



NOLA CITY COUNCIL

The legislative branch of city government

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Report on Community Driven Solutions to Crime Prevention and Public Safety

A safe New Orleans is a vision we all share, and many are working to ensure that this vision becomes a reality. As your councilmember, it is very important for me to get your point of view on the issue of crime, because I understand that it is impossible to craft meaningful solutions without your input. To this end, I held four town hall meetings across District C on the subject of crime. The following report categorizes and details your comments. Throughout my time in office, I plan to continue this conversation and bring experts into the discussion so that we can implement best practices as we move forward and make the changes you are demanding.

New Orleans continues to be plagued by crime and our citizens are living in fear. In 2014 so far, there have been 113 homicides and more than 2,600 violent crimes city-wide. In June, we experienced a high profile shooting on Bourbon Street that garnered national attention. Since then, we've experienced violent crimes and murders in the quadruple digits throughout the District and the City. Many of the victims and perpetrators of crime in this City as well as around the country are between the ages of 16 and 25 years old. This is an epidemic that is affecting the daily lives of our citizens and the growth potential of New Orleans.

As the City's economic boom escalates, we need a multi-faceted, innovative and inclusive approach to crime prevention. We must ensure that the longtime residents are receiving a share of the benefits of our economy's growth, and are not further marginalized, as this

Town Hall Meetings

8th Police District:

July 9, 2014 @ St. Jude
Community Center for
French Quarter & Tremé

8th District Contact Info:

Comm. Jeffrey H. Walls
Quality of Life Officers
David Liang & Shereese
Harper
CoCo Sgt. Jonette Williams
334 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA 70117
(504) 658-6080

5th Police District:

July 21, 2013 @ Holy Angels
for Bywater & Marigny
August 6, 2014 @ Our Lady
Star of the Sea for St. Roch

5th District Contact Info:

Comm. Christopher D.
Goodley
Quality of Life Officers
Vitoria Guidry & Dwight
Alcorn
CoCo Sgt. Roderick Franklin
3900 North Claiborne
New Orleans, LA 70117
(504) 658-6050

4th Police District:

August 5, 2014 @ Algiers
Regional Library for Algiers

4th District Contact Info:

Comm. Shaun Ferguson
Quality of Life Officer Alvin
Walton
CoCo Sgt. Lawrence Gates
2405 Sanctuary Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70114
(504) 658-6040

contributes to criminal activity. I am committed to working with the residents, business owners and experts, both local and across the country, to identify the causes of this violence and come up with solutions. I am concerned that in spite of our progress, we are letting opportunities slip away-- opportunities for economic development, opportunities to create possibilities for young people, and opportunities to save families. We can't police ourselves out of this!

I have a four point plan to address the crime problem in District C: (1) Receive public comments; (2) Report on community concerns; (3) Meet with experts in criminal justice, mental health, education, economic development and other diverse areas to identify policies that will help to work with the Mayor and other legislators to prevent and reduce crime; and (4) Implement policy recommendations.

The first part of the plan was implemented this summer when I hosted a series of town hall meetings to receive public comment. The second step is the issuance of this report, which is a summary of issues raised at those meetings. Third, I will host a crime forum in Fall 2015 with local and national experts to identify and discuss innovative, holistic and systematic crime reduction and prevention strategies. Finally, based on the findings and recommendations of the forum, I will work with the City Council and Administration to implement the necessary and appropriate policies.

Public Comment

Each of the town hall meetings held throughout the district to receive public comment about the neighborhoods' safety concerns was recorded, and my staff took detailed notes. Hundreds of community members attended and registered their concerns. Members of the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) and other criminal justice agencies were also in attendance to learn more about

citizen concerns and to provide information about programs currently in place and answer questions. This report provides a summary of the community's concerns and a brief overview of the current policies.

Community Concerns

Members of the public expressed a broad range of concerns falling into the following categories:

Police staffing and deployment:

Residents felt that community policing — more “boots on the streets”(not in cars)— deters crime and facilitates a more positive relationship with police. Suggestions included the need to increase hiring and retention through pay increases and use of state police within Orleans Parish to conduct traffic enforcement to free more officers to patrol the streets.

Access to and the sufficiency of police services:

There was an expressed interest in increasing communication with citizens and a more visible district station. Residents reported poor response times and confusion over the border between Algiers and Jefferson Parish.

Prevention: Residents of all parts of District C reported a desire to see more measures taken to prevent crime. Residents suggested the expansion of use of crime cameras, restoration of streetlights, an increase in street patrols, and the practice of creating a neighborhood patrol program so officers and residents get to know each other and officers are more able to know when someone does not belong in the area. There is also a broad desire to reduce recidivism through the use of diversion programs, jobs, education, and limited bond opportunities. Concerns regarding the safety of children while waiting for their school buses were also brought up along with a desire to see the truancy program expanded.

Guns & Gangs: The prevalence of gun and gang violence was a widely vocalized concern. Residents reported hearing shootings and finding bullets in parked cars. They



also suggested that in order to combat gang violence the police should go after the homeowners of known gang residences.

Quality of Life Lastly, concerns about quality of life in District C were prevalent. The most common concerns regarded sidewalk obstructions, vandalism, drug dealing and vagrancy.

Current and Planned Policies

A major challenge to the police force is low numbers after years of having a hiring freeze coupled with high attrition rates. As of October 2014, we have a new Police Chief, Lt. Michael Harrison and recruitment is in full swing. Pay raises and promotions have also been implemented in 2014.

The December 2014 class graduated twenty-six recruits. Twenty-nine additional recruits are expected in 2015 from the second class and a third training class is expected to start before the end of the year. To date, 622 patrol officers have been promoted and the City Council recently approved a 5% pay increase for 2015. The department has also identified areas where officers can be replaced by civilians in order to allow those officers to patrol the streets. The department is using 1,200 hours of overtime per week for hotspots and calls for services. As the police force grows, the department has committed to more time for officers to spend on proactive patrols and foot and bicycle patrols.

Other recent policies are the full implementation of body cameras to increase accountability and facilitate community relations. The department also budgeted \$2.4 million in overtime pay to focus on crime hot spots in each police district. There are two hundred new police cars and 100 more planned in 2015. The City Council voted to remove the requirement that new police officers live in the city and the Civil Service Commission agreed to exempt applicants with military experience, including in the National Guard or Reserve, from the 60 hours of college credit requirement. The NOPD has also loosened its restriction on visible tattoos.

The District Attorney's office reports successful use of a diversion program, and is working with the police to clear thirty cold cases and to process five hundred rape kits. Currently eighty-five percent of cases from the police are accepted, which is up from fifty percent from previous years. Ninety-five percent of homicide arrests result in charges filed. Since 2012, the gang unit has been successful in dismantling 10 gangs

and the district attorney has arrested 103 individuals, many who are facing life sentences.

Despite these efforts, the reality is that the police force has continued to lose an average of 117.8 officers annually since 2010. At present, there are roughly 96 detective vacancies and 60 vacancies in the Investigation Services Bureau. We also continue to see systemic failures within the department, such as the recent revelations related to the Sex Crimes Unit in spite of the fact that the consent decree has been in place for two years. Until the numbers are adequate to address the needs, and the culture is reformed, short term as well as long term solutions are needed.

This summer, through November 1st, the State assigned additional State Troopers to assist in the French Quarter. They did a great job and helped create a sense of security. The Mayor and the Council urged the State to permanently assign State Troopers to New Orleans, but there has been no commitment to date.

The Council also voted to approve an interim measure to establish the NOLA Patrol in the French Quarter using independent funds generated from a self-assessment by the hotel-motel industry. The French Quarter Business League is also contributing to a private fund to hire details to patrol Bourbon Street. The NOLA Patrol will go into effect in 2015. Both of these measures are expected to relieve NOPD officers to address higher level criminal activity in the French Quarter and beyond.

Additionally, the Council increased the budget for the Department of Health to improve access to behavioral health services, which should also lead to a reduction in violent crimes.

Recommendations for Policy Solutions

Now that we have taken the steps to hear the community's concerns and report on them, my staff and I will engage the experts to identify programs and best practices across the country. It is important to remember that we cannot police our way out of

NOPD 2014 Metrics

622 promotions

1,200 hours of overtime per week for hotspots and calls for service

5% pay raise

Interim Measures

French Quarter Improvement Fund

NolaPatrol

French Quarter Business League Security Details

Department of Health Behavioral health services

Nola for Life

this current situation. Our long term goals need to ensure that our children succeed through education and job opportunities, because when children succeed and become productive members of society, everybody succeeds. The overwhelming consensus is that the police should be a part of our communities and our youth should grow up going to good, safe schools with strong employment prospects. It is imperative that our citizens have every opportunity to be productive contributors to our society. There are so many positive things about District C and the entire City. We are working toward the day when everyone is able to benefit from what is good about New Orleans.

Some of the areas we will be looking at are (1) Greater community policing; (2) Continuing to enforce the consent decree; (3) Fully funding and staffing NOPD with 1,500 officers; (4) Increasing the starting pay for new police recruits; (5) Improving and expanding the Reserve NOPD Division and allowing them to handle routine traffic accident and non-emergency calls; (6) Establishing more coordinated and regional cooperation between NOPD and other local law enforcement agencies; (7) Creating a state-of-the-art Regional Crime Lab and Law Enforcement Training Academy; and (8) Sustainable funding for the Independent Police Monitor.

I welcome your continued input on this issue. Please send your comments to districtC@nola.gov.

Resources

New Orleans Police Community Advisory Board rjbolling@nola.gov

Citizen's Police Academy sylbrown@nola.gov

COMSTAT meetings

***4th District 1st Monday** @APAC, 3014 Holiday Dr. contact: 504-658-6040

***5th District Every Tuesday, 1:00 PM** @ 3900 N. Claiborne contact: 658-6050; **NONPACC meetings 2nd Wednesday @ 6:00 PM**

***8th District Weekly on Tuesdays** @ Royal Sonesta Hotel - The Bourbon Room, 300 Bourbon St. contact: Sgt. Jonette Williams jrwilliams@nola.gov 658-6080