

**MAYOR CAVALIER JOHNSON**

# **A Public Safety Strategy for Milwaukee**

**January 12, 2022**

**v1.1**

## INTRODUCTION

Milwaukee is at a critical junction. As Mayor, I am committed to the leadership and dedication needed to move this city from public safety crisis to security and prosperity. After five years of decreasing violence we have broken homicide records in two consecutive years. Residents deserve to feel safe. As a parent and as a life-long Milwaukeean, I am committed to turning the tide on violent crime and giving our families and communities the safety, security, and healing we deserve. Violence isn't a new issue for me, it is something I have continued to speak out against and something that is personal to me and my family.

First and foremost, I believe too many city residents are able to illegally obtain guns, and too many are resolving conflicts with bullets. Auto thefts continue at alarming rates and not enough attention has been dedicated publicly to our city's overdose and illegal drug use issues.

As Mayor, I am tackling these challenges head on. I am committed to improving the health and safety of our community by reducing violence, supporting social services which address the root causes, and wellness programs which promote community healing. To accomplish my vision for a safe and prosperous Milwaukee I will build upon my work with governmental partners, community-based organizations, the private sector, and most importantly, neighbors and community members. I will continue to work with stakeholders to build on successful strategies to bring folks together to move the needle on gun violence.

The impact of violent crime is far-reaching and any one life lost equates to generational trauma felt by many more people connected to the victim. This is not a problem that enforcement alone can solve, we must also equitably invest in prevention and healing. I want to thank Director Holliman and her team at the Office of Violence Prevention for their tireless work to address violence before it happens. I commit to equitably investing in this work and building on the framework and goals outlined in the Blueprint for Peace.

But let's not pretend there is a simple solution. Reducing crime will take a comprehensive, multi-faceted, neighborhood-level approach. As with any complex problem, there is no simple antidote to the disease of violence in our city. We aren't going to choose one approach over another - we are going to do *everything* we need to in order to move us towards long-term, sustained, improvements. Moving the needle on community violence won't be easy, it will take a concerted amount of time, effort, and leadership. I am ready to take on that commitment.

We can also improve police-community relations to make us safer and stronger. I want to thank Chief Jeffery Norman, who has demonstrated time and time again a sincere commitment to community engagement. He is committed to policing the right way, and has been responsive to the needs of residents. And now, while we are in a crisis of violence and unsafe neighborhoods and streets, I am committed to maintaining our sworn strength despite very real budget constraints. We are going to need the State's partnership on this to keep us strong and safe.

Below, I lay out my three part comprehensive priorities to reduce violence and ensure safety:

1. Law Enforcement – Continue investments in law enforcement and partner with the Chief and MPD leadership, the rank and file officers who put their lives on the line every day, and the community to build trust.
2. Community Healing – Address the root cause of violence and build up our communities through implementation of the Blueprint for Peace.
3. Neighborhood-level Investments – Engage community members in sustaining safer neighborhoods and invest in upstream crime prevention.

This is just the beginning. I look forward to working with a broad coalition of residents and stakeholders to implement and continue this work. Please contact [k.kenney@milwaukee.gov](mailto:k.kenney@milwaukee.gov) to get involved.

**-MAYOR CAVALIER JOHNSON**  
***January 12, 2022***

## A RECORD OF TAKING ACTION

### Cavalier Johnson's record as Council President:

- I championed approval of a federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant which provides \$10 million in funding for 30 additional officers over the next three years.
- I sponsored and passed a 2022 budget amendment to hire 195 new police officers to maintain the city's sworn officer strength.
- I supported funding for additional Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) investigators committed to increasing stolen vehicle clearance rates.
- I advocated for the Fire and Police Commission (FPC) to update MPD Standard Operating procedures in compliance with "8 Can't Wait" to improve resident and officer safety in police interactions. The Milwaukee Police Department is now in full compliance with the eight policies in the campaign shown to reduce violent interactions with law enforcement.
- I sponsored and passed \$3 million in additional funding for the Office of Violence Prevention to expand 414LIFE violence interruption into Milwaukee's southside.
- I authored successful resolutions urging the FPC to implement an emotional intelligence and cultural competency framework and assessment criteria to be included alongside all MPD training.
- I passed a resolution urging the FPC to collaborate with MPD to engage with community leaders to rebuild trust and discuss community-oriented strategies to address local civil unrest.
- I passed legislation urging the FPC to redouble recruitment efforts within Milwaukee neighborhoods so that the Fire and Police Departments are more diverse and reflective of the communities that they serve.
- I pledged increased funding to double clinical staffing to expand Crisis Assessment Response teams (CART), which dispatch licensed clinical mental health care workers with MPD officers on mental health care calls for service.

- According to the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division, 80% of the time, CART is able to provide an outcome that connects residents with resources or voluntary services instead of emergency mental health detention.
- I appointed members to the Community Collaborative Commission (CCC) to increase policing accountability and improve police-community relations.
- I initiated an audit of FPC internal processes and procedures following the disciplinary action taken against former Chief Morales.
  - This resulted in process improvements to increase taxpayer transparency and accountability.
- I sustained advocacy for gun safety and common-sense gun laws that protect Second Amendment rights while also keeping illegal firearms off the street.
- I partnered with Common Ground to join a consortium of cities to advocate for and test firearms with increased safety technology.

## ENFORCING THE LAW

**As Mayor, I will continue to partner with Chief Norman and the Milwaukee Police Department to ensure policing that aligns with community values and prioritizes community engagement, while I commit to maintaining sworn officer strength.**

**I will take the following actions around law enforcement:**

- Collaborate with the FPC and MPD Chief Jeffrey Norman to ensure Community Oriented Policing is the foundation of Milwaukee's policing strategy.
  - Support the work of the Community Policing Task force partnership between MPD and the CCC to develop community-centered updates to MPD's Community Policing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- Bolster the Fire and Police Commission to its full capacity of 9 members, those with fire and police experience.
- Maintain average sworn strength levels despite budgetary constraints through the following approaches:
  - Supporting Chief Norman's ongoing commitment to increased civilianization by incorporating recommendations from an MPD staffing analysis currently being conducted.
  - Working hand in hand with legislators in Madison to ensure continued and sustainable investments in the Milwaukee Police Department.
  - Increased utilization of Community Service Officers (CSOs) within MPD. These unarmed trained officers can handle many non-emergency police issues and free up sworn officers to improve response times and increase sworn officer visibility on the streets.
- Partner with Chief Norman to bring more MPD outreach activities into police districts, schools, and communities.
- Increase investment to curb reckless driving and stolen vehicles. See my STAND for safer streets plan.
- Work with FPC, MPD leadership, and community members to develop recruit training and professional development for officers that reflect our shared expectations and ensure constitutional policing.

- This includes additional training around diversity, cultural sensitivity, use of force, mental illness for MPD and Milwaukee Fire Department (MFD) staff and new hires.
- Work with the Fire and Police Commission to update recruitment and retention plans for police and fire departments to sustain increased diversity.
- Upgrade MPD's training and professional development facilities and standards.
- Partner with Republican legislators in Madison to:
  - Prevent residents convicted of domestic violence from possessing a firearm, expand penalties around illegal straw gun purchases, and tighten oversight of unregulated gun sales.
  - Explore reforms to the cash bail system to ensure those residents who pose the greatest risk to the community are held accountable and that low risk residents don't face inequitable financial burdens to release.
- Explore creative ways to fund crime prevention in partnership with Milwaukee County such as reinvesting certain court mandated fees back into the community.
- Partner with the MPD and the FPC to hire retired homicide detectives to help increase clearance rates.
- Commit resources to ensure continued progress in reaching benchmarks towards full compliance with the Collins Settlement agreement for constitutional policing within MPD, FPC and the City Attorney's office.
  - We must make certain our policing efforts are met with community support and are done while protecting the rights and well-being of all persons in our community.
  - This includes continued support for the work of the resident-led Community Collaborative Commission in police-community relations and equitable policing.

## PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALING

**As Mayor, I commit to equitably investing in the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) by supporting the largest ever infusion of resources to promote community healing and stop violence before it starts.**

**I will take the following actions to promote community healing:**

- Invest \$5.5 million additional dollars in the Office of Violence Prevention as a part of the second tranche of federal American Rescue Plan Act funding. This funding will be used to:
  - Provide grants to community based organizations to support youth engagement and violence prevention programming utilizing the strategies in the Blueprint for Peace.
  - Increase 414 LIFE's capacity to interrupt retaliatory violence given the significant increase in shootings. This includes supporting the southside expansion and overall increased capacity.
  - Expand implementation of Blueprint for Peace in 3 additional targeted neighborhoods.
  - Support expanded internal capacity to manage grants, evaluate programming, and expand violence prevention efforts. This includes expanded efforts around suicide, substance abuse, and overdose prevention.
  - Scale up response to community crises in addition to promotion of healing and wellness-related programming.
  
- Elevate the Director of the Office of Violence Prevention to a member of the Mayor's cabinet.
  - This ensures that the work of OVP is held in the same regard as other critical city functions.
  
- Work with Milwaukee County to secure State and private funding to further expand CART mental health services and partner with the County's new mental health hospital.
  
- Ensure the \$8 million to the Office of Violence Prevention in state grants is utilized on evidence-informed strategies to reduce crime by promoting wellness and healing.



- Utilize \$22 million in Opioid Settlement funds to expand evidence-based strategies to prevent substance abuse and overdose.
  - This includes expanding the Mobile Overdose Response Initiative (MORI) within MFD to connect residents with substance use treatment following an overdose.
- Support Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) programs within the Milwaukee Fire Department.
- Partner with federal lawmakers to renew the bipartisan Violence Against Women Act which includes provisions to support culturally sensitive programs for communities of color including tribes, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Support expansion of the Credible Messengers program for justice-involved youth and the trauma response team in partnership with Milwaukee County.
- Promote safe and responsible gun ownership through increased distribution of gun locks and public education efforts including suicide prevention.

## SUPPORTING NEIGHBORHOODS

**As Mayor, I will strengthen community partnerships and neighborhood-level approaches to address the root causes of violence. This includes a visionary proposal to locate Municipal Court within the community and co-locating wrap-around services.**

**I will take the following actions to support neighborhood-level approaches:**

- Invest in environmental design strategies to hinder crime and foster community engagement.
  - Ensure the timely upgrade for \$10 million in street lighting infrastructure while exploring innovative avenues to update equipment in a sustainable manner. Reliable street lighting means deterred crime in our community.
- Work with the Medical College of Wisconsin, government partners, and city departments to elevate the work of VRPHAST and implement evidence-based strategies to address community violence.
- Sustain community efforts to increase resident engagement with law enforcement around violent crime to increase clearance rates and solve crimes. This includes expanding opportunities for anonymous reporting to law enforcement without fear of retaliation.
- Transform the City's Municipal Court into a Community Court model to co-locate resources within the court system for wrap-around support to address the root causes of crime.
  - This proposal would include connecting residences on-site to housing resources, community service opportunities, substance abuse treatment, amongst others.
  - The goal of this proposal would be to partner with other court systems to help leverage impact. The Municipal Court building would be relocated into the communities that it serves.
- Launch a vacant lot beautification program in partnership with neighbors.
- Enhance youth engagement around summer jobs including expanding Earn and Learn employment opportunities.

- Implement Complete Streets treatments funded by ARPA to reduce reckless driving. See my STAND for Safer Streets plan.
- Create a plan in partnership with applicable city departments to map alcohol license density in neighborhoods hardest hit by violent crime.
- Increase access to positive and accessible activities for youth and young adults.
- Increase resources for parents and early childhood education including:
  - \$1 million investment in the Triple P positive parenting program through Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, Triple P, and the Parenting Network.
  - Support the work of the City’s fatherhood initiatives with an emphasis on the well-being of children and families.
  - Bolster initiatives and partnerships through the Office of Early Childhood Education in the Mayor’s office.
- Support organizations which provide career pathways for residents with criminal records.
- To solve crime, we need increased access to jobs and economic mobility. Look out for my forthcoming economic development and jobs plan.