

# Report: Gangs moving to suburbs

Tribune staff report

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Some gangs members apparently have begun escaping the pressures of big city life by beating a well-worn path to the suburbs.

That's one of the findings of a report released today by the Chicago Crime Commission in its first major study of area gangs in more than 10 years.

"More and more gangs are migrating to the suburbs," Jim Wagner, president of the commission, said at a news conference today.

He said Chicago police have become skilled at disrupting gangland activity, so some gang members are moving to the suburbs where authorities often don't have the manpower or experience to deal with them.

In addition, he pointed out, the Chicago Housing Authority has torn down many of the high-rises that once served as hideouts for gangs, and high-end condominiums have replaced dilapidated two-flats in many of the Chicago neighborhoods where gang activity used to thrive.

"Briefcase carrying young executives now stand on the very corners where gang drug dealers once peddled their poison," Wagner said in a press release.

Wagner said people in the suburbs no longer can afford to view gangs as an inner-city problem.

Between 70 to 100 gangs operate in the Chicago area with 70,000 to 125,000 members, according to the 272-page report.

In a survey of 81 suburban police departments, the commission found gang activity to be widespread. With the exception of some affluent and far outlying communities, most departments have had contact with street gangs, and in some cases the problem was found to be extensive.

For instance, an estimated 3,000 gang members operate in Waukegan, 2,000 in Cicero and 1,800 in Aurora, according to the report. In addition, gang activity is reportedly on the rise in 31 communities, including Hinsdale and Naperville.

Drugs remain the financial backbone of Chicago-area gangs, with estimated annual sales of a half billion dollars, according to the report.

But gangs are branching out into other activities, such as mortgage and real estate fraud. They are also active in money laundering schemes, counterfeit IDs, dog fighting, human trafficking and prostitution, according to the report.

# Suburbs pool data as gangs expand

By Charles Sheehan  
Tribune staff reporter

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As evidence mounts that rival gangs are working together to expand drug sales outside of Chicago, suburban police departments are teaming up to address the problem.

Towns like Addison, West Chicago and Riverdale that built gang databases two decades ago and became information clearinghouses for other suburbs are less of an oddity now. In recent years, according to police departments, more information is being collected on suspected gang members who are living and operating in the suburbs.

Thirty-one of the 81 suburbs surveyed by the not-for-profit Chicago Crime Commission said gang-related crime has increased over the last three years, according to a report released Monday.

Law enforcement officials welcomed the extensive report--a roadmap to gangs in Illinois with the names of alleged gang leaders, where the gangs operate and their illegal activities--yet no one seemed surprised by the numbers.

"For these gangs that get away from their home turf, it is all about the profit, so they are teaming up," Addison Police Chief Bill Hayden said. "If you fail to do the same as a community, I think you have your head in the sand."

Hundreds of communities statewide already feed information into the Illinois CLEAR system that helps police track the movement of convicted gang members.

On the community level, however, police departments are collecting and sharing information that does not meet the same criteria required for entry into the statewide system, such as an arrest record for gang-related crimes.

The CLEAR system is a useful tool, but the information it contains is scant compared with what is available to the Police Department in West Chicago, Police Cmdr. Bruce Malkin said.

"One of the things that we lacked was gang intelligence, so we developed our own [database]," he said. "The Illinois ... system does not have the info that we need to get to our troops. It doesn't have the photographs, the people that this person travels with ... Basically, [it does not have] what is needed to prove up a case."

As major gangs draw alliances rather than weapons in the name of profit, West Chicago and other communities say the only way to know what gangs are doing is to know them well.

Police departments in the north and west suburbs have seen the Latin Kings become the prominent gang power, with the Gangster Disciples and the Sureno 13s coming in a distant second, according to the Chicago Crime Commission's "Gang Book," a 272-page report.

The Gangster Disciples and the Latin Kings have extensive networks south of the city, followed by the Vice Lords, Four Corner Hustlers and the 2-6s, according to the report.

Some gang members who have moved to the suburbs do not operate where they live, but their residency is noted, Naperville Police Capt. Kevin Kirk said.

"With the maturation of the gangs themselves, some of these gang members are older," he said. "They have small children, and they are looking for a place to live because they don't want them to grow up in gang territory."

Naperville reported increased gang crime, though Kirk said much of that is vandalism. The city reported it has between 75 and 100 gang members living there, according to the Chicago Crime Commission.

Riverdale was among the first suburban communities to begin collecting extensive data on gang members, Police Chief Pete Satriano said.

There is no statewide system available to collect the information needed to stay on top of gangs that seem to become more mobile every year, he said.

"We learned a valuable lesson as far as being able to share information with each other," Satriano said. The gangs "had a much better way of networking than police did years ago, which sounds crazy, but there was a real lack of information out there."

The database system that was developed in West Chicago has been distributed to as many as 50 other departments, Malkin said.

"There is no [direct] connection between the departments, and that is a barrier," he said. "But if we have a known gang member in West Chicago, I can tell you about his car, his known associates, when he was stopped, the reason he was stopped, who was with him that day, tattoos, the officer who made the stop--that kind of information that we need."

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### Gang-related crime grows in suburbs

Of 81 suburban police departments that took part in a survey about gang crime, 31 reported an increase from three years ago. Drug dealing was the most commonly reported gang-related crime.

Note: The Will County sheriff's office is the only county in the sixcounty area that did not participate in the study.

WHERE GANG CRIME HAS RISEN: As reported for 2003-05

### MOST COMMON GANG CRIMES

Number of suburban police departments reporting activity in 2005

Drug dealing	54
Theft	38
Burglary	36
Robbery	33
Aggravated assault	32
Auto theft	30
Homicide	15
Gun trafficking	14
Arson	12
Illegal immigration	10

Source: Chicago Crime Commission