

Anatomy of a Riot

Grand Rapids City

Planning Department

Shortly after midnight on July 25, 1967 a civil disturbance began in Grand Rapids, Michigan which has been identified as one of the many big-city race riots of the past summer. The following information and commentary has been printed to document some of the facts and to provoke thinking about what our community can learn from the experience.

The facts stated in the report were compiled from the arrest records of the Grand Rapids Police Department through August 3, 1967; an interview with a police official; selected information printed in the Grand Rapids Press; the Target Area Inventory of families gathered by Sheldon Complex, and the United Community Services Social Service Exchange records of services by public and private health, welfare and education institutions in Kent County. The report of the riot has been divided into four parts:

1. A general description of the riot.
2. The description of the persons arrested in the morning of July 25 between 2:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. During this period, the general community was unaware of events occurring, the

persons involved were more homogeneous and the activities were more spontaneous than later in the riot.

3. After noon of July 25, many types of people were involved for many reasons. Section four discusses the development of the riot and the people arrested during the last 48 hours of the riot.
4. The report will conclude with a brief commentary on some of the motivating factors of the riot, the importance of self-appraisals by our local organizations rendering health, welfare, recreation and education services and the necessity of an integrated master plan.

II. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RIOTERS AND RIOT AREA

The riot occurred from approximately 2:00 A.M. on July 25 to noon July 27, 1967. During this period over 320 adults were arrested, including 28 women. In addition, it was estimated that approximately 28 juveniles under the age of 17 were committed to the custody of the Kent County Juvenile Court because of their activities in the riot. The Grand Rapids Police Department discovered that almost 49% of the adults arrested had been fingerprinted before. At the time of the riots, there was much fear of and speculation about "outside agitators" which

has been fairly well disproved by those closely observing the riots. The home addresses of the 320 adults arrested support this fact that those who participated in the riot were almost all local people. It is acknowledged that the news of rioting in Detroit generally ignited the long-standing volatile situation in Grand Rapids on July 25, 1967, but it is generally recognized that a riot would have occurred sooner or later in Grand Rapids without the help of a Detroit disturbance.

During this period there were at least 33 fires and 25 major mobbing, stone throwing, shooting or looting incidents. Records show that all of the major house fires were in vacant, deteriorated buildings. Much of the destruction and activity occurred in Census Tract 24.

Census Tract 24 is bounded on the north by Wealthy Street, on the west by Division Avenue, on the south by Hall and on the east by Lafayette. Seventy-six percent of the rocking, mobs, shooting and looting occurred either in Census Tract 24 or within one block of Census Tract 24. Likewise, 85% of the major fires were either in or within one block of Census Tract 24.

The major portion of the rioting was concentrated in a 36-block area between Franklin and Wealthy and between

Ionia and Lafayette. This is the northern half of Census Tract 24 and the north eastern tip of Census Tract 23. In this area approximately 28% of the families are on welfare, 13% of the male heads of households and 59% of the female heads of households are unemployed. A most significant fact is that 80% of the unemployed heads of households are females supporting and caring for dependent children. These are families without an adult male to give support, love and guidance to the children. Frequently the mother must choose between being home with her children when they need her and leaving the children in order to work at a fulltime job, which pays only slightly more than the welfare allotment for the family.

The area is one of the most deteriorated residential sections in Grand Rapids. The houses are old and most of them have been inadequately maintained for over ten years. One or more major repairs are usually needed on such things as the roof, flooring, electrical wiring, plumbing or heating unit; and, almost all of the buildings have not been painted often enough to prevent serious deterioration. Most yards do not have grass and trash is littered. Yet, the median rent in this area is \$75.00 a month. The most frequent rental is a four or five room portion of a house which was originally designed for one family and now houses two to four families. This housing unit most frequently rents for \$80.00 or more per month and does not

include the cost of utilities. Although the majority of families living in this area has been in Grand Rapids over ten years, families with female heads move frequently from house to house looking for better living conditions or because of lack of funds.

The residences in this area are generally located on the less traveled streets behind the rows of businesses lining the major streets such as Division Avenue. The residents of the area are predominantly negro, but most of the stores are owned and managed by whites who live in other parts of Kent County. Some of the unemployed and under-employed residents of this area support themselves through various associations with petty gambling, drugs, illegal liquor sales and prostitution. These activities attract into this area at night many teenage and young adult males who live in other areas of the city. For several weeks previous to the riot, the Grand Rapids Police Department had been especially active in an antivice program which they felt had seriously curtailed the prostitution business. It is the opinion of many persons that this also contributed to the time and place of the riots.

From these facts it can be concluded that, like most of the recent riots in American cities, the destruction and anguish of the riot most affected the residential area

and its families who had a minimum of personal possessions and income and are least able to recuperate from such social and economic trauma.

III. THE MORNING OF THE FIRST DAY

Between 2:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. of July 25 there were 46 persons booked by the Grand Rapids Police Department. Forty-five were males and therefore constituted approximately 98% of those arrested that morning. Approximately 95% of those arrested that morning were negro. Thirty-six percent of the adults arrested that morning were between the ages of 17 and 19, 46% were between the ages of 20 and 24, and only 18% were 25 years old or over.

Sixty-eight percent of those arrested that morning were charged with disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace. All the other types of charges that morning were made against young negro males less than 25 years old. These charges included arson, malicious destruction, profanity and resisting arrest. Approximately 10% of the males under 25 were arrested for arson and 16% were arrested for malicious destruction. The policemen on duty that evening recalled that they had observed much anger in the crowds and frequently heard such statements as "whitey hates us."

In summary, the records show that young angry negro males, who either live in the general riot area or frequent it at night, were the main participants the morning of the first day. And that the riot occurred where the action, the problems and the people with the problems are. It was not artificially transplanted into some area which symbolically represented the "good life" that is presently unattainable for most negroes. To the contrary, the riot was mainly in the areas where negroes represent over 90% of the population and where many feel trapped between their inability to move out and their inability to improve the houses and the neighborhood. It is also the young negro who feels that action speaks louder than words and that he does not have anything to lose by being destructive.

As for the history of the young adults arrested that morning, at least 37% had juvenile court records, 57% of their families have been served by one or more health services in the recent past and at least 50% are either now or were on public welfare. In addition, over 60% of the families of the people arrested that morning have received the services from such health, welfare and education agencies in the community as Big Brothers, Family Service Association, Child Guidance Clinic, The Visiting Teachers Program of the Grand Rapids Board of Education,

day care services of Methodist Community House, the Salvation Army and Legal Aid Society. Almost half of these families served by private agencies had been served by the Legal Aid Society.

Records also show that at least 33% of these people came from families which could be identified as "multiple problem families" where the family has received a combination of many services over a long period of time. Also, 17% of those arrested were husbands or wives of one multiple problem family and sons or daughters in another. This means that over half of these persons from multiple problem families are so deeply entrenched in problems of social dependency and personal maladjustment, that the problems are passed from one generation to another. This is the vicious cycle of poverty which is especially acute for negroes, hindered from becoming self-supporting, self-respecting and self-controlled heads of families by discriminatory practices to numerous for anyone to recount. For many, the motivation and even the ability to do better than their parents slowly disappears during their formative years while either perverted means and goals or unrealistic dreams are substituted. In effect, they become members of another world.

As to the location of the arrests, 88% were made in Census Tracts 23 and 24, but only 50% of those

arrested lived in Census Tracts 23 and 24. Nineteen percent of those arrested lived in Census Tract 25 and most of the remaining 38% arrested lived in the eight other adjacent census tracts in southeastern Grand Rapids.

An interesting fact is that the persons tended to be arrested outside of their own area. Only 28.6% of the arrests were made in the same census tract as an individual's home address. Even if he lived in the riot area, he was usually arrested in another area. This means that there was first a convergence of people from all directions into a central location roughly described as the northern half of Census Tract 24 and eastern part of Census Tract 23. And secondly, there was much movement from one neighborhood to another within the riot area. (See Maps 1 & 2)

IV. THE LAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS

On the first day of the riot, the City of Grand Rapids announced a curfew would be in effect as of 9:00 P.M. through 6:00 A.M. each evening until further notice. Most of the arrests were made during the early evening after the curfew went into effect. From noon, July 25, the law enforcement agencies involved in the riot attempted to systematically contain the rioters in a small area of the city. It is felt that this action stopped most of the sporadic incidents, which occurred the first night outside

of the main riot area, and might have changed the character of the rioting in the main area to some degree.

Location.

During this last period of the riot, arrests were made in 16 census tracts in Grand Rapids, but the riot area can be generally described as a core area adjacent to the southeastern corner of the central business district with decreasing activities in all directions from this center. The highest concentration of arrests (79%) was in a central area which included parts of Census Tracts 23, 24 and 25. The number of arrests decreased in all directions as the distance increased from this central location: 11.3% of the arrests were made in Census Tracts 16, 20 and 29; 6.2% were made in Census Tracts 22, 26, 28 and 30; and 3.3% were made in six other Grand Rapids census tracts. (See Map 3)

Race, Sex, and Age of Those Arrested.

After the early morning rioting of the first day, which was predominated by young negro males, many other types of persons were involved. Beginning in the afternoon and continuing into the evening of the first day, the number of white males and older adults arrested increased. The proportion of rioters who were negro had decreased from 96% during the first morning to 66%, while the proportion

of white rioters increased from approximately 4% during the first morning to 27.2%. The remainder of those arrested were Spanish-American.

Ninety percent of the 274 adults arrested during this 48-hour period were males and 10% were females. This number included 154 negro males, 84 white males, 9 Spanish-American males, 26 negro females, and 1 white female.

During this last 48 hours, the negro male under 25 was still the most frequent single type of person arrested (33%), with older negro males second (23%), white males under 25 third (16%), and white males over 25 fourth (15%). And as on the first morning, young adults still outnumbered the older adults arrested: 60% of the negro males, 62% of the negro females, 52% of the white males, the one white woman, and 78% of the Spanish-American males arrested were under 25 years of age. In fact, 58% of the persons arrested in the latter part of the riot were under 25. In brief, the arrest records show that all through the riot, males participated much more than females, negroes more than whites, and younger persons more than older persons.

Charges.

The proportion of arrests during the last 48 hours made by charge were: curfew violation, 58.6%; carrying a concealed weapon, 13.3%; disorder, disturbance, rioting or

violation of park ordinance, 12.9%; larceny, 6.5%; drunkenness, 6.1%; felonious assault or malicious destruction, 2.3%; and resisting arrest, 0.4%.

Residents of various census tracts, as seen in the arrest charges, displayed a few differences in their collective behavior. More residents of Census Tract 24 were arrested than from any other single census tract; the largest number of persons arrested for each type of offense were from 24, but the distribution of charges against them was essentially the same as the distribution of charges against the total number of people arrested in the three days.

Census Tract 25 residents had the second highest number of arrests, but the percentages of offenses for carrying a concealed weapon or rioting were greater than the overall distribution of these charges in the riot.

Census Tract 23 residents had the third highest number of arrests, but 75% of their offenses were curfew violations.

Census Tract 26 and 29 residents received a disproportionately large number of larceny charges.

Considering the proximity of Census Tract 22 to the main riot area, only a few residents of that Tract were arrested in the riot (3).

It is interesting to note a time factor in two charges. No one was arrested during the first morning of the riot for carrying a concealed weapon, but 13.3% of the charges made in the riot from Tuesday afternoon on were for carrying concealed weapons. And, all of the persons, whose primary charge was arson, were arrested during the first morning.

Operation Task Force.

A group of fifteen young men, many of them college students, played a special role in the riot. They had been hired by the local Community Action Program to staff a program in Project Summer entitled, "Operation Task Force." This program was directed from the Sheldon Complex and designed as an outreach program to counsel elementary and high school age children with personal problems.

The twelve negro and three white Task Force agents were raised in the area and were former Grand Rapids high school athletes. During the six weeks preceding the riot, these men covered much of the inner city on foot visiting homes, churches, barber shops, pool rooms, parks and gyms to seek problem situations and to keep in touch with what was happening in the community.

Task Force agents worked as social workers, big brothers, counselors and baseball managers. Many children, who came in contact with an agent, were referred to appropriate

educational enrichment, social-health and recreational programs. Over 600 youngsters were enrolled and supervised in the GAP Baseball League, approximately 140 boys were recruited for Project "Mr. Clean," 60 youngsters were referred to the Experimental Theater and more than 30 to the Children's Visitation Program.

During the riot, the Task Force agents at great risk to their personal safety, moved among the people who were causing trouble in an attempt to lessen the tension and assist the Grand Rapids Police Department. The agents had no special identification; and possibly for this reason, one Task Force member was shot in the face and another in the back. This caused concern because the Task Force agents were well known to the police and had permission to work among the gangs of young people to prevent crimes and calm the rioters.

The Task Force's effectiveness in preventing crimes and decreasing the momentum of the riot cannot be objectively measured, but the local newspaper published several articles on the riot which included statements by personnel in the Grand Rapids Police Department acknowledging the help given them by these fifteen men.

The Time Factor

Time played an important role in the riot. During the riot, the periods from approximately 6:00 A.M. to the middle of the afternoons of each day were relatively quiet. Incidents increased from about 4:00 P.M. until about midnight, slowly tapered off until dawn and then activity almost stopped.

Within a 24-hour day, the greatest number of incidents occurred and the greatest variety of participants were arrested. For instance, the majority of the negro women, white men and Spanish-American men were arrested in this period. Likewise, it can be seen that the riot reached its peak between 6:00 P.M. and midnight Tuesday evening when approximately 46% of the arrests in the last 48 hours of the riot were made.

Although the riot gradually declined from early Wednesday morning on, it was still very active between midnight and 9:00 A.M. Wednesday morning--approximately 21% of the arrests in the last 48 hours were made during this period. There was a small upsurge again Wednesday evening after 6:00 P.M., but the riot had lost its momentum and subsided rapidly after midnight. While there was no specific hour designating the end of the riot, it was generally acknowledged by the community that the riot was over by noon, July 27.

Three separate and distinct stages in the riot can be seen by the changes which occurred in the behavior, characteristics and motives of the participants.

The first stage occurred during the first morning, when it could be said that the rioting was a relatively spontaneous activity by a fairly homogeneous group of people living in or near the riot area. The second stage began in the afternoon and early evening of the first day when the "drawing effect" of the riot drew many types of persons of all ages from a wide area. The behavior and motives of the rioters thus became more complex and far-reaching. The third stage occurred when groups formed outside of the area in an apparent preparation to defend their territory from an assumed attack by negro rioters or to organize an attack upon the rioters in the riot area. Fortunately, the momentum disappeared during the second and third stages of the riot, and it stopped at this point.

In all riots there is always the potential fourth stage. The fourth stage would have begun when semi-organized groups of outsiders would have converged on the riot area. Immediately, both rioters and non-participating residents of the riot area, trying to protect their property, group for counter-attacks. When a riot evolves into this fourth stage, the legal law enforcement groups are not large enough to control the many scattered outbreaks.

The Drawing Effect--Rioters and Reactors.

The riot had a very distinct "drawing effect." On the first morning, those arrested were from 12 census tracts in Grand Rapids and one census tract in the City of Wyoming. In contrast to this rather centralized character of the first morning, the arrests during the last 48 hours included residents of 30 census tracts out of the total 40 census tracts in Grand Rapids, 3 census tracts in adjacent suburban cities, 5 rural townships in Kent County, 7 counties in Michigan, and 2 residents from other states (Ohio and Mississippi). Sixty-nine percent of those arrested outside of Kent County were young people from Holland, West Olive, Spring Lake, Fruitport, and Muskegon along the Lake Michigan shore. Only 3 of the persons arrested in the riot were from larger cities--2 from Detroit and 1 from Cleveland.

It can be concluded from these police records that the riot's drawing effect was moderately weak outside the city limits, because most of those arrested were residents of Grand Rapids. Approximately 77.7% of those arrested in the last 48 hours were from the riot area or the adjacent southeast Grand Rapids census tracts, 12.1% were from other parts of Grand Rapids, 3.6% were from the adjacent suburbs or rural townships in Kent County, 5.8% were from the other counties in Michigan and 0.8% were residents of other states.

Most of the residents of counties or states outside of Kent County were arrested for curfew violations at the peak of the riot; 72% were arrested during Tuesday evening or early Wednesday morning and their charges were as follows: 78.9% for curfew violations, 15.8% for carrying concealed weapons, and 5.3% for larceny.

It cannot be clearly determined from the available information how many curfew violators and persons carrying concealed weapons were motivated by curiosity, an attempt to play the vigilante role, or an attempt to take advantage of the lawlessness to destroy, steal or fight. Some of these persons would have to be identified as "reactors" to the riot rather than "rioters."

During the evening of the first day and early morning of the second, many of the people who were booked for carrying concealed weapons explained to the arresting officers that they were in the area to protect their businesses. This was the first sign of the white backlash which grew as the riot continued. Many of the people in Grand Rapids at the time were apprehensive, but many people tried to keep it to themselves. Others were not as restrained and contributed to the fear by repeating unfounded rumors and telling others to prepare to defend themselves and their property. An overt backlash grew faster in some areas of the city than in others. Many of the people in these areas

became quite restless and agitated by rumors that the riot would spread into their area. Gangs formed and roamed the streets on foot and in cars. Fear was particularly evident in west side neighborhoods. There were also many calls to the police and attempts to volunteer as vigilantes during this latter part of the riot.

Conclusions.

In summary, one of the shorter and less destructive riots occurred in Grand Rapids, Michigan this summer. Although the arrest statistics do not show any singular motivation or pattern of behavior which might imply a battle plan, it is clear that many of the participants in the riot were not playing. The rioters were oriented towards serious and damaging acts. And, it appears that the legal consequences of their acts did not deter them.

The individualism of the rioters was reflected in the amount of movement of individuals from one area to another. A few individuals would come together at the same location, mill around for a short time, suddenly form a small group, "demonstrate" and disperse. In general, the rioters could be described as far more disorderly, vocally protesting and uncooperative than destructive. It was quite fortunate that the majority of the participants were willing to simply engage in riotous, noisy disturbances

and only a small minority were concerned with arson, malicious destruction, felonious assault or larceny.

From the observations of persons on the scene, it has been estimated that less than a thousand persons were involved in any way in the total riot. Since over 30% of the adults arrested were not negroes, it can be assumed that less than 800 (less than 4%) of the more than 20,000 negroes in Kent County, chose the lawlessness for whatever reasons they had. Therefore, an important fact to remember is that over 96% of the negro population did not participate in the riot, but had the same excuses to riot as those who did.

Because of the relatively low amount of destruction and the small percentage of the area's population involved, it can be said that this riot was only a "demonstration."

V. COMMENTARY

This section has been designed as an interpretative footnote to the report. The ideas are presented as a contribution to positive thinking and dialogue among citizens' groups and existing public and private organizations in the community.

Every institution, organization and department in the metropolitan area is indispensable in the essential task of revitalizing the local urban way of life. The urban condition should strengthen a man's resources rather than drain his energy trying to live in a city predicated on the values of a past century.

Our collective plans and action must have the comprehensive objective of building a more livable community. We must avoid the near-sighted goal of simply stopping riots. Riots do not occur where there is full employment, good education, health services and comfortable safe housing at proper prices for everyone, recreation for all ages and the opportunity to have a voice in the operation and improvement of the metropolitan area. We must remember that a community is PEOPLE, and that everything else in the metropolitan complex exists solely to serve them.

When most of us think of the white backlash to the riots, we frequently think of the poor white who is as personally acquainted with unemployment, poverty, public welfare and physical deterioration as the negro. It is assumed that urban poor whites are obsessed with racial prejudice and leap at every opportunity to hurt negroes. Actually, poor whites have the same marginal economic position in the city, but have less solidarity and are generally more fatalistic about their life chances than negroes. They therefore have relatively even more fear of economic failure than the negro. Imagine living in a mental world over which you feel you have no control. It is almost as if you have experienced a great depression until yesterday and can do nothing to prepare for the next which will probably occur tomorrow. With this frame of mind, poor urban whites are far more fearful of things which would affect their incomes than they are fearful of negroes. They often react more harshly to a negro competitor than to white competitors because, due to social prejudice, negroes are more vulnerable.

The most significant white backlash occurs when the majority reacts to a riot by seeking repressive laws against a misbehaving group of faceless people and tries to punish them by withdrawing support of organizations, programs and policies working toward the improvement of urban conditions. This backlash is far more destructive and harmful

than the riot. It is a senseless withdrawal of responsibility which solves nothing; and its harm touches everyone and lasts for generations.

Today, most urban negroes know they must work together to achieve the paramount goal of equality. They have learned that they cannot depend upon the presently constituted society to reward the efforts of every negro individually. They can see that a white man's poverty is considered a difference in social classes which can easily be erased if the person is industrious and thrifty, and they know that poverty is almost presumed an inherited characteristic of the negro. They also know that these generalizations about advancement in our society are untrue and extremely pernicious, because they provide the majority of Americans an excuse to avoid without guilt their responsibility for the poor. Negroes are hindered by the legacy of discriminatory customs which stem from slavery and are pulled in different directions by advocates of conflicting methods for achieving their goal, but the majority are convinced that everyone will have to work hard and do it together to succeed.

For over seventy-five years after the Emancipation Proclamation, negroes were accused of being apathetic toward their way of life and were allowed to misbehave like irresponsible adolescents. White society loved to characterize negroes as happy children, or at least children, unable to take their places as men and women with full-

fledged adult responsibilities and a disciplined morality. American society was so committed to this separation of the races that much energy was wasted thinking up reasons which explained the necessity for this separation and physically maintaining the distance between white and negro. When a negro transgressed the boundaries of the white man's world, no punishment was too severe to make him an example to others who might be tempted to do the same.

Actually, negroes were developing organizations such as the NAACP and the National Urban League to gain their rights through the courts, the legislatures and the textbook. In our recent past, the employment of negroes in skilled positions in northern urban cities during World War II, and the Civil Rights Act of 1954 started a new era of advancement for negroes. In the 1950's and early 1960's it was mostly a middle class negro movement, characterized by reasonableness and direct but nonviolent action. Many liberal whites participated as sympathizers in the demonstrations. This was not enough. As the negroes achieved token desegregation in schools and public facilities, they were also running up against a deadly earnest resistance about the more significant problems. Everyone was acutely aware that the common negro was not materially benefiting where it most counted--his income. His income was not keeping pace with the rapidly increasing standard of living of white Americans.

Concomitant with the Economic Opportunities Act of 1964, which demanded that the poor have a significant leadership role in the programs and had many provisions for hiring poor people to work in the programs, the civil rights movement was at last enlisting the energies of the urban lower class negroes. For both reasons, the hard problems of economic security, segregated housing, physical deterioration, lack of city services, inferior education, and disorganized dependent families suddenly became major targets for reform and a new leadership in the negro community was established around actionists.

The riots of the 1960's began when the fine moral line holding the negroes' allegiance to non-violent civil disobedience was broken by persons who grew impatient with the delays and excuses of local authorities. The urban negro ghetto resident, already angered by a life-time of discrimination, wanted tangible results and was alienated by the big city's bureaucratic process, the subtleties of long-range plans and a lack of real concern for his problems. As misdirected and self-aggrandizing as they were, the rioting and wanton destruction were a loud clear protest that all whites and negroes could understand.

✓ Since the first riots in the summer of 1965, rioting seems to have become almost just another strategy for change--especially for those whose side-tracked morality has led

them into previous deviancies. Thus, we should not read into the Grand Rapids riot the collective outburst of pent-up emotions seen in the New York City and Los Angeles riots. Many of the crimes in those riots were probably reactions to the severe stress of a very large impersonal city. The rioters seemed to act as if they wanted to hurt the city as it had hurt them.

For many of the rioters in Grand Rapids, the rioting offered a new experience, excitement and an opportunity to exercise their creative ability against an opponent; and, for a few, the possibility of material gain. But there is reason to believe the core of the rioters, especially during the first morning, were conscious that they were playing a protest role that they felt had been somewhat legitimized by the previous disorders in American cities. Even though the raw uncontrolled emotionalism of earlier riots to some degree had been replaced by this conscious effort, the riot still represented just as strong a protest against the same forms of neglect, deprivation, arbitrary control and abuse suffered by negroes in every American city. While the rioters' behavior does not represent the majority of inner-city residents, their demand for action does. We must incorporate the ideas of the inner-city residents in our plans and work together to build a better city.

The most frequent word in the riot report was "Negro." And, almost half of the adults arrested had police records; three out of eight had juvenile court records, and over half of the families represented by the rioters had received public assistance, used health services or other private agencies at some time. Many of these families cannot be considered occasional users of services, but are so seriously disorganized that they are completely dependent upon public and private health and welfare services. In addition, the riot area is characterized by a high rate of unemployment, a high ratio of families with female heads and are high in number of families on public welfare. Many of these families are not newcomers to Grand Rapids--they have lived here at least ten years. Unfortunately, in spite of much talk, poverty and the urban negro have been low priority social problems. These are the people and the area which should get first attention.

Income

The first help to inner-city residents must be in ways which will allow them to help themselves. The most important of these would be to raise their economic status. Money is the most powerful resource people have to cope with their problems and it is the means by which they can be permanently released from poverty. Every head of a household

must have sufficient income to support his family in an American city. He must be able to pay for necessary services which his family now goes without or receives as charity.

This requires full employment for everyone who is employable and a guaranteed annual income for handicapped and female heads of families with dependent children. Achieving this goal no doubt will need national implementation. If we could achieve full employment in our cities, there would be a great enough increase in personal income and the gross national product of the United States to more than compensate for the amount of monies needed for a guaranteed annual income for those who cannot or should not be part of the labor force. This is more easily said than done.

We can begin locally by examining our economy and labor market. Where vacancies exist, on-the-job training programs must work through the companies to prepare eligible adults for definite positions. The local economic growth in the next five and ten years must be ascertained to see what types of firms should be encouraged to locate in the area to utilize the available adults. An advisory and financial aid service should also be established on a national and regional basis to relocate employable heads of households whose skills are not needed in Grand Rapids, but are needed elsewhere.

There is tremendous potential for changing the central city through the establishment of new and improved channels for financing negro businessmen. Only about 70 businesses in

Grand Rapids are owned by negroes today. And, there are no negro-owned financial institutions or loan companies. For every new negro businessman, there could be several new negro employees. This would not only raise the economic status of the families involved, but it would also contribute towards reversing the deterioration and abandonment of the inner city.

To anticipate the long-range occupational requirements of business and industry, many of today's educational and vocational training programs must revise their curricula and develop a built-in "updating mechanism" to keep their preparation of young people relevant to the perennial technological innovations and changes in modern urban society.

Housing

The second most important way to dynamically change the lives of inner-city residents is to help them to reverse the deterioration of the central city. Several things must be done at the same time. In addition to business ownership, home ownership should be encouraged and nurtured. More adequate financial services must be accessible so that negroes can purchase homes at reasonable prices. Many of the white and negro families also need an advisory service which would counsel them about the details of purchase contracts and properly maintaining their homes.

At the same time, to stop deterioration the prices of ghetto property have to be determined by the supply and demand of an open market. In other words, a greater number of homes in all residential areas in the metropolitan area must be available to negroes. When a relatively small number of older buildings in the inner city are the only houses available to a large number of families, these structures will be sold at a much higher price than they would be worth otherwise. And because of the generally lower incomes of the families buying this property, a higher proportion of the family income will be spent on mortgage payments than is spent by the average homeowner. The result is either having less income to spend on maintenance or renting parts of the building to other families. In either case, the property deteriorates.

To keep people from abandoning the inner city, the families living there must have strong support from the local government. The city must provide the same quality and quantity of service to the inner city as it does to the outter residential area. The residents of the inner city must feel that the local government is their government. This is best shown when their problems and suggestions are considered as seriously as those of others in the community. A reputation for being concerned and doing everything possible for the inner city will go a long way toward creating the opinion that, unlike most American cities, the government of Grand Rapids considers these people first-class citizens.

Integrated Services

The community must have a great variety of public and private health, welfare, educational and recreational programs which realistically supplement the inadequacies of its people. These service organizations or departments were created for specific purposes and employ personnel whose skills were developed by specialized training and experience to accomplish these ends. Each organization and its personnel are supposed to provide a unique service to the community, and it is always hoped that these unique services will complement and supplement each other in such a way that they form an integrated system of services.

Unfortunately, in spite of good intentions on the part of everyone involved, it generally does not work that way. Because of the community's values, each human need has a priority rank which determines whether programs will be established in the community to resolve it and how large they will be. These decisions are often based on factors whose points of reference are less than the total community. Over time it is easier to get support for some services than others and these expand faster than the rest. It is also a natural consequence of directly serving clients, that an organization will work hard toward the singular objective of increasing programs which it feels are vitally needed by those with whom it is personally involved.

It is very time-consuming and difficult to maintain spontaneous and frequent communication among all of the public and private services in a community. And therefore, new services of one agency sometimes duplicate the activities of another. Or, facilities and equipment of one organization may be idle when other organizations need them. Frequently, clients are referred to one agency after another because their problems do not fit any agency's existing services. And, some of our services are piecemeal because of a lack of funds. In some cases, more people might get better service if several organizations pooled their resources.

This segmented effort is often encouraged when the staff of an organization tend to see the community almost as their own private responsibility and act as if their specialties attack the root problem of the city. This is frequently the result of not seeing how one skill or service is related to other skills and services. Most know, but fewer practice the principle that it requires all of our services to provide for the inadequacies of a whole person or whole family.

We have all realized many problems are bigger than local urban areas and will have to be attacked from a state-wide, regional or national level, but this is an easy generalization. We have not gathered enough information about the origin and contributing factors of most social problems and how our respective services can affect a change in our clients to know

with certainty what subjects must be handled through regional planning and what is most effectively accomplished by local planning. It is very easy to generalize that either everything is a regional or national problem or that every program must be conceived and administered in terms of the local situation. This lack of information about ourselves and our impreciseness about where to start affords very little support for efforts to make our services more realistic and effective.

Let us start with small but positive steps towards creating a closely knit federation of programs for the residents of our metropolitan area. First, each organization must objectively evaluate its relevance to the most important urban problems today. At least twelve of these problems are:

1. Adequate income for everyone
2. Housing
3. Comprehensive health services
4. Family breakdown and family planning
5. Crime and delinquency
6. Education for low income families
7. Employment of underskilled and handicapped
8. Special problems of minority groups
9. Legal services for everyone
10. Air and water pollution
11. Alcoholism and drug addiction
12. Recreation

Existing services and innovations in the future should get support in accordance with their relevance to these community-wide problems.

Secondly, it is suggested that with this information as a resource, agencies would be in a good position to contribute to a master plan designed as a guide for the future development of all public and private services in the community. An advisory committee, composed of professionals, interested community leaders, and recipients of the services in the metropolitan area, would draw up tentative objectives and ground rules for coordination. These suggestions would then serve as the substance of a workshop in which viewpoints of all of the agencies could be shared about how they could work together to maximize their efforts. A permanent forum would be established, and together with the advisory committee, they would develop the master plan, be a vehicle for communication among the agencies, and update the plan as changes occur in the community.

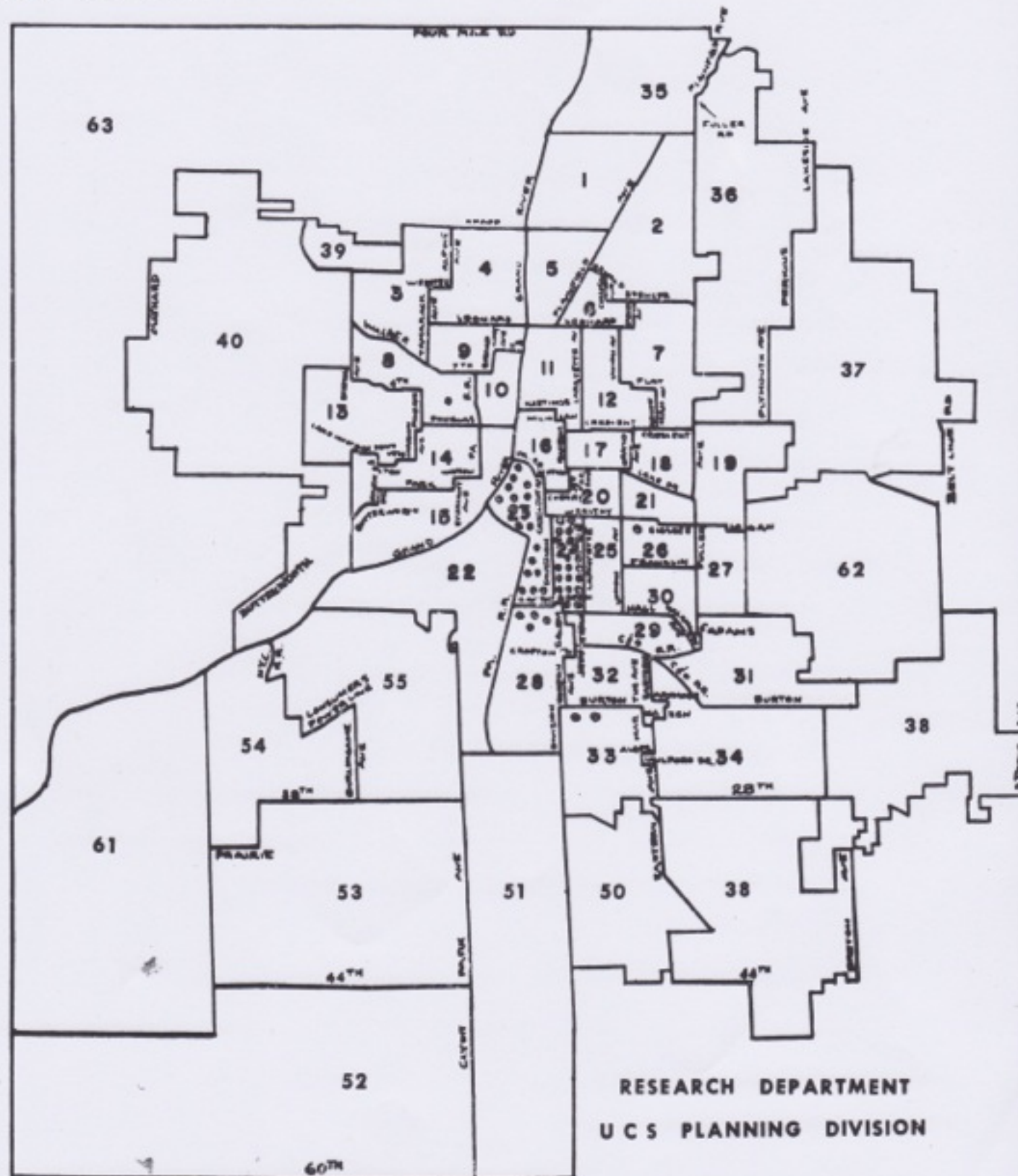
By forming this federation of services in the metropolitan area, communication among organizations would be tremendously increased. It would make it easier for organizations to help each other with problems that a single organization tries to solve by itself today. And, it would be hoped that the eventual coordination and development of new services would eliminate unfulfilled needs.

The master plan developed by the amalgamation of ideas would have a priority system for innovating existing services and developing new ones. In addition, with this plan and its supporting information Grand Rapids could make an invaluable contribution to state, regional and national planning. It is especially important that such a local plan include all of the metropolitan area, because it must eliminate as much as possible the central city's currently inequitable share of the responsibility for solving urban problems.

MAP 1

LOCATION OF ARRESTS MADE
BETWEEN 2 A.M. AND 6 A.M. , JULY 25, 1967
BY CENSUS TRACT

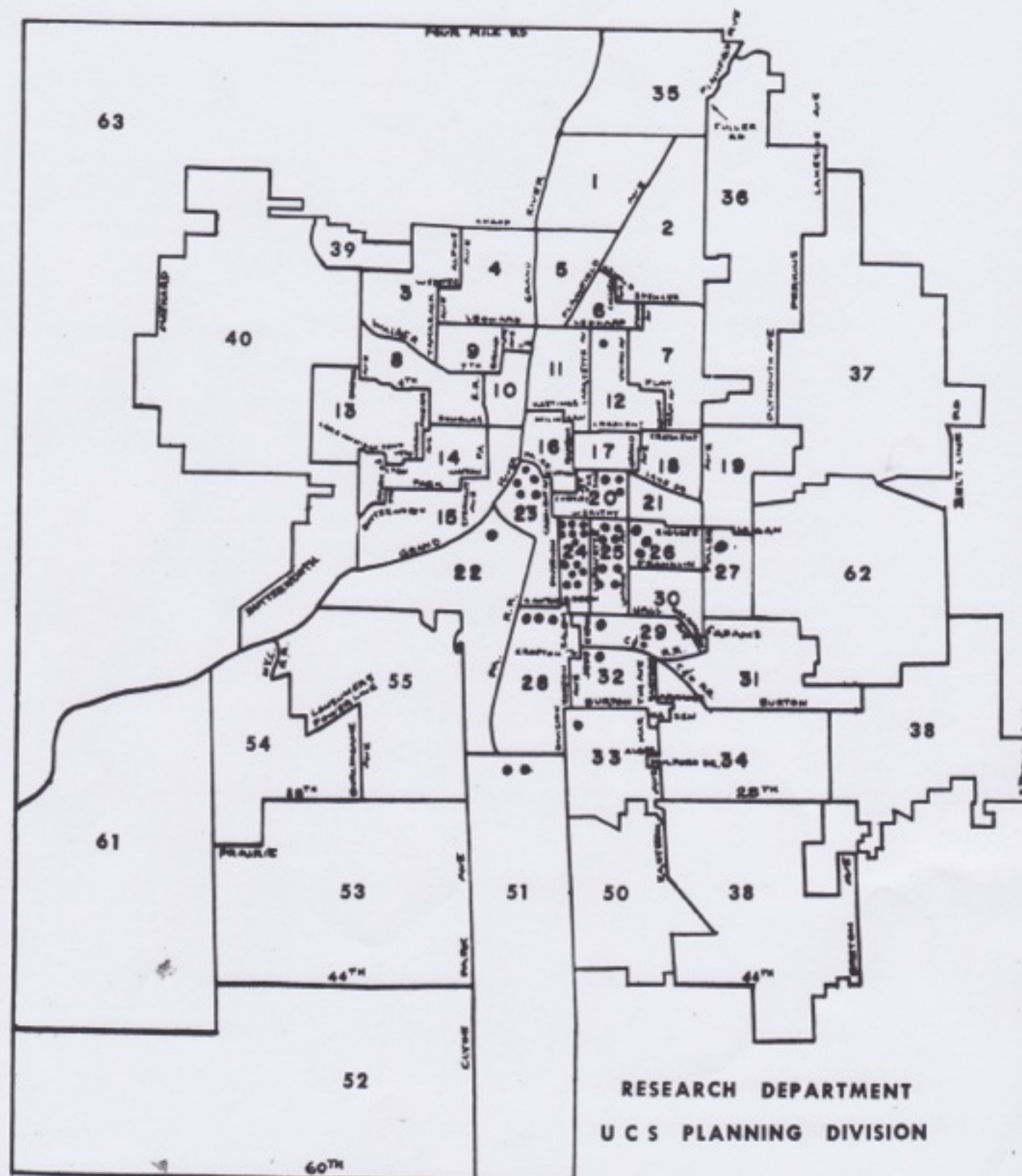
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN



MAP 2

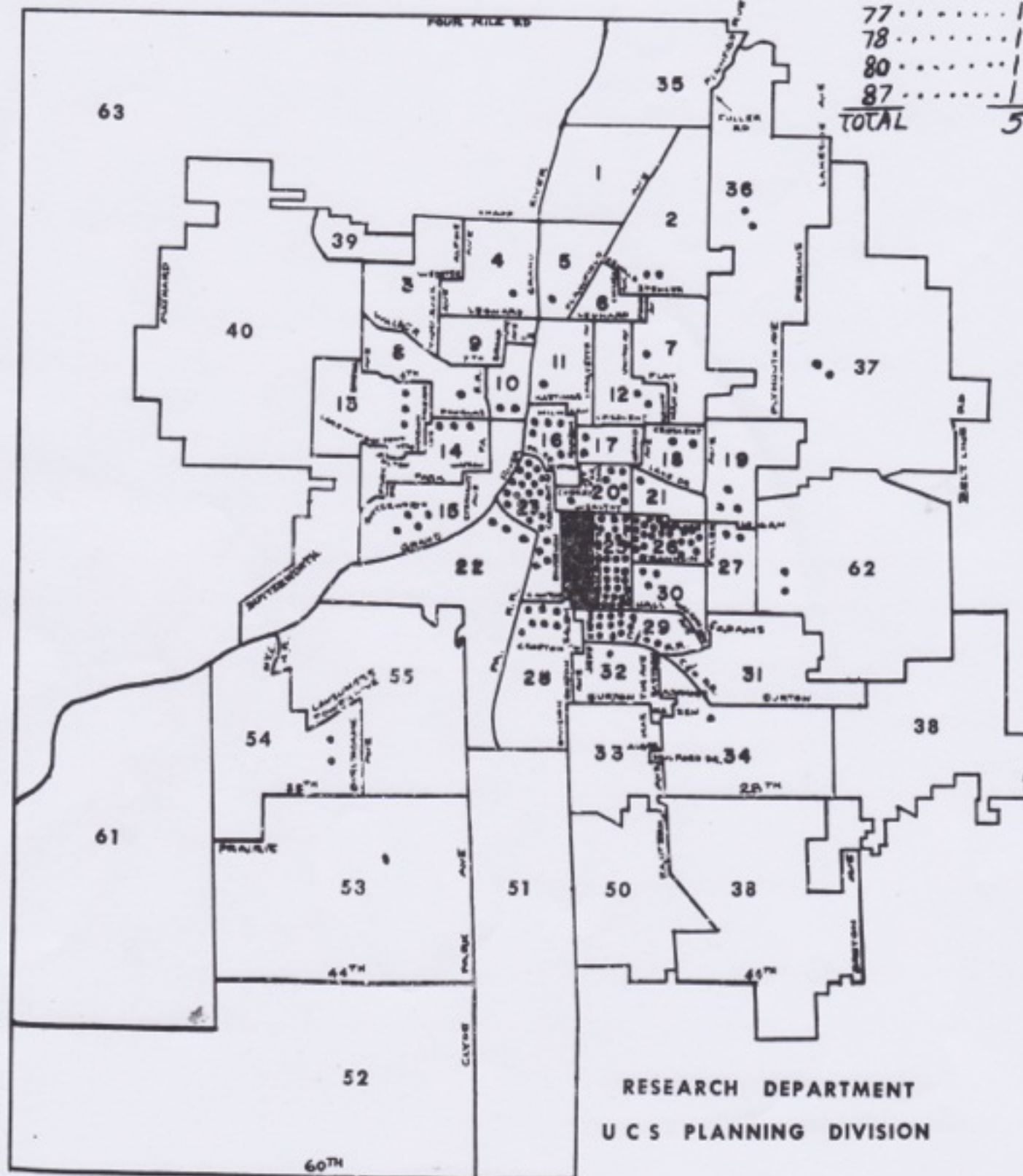
HOME ADDRESSES OF THE ADULTS ARRESTED
BETWEEN 2 A.M. AND 6 A.M., JULY 25, 1967
BY CENSUS TRACT

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN



HOME ADDRESSES OF THE ADULTS ARRESTED FROM KENT COUNTY
BETWEEN NOON JULY 25 TO NOON JULY 27, 1967
BY CENSUS TRACT

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN



| RURAL CENSUS TRACTS | NUMBER ARRESTED |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 73..... | 1 |
| 77..... | 1 |
| 78..... | 1 |
| 80..... | 1 |
| 87..... | 1 |
| <u>TOTAL</u> | <u>5</u> |

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
U C S PLANNING DIVISION