



Greg Landsman
Councilmember

09/07/2021

MOTION

Investing in Community-Driven Safety Plans to Reduce Crime & Violence

In addition to expanded efforts to get illegal guns off our streets and other safety measures the City is pursuing, we hereby move that the Administration, working with its many capable and diverse partners, establish a renewed effort to support community-led violence reduction efforts.

In particular, **the Administration should re-establish the “Safe and Clean Fund” with a starting investment of \$500,000** in acknowledgment of the imminent crisis of gun violence and the importance of curbing it. This fund – the money for which could come out of this year’s carry-over budget or other relevant funding sources) – would support the execution of community-driven violence-reduction plans submitted to the City by neighborhood leaders*. In particular, place-based environmental improvement projects communities desperately need that are proven to reduce crime and nurture strong community-building (eg. improved lighting, security cameras, better signage, blight and litter control, etc.).

*In order to nurture the creation of such robust community-driven plans, the City should also provide the following additional support to neighborhoods as part of this renewed effort:

- **Update PIVOT¹ “micro-locations”** — described in the June 2017 report as “mak[ing] up only 1.4% of the city’s landmass, [but] a disproportionate amount of violence recurs in these places... 14.4% of all Part I crimes, 25.7% of Part I violent crimes, and 42.6% of shooting involving a victim occurred in these small geographic areas”² — with new data and information. The map of updated micro-locations should be shared with *all* neighborhoods, so communities have access to updated information as they build out community-led efforts. The City should assist and support neighborhoods in these efforts.
- **Provide SARA training³** to help neighborhoods build comprehensive plans to address ongoing issues contributing to crime and violence. The Administration should leverage current partnerships to provide this training.
- **Ensure follow-up and follow-through from the Administration and the City** in the form of coordinated support regarding any issues that emerge from the safety plans

¹ The assessments done on the original PIVOT efforts show effective, long-lasting gun violence reduction. The City should continue to lift up this proven strategy.

² <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/Research%20Center/CPD%20PIVOT%20Goldstein%20Submission.pdf>

³ SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) is the Collaborative’s approach to problem-solving crime. It is intended to reduce crime and improve the quality of life for its citizens by facilitating community work and coalition-building between communities and the police, to effectively address crime, disorder, and the fear of crime in communities.



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submitted. This could include traffic calming efforts, curbing illegal dumping, temporary street closures for community events, police visibility, and more.

- **Confirm City partners' commitment to providing additional support to neighborhoods** on the issue of crime and violence reduction. Areas of additional coordinated support could include youth jobs and activities, mentoring, child care, career training opportunities, community events, support services, and more.

Due to the urgent nature of Cincinnati's gun violence crisis, we ask that the Administration report back to the Mayor and Council within 30 days as to how best to structure, fund, administer, and execute these new efforts, with the ultimate aim of most effectively providing support to communities who need it.

STATEMENT

One of the most effective ways to achieve long-lasting crime reduction is to not just listen and engage with the communities most impacted, but *follow their lead*; they will have the most nuanced and genuine understanding of what is needed.

In 2003, Cincinnati recognized the need for community-led responses to violence by establishing a "Safe and Clean Fund" to support and encourage community-based and community-initiated efforts aimed at improving neighborhood livability. Research proves that visible signs of disinvestment in neighborhoods lead to higher levels of crime, locking certain neighborhoods into a vicious cycle of poverty and disorder.

In recognition of this, we should re-establish the "The Safe and Clean Fund" with a starting investment of \$500,000 to financially support community-driven violence-reduction plans submitted to the City. Additionally, we should provide neighborhoods with updated data and information, and relevant training that will help support the creation of community-led plans, and commit to coordinated support from the City and partners to ensure plans are executed.

We must act now to apply more people, energy, attention, and funding to the needs identified by the communities most affected by gun violence in our city.

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APPENDIX

THE FACTS:

The idea that increasing neighborhood livability through neighborhood-level problem solving approaches is effective at reducing crime is not a new discovery. It has been proven time and time again that visible signs of disinvestment in neighborhoods leads to higher levels of crime, and that this often locks certain neighborhoods into a vicious cycle of poverty and disorder.

- The demolition of vacant and abandoned buildings in Detroit was associated with an 11% reduction in gun assaults.⁴
- One 4-year study on an unnamed city in the Midwest found that the areas with vacant lots maintained through a City blight-reduction program had nearly 40% fewer assaults and violent crimes than those with unmaintained vacant, abandoned lots.⁵
- After vacant lots in high-poverty areas of Philadelphia were mowed, graded, or otherwise treated, gun violence dropped by 29%; researchers concluded that were the same treatments applied to vacant lots citywide, Philadelphia could expect to record 350 fewer shootings each year.⁶ In that same study, they also found a 22% decrease in burglaries, a 30% drop in noise complaints and illegal dumping, a 58% increase in residents reporting fewer security concerns when leaving their homes, and more than 3/4 of residents saying they significantly increased use of their outside spaces for relaxing and socializing.⁷
- In Chicago, researchers found that increased street lighting reduced outdoor nighttime felony crimes like murder, robbery, property damage, and aggravated assault by approximately 36%, and overall crime by 4%.⁸
- Improvements to lighting not only act as a situational deterrent to crime, but can also improve local community cohesion and pride, which in turn increases the willingness of residents to intervene in crime or cooperate with the police.⁹ Some researchers estimated the benefit-to-cost ratio of neighborhood street lighting upgrades to abate crime at about 4 to 1.¹⁰

Importantly, these studies do not find that the violence gets displaced to other neighborhoods — rather, it just sincerely decreases, across the board. This all goes to show that community-led, quick, inexpensive environmental-based tactics can substantially decrease violence in neighborhoods, particularly when addressed block by block. Furthermore, this approach yields a high return on investment — both economically and at a

⁴ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10865-019-00031-6>

⁵ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30216464/>

⁶ <https://www.pnas.org/content/115/12/2946>

⁷ <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/cleaning-vacant-lots-makes-neighborhoods-safer>

⁸ <https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/projects/crime-lights-study>

⁹ <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p156-pub.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2019/5/9/how-something-as-small-as-street-lights-can-reduce-crime>

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public-health level — while not displacing long-term residents, unlike some other costlier methods unintentionally do.¹¹

¹¹ <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/cleaning-vacant-lots-makes-neighborhoods-safer>