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## **RESEARCHERS FIND THAT THE SAFER CITIES INITIATIVE IS EFFECTIVE AT REDUCING HOMELESS-RELATED CRIME**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla—In a study published in *Criminology & Public Policy* (CPP), researchers found that the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) is an effective strategy for reducing homeless-related crime without merely displacing crime to other areas. Professors Richard Berk and John MacDonald of the University of Pennsylvania examine 8 years of crime data from the City of Los Angeles. The SCI is a place-based policing intervention that was implemented in downtown Los Angeles' Skid Row. Skid Row was highly populated with homeless individuals who were frequently engaging in various forms of crime and disorder. The findings from this study provide support that geographically targeted police interventions can be useful tools to reduce crime without displacing it.

Regarding the policy implications raised by Berk and MacDonald's findings, Anthony Braga of Harvard University and Rutgers University, suggests that police departments in the United States need to be more refined in their approach to crime and disorder issues, including those associated with homelessness. Additionally, Dennis Culhane of the University of Pennsylvania, Alex Vitale of Brooklyn College, and Michael White of Arizona State University argue the best way to address the problematic concentration of homeless encampments is by recognizing that homelessness is not a crime, and by addressing the fundamental problems associated with homelessness. Specific strategies include providing indigent populations with community-based services and support to help find permanent housing and mental health treatment. Michael Rowe and Maria O'Connell of Yale University, Alex Piquero of Florida State University, and John Eck of the University of Cincinnati argue that homelessness and homeless-related crime involves attention to a wide range of policy practices that integrate social, economic, and criminal justice approaches.