



The recent rise in gun violence is both alarming and devastating. The harm we are witnessing daily in our community to immediate victims, their families and surrounding neighbors requires action. While formal research with trusted partners and time will reveal the reason why—we can assume our backdrop of economic and racial disparities compounded by the pandemic, and its consequences, are contributing factors: systemic racism, growing economic inequities, the shuttering of schools, recreation activities and sports, and required physical distancing—which, for some, has caused social isolation and mental health impacts.

The daily instability many communities experience and face are real and cannot be ignored. We want to acknowledge and appreciate the deep concern and calls for action raised by numerous community groups, leaders, and activists to lift up the urgency of this crisis. For decades, these advocates (including our very own Council colleague) have engaged in calls for human-centered change and action in our community safety system.

Proposal

There is agreement among the majority of Council that conversations focused on increased funding for police engagement is the wrong place to start. We, as a Council, must build a timeline and plan to transform our community safety system into one that is right for Portland—then resource and implement a plan co-created with community.

We also recognize there is urgency to address the gun violence crisis. As such, we must commit to immediate/ short-term systemic strategies that will set the foundation for the long-term, sustainable, and community-centered solutions. We aim to schedule a Work Session in early April so Council can identify concrete long-term solutions to build upon this proposal. **Our actions as Council must be in alignment with our goal of community safety transformation if we are to build real trust with the communities and families impacted by gun violence and the culturally specific partners trusted by these impacted communities.**

We propose the following actions to directly address the rise in gun violence and to collaboratively make progress on a plan for community safety transformation:

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE (1-3 WEEKS)

- 1. Immediately direct the Community Safety Director to lead the gun violence response and community safety plan development, and all related external communications.**

The City's new Community Safety Director starts on April 1st. This position was created to provide greater coordination across the City's public safety bureaus and to guide systemic change. We believe the new Director should immediately be directed to lead the collaborative effort to 1) develop, implement, and evaluate the overall community safety plan in collaboration with community-based partners dedicated on matters pertaining to community safety, 2) be in charge of data collection, specifically on gun violence work of PPB and our multi-jurisdictional partners, 3) evaluate whether any budget requests from safety bureaus should move forward, and 4) serve as the lead spokesperson for media and external communications with the community.

Council must strive to set the Community Safety Director, Office of Violence Prevention Director, and the Portland Police Chief up for success to the greatest extent possible. We also must clearly define their respective roles in relation to other jurisdictions and the public and focus on building and sustaining relationships.

- 2. Resource and activate a network of trusted prevention and intervention partners currently on the ground.**

Immediately allocate \$3.5 million dollars—for one year—directly to organizations working with the communities impacted by gun violence and have an established partnership with the city. These organizations include but are not limited to current OVP contractors. These immediate allocations must be different from their current contracts and provide as much flexibility to our partners as possible. Each grant may vary in ranges base on the number served.

These targeted investments should be facilitated through the Office of Management and Finance. The new Community Safety Director will oversee the Office of Violence Prevention management of the partner contracts, intervention, and workforce contractors.

We also recommend investing \$600K to build capacity among small/emerging contractors (i.e. Word Is Bond, Redstone Collective)—those without current City contracts—who work with individuals and families in neighborhoods and communities where incidents of gun violence are occurring.

Investments should resource the following activities:

- Intervention case management;
- Flexible funds for wraparound support;
- Aftercare support funds for families of victims; and
- Capacity building in small contractors to provide services.

3. Immediately expand and enhance the Park Ranger Program to increase patrols in all quadrants of the city from May-December 2021.

Park Rangers are goodwill ambassadors and provide a positive, unarmed community safety presence in Portland's parks and surrounding neighborhoods. They help solve park problems and help protect natural and cultural resources. Park Rangers are not sworn law enforcement officers but still maintain the authority to enforce Title 20, the city code related to park rule violations. Park Rangers use a combination of education and positive engagement to reduce harm to park resources and the visitor experience. When voluntary compliance cannot be gained, exclusions or ejections may be used, as well as civil penalties in limited cases.

We propose investing \$1.4 million to expand Park Ranger services from May to December of this fiscal year—resulting in the activation of 24 FTE to patrol 12,000 acres of city park land and surrounding areas during peak season--seven days a week, including graveyard shifts.

4. Develop clear agreements among Violence Prevention/intervention contractors and the Portland Police Bureau to promote clarity of purpose, collaboration, and learning.

We recommend directing the violence prevention/intervention contractors and the Portland Police Bureau to work together to define areas of distinction, establish standards of collaboration and safety protocols where areas of intersection occur, and create space for officers to truly develop an understanding of, and respect for, the role of community outreach.

5. Immediately direct police bureau to realign internal resources to create 6 additional assault investigative detectives and 1 sergeant.

This is a necessary reallocation within the bureau to ensure maximum investigative capacity and reflects the priority of Council to investigate gun shootings and gun violence thoroughly. We believe that the direction PPB should take in hiring must reflect new talent with diverse cultural experiences and understanding.

Therefore, a program that focuses on hiring retired officers is not the solution. Lastly, we highly encourage PPB to coordinate with Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt in these investigations. As the top law enforcement official in our region and with a philosophy centered in community, we must do what we can to support his efforts in investigating and prosecuting these cases.

6. Create a Space for Government and Community Resource and Program Coordination.

The City will not be successful in acting alone and needs to coordinate our approach with government and community leaders for both transparency and accountability within our system. This effort will also be regional in nature to ensure impacted community members are supported in a seamless and coordinated manner and to ensure maximum amount of leveraged coordination and resources. This table must include trusted community partners that will develop a long-standing strategy with the goals of sharing information, braiding, and leveraging resources, and monitoring and reporting outcomes and sharing learnings for continuous improvement.

Representatives will include at minimum:

- 3 members on Portland City Council (at least)
- Multnomah County Chair, Deborah Kafoury + 1 Commissioner (or designee)
- Multnomah County District Attorney, Mike Schmidt
- Multnomah County Sheriff, Mike Reese
- Portland Police Chief, Chuck Lovell
- 1-2 member from Gresham City Council (at least)
- Portland Office of Violence Prevention
- Multnomah County Health Department
- Multnomah County Department of Community Justice
- Prevention and intervention CBO providers

LONG-STANDING RESPONSE (1-3 months)

7. Establish clear timeline to develop/make progress on a Council-driven comprehensive community safety transformation plan (aligned with short term gun violence plan.)

Prioritize a series of Work Sessions led by the Community Safety Office to make progress on a Council-driven gun violence response plan. Hire a trauma-informed consultant team to facilitate and co-create-with council and the new coordinating table and community - a written plan with timelines, actions steps and measures of success. This includes making progress in our Office of Management and Finance-identified Workgroups. We must also establish and execute a plan for sharing regular reports to the public.

8. Reevaluate gun violence prevention strategies and increase investments in partners.

Council must co-create a core model of outreach/case management with our impacted individuals, community-based partners, and with local experts on the frontline. We recommend convening the Office of Violence Prevention and other intervention contractors to determine what practices and strategies work to curb gun violence, promote positive identity development, family stability and deepen engagement. This could be convened and/or included within the working scope of the multi-jurisdictional table referenced above.

Additional actions include:

- Evaluate existing contracts with community-based organizations and engage them in solutions.
- Examine financial resources and determine if it's enough for desired outcomes, which is to focus on the root causes of violence, as well as working with trusted partners doing intervention.
- Explore contracting vehicle/partnerships (Office of Violence Prevention, Health, City-County, other).
- Expand contractors by building capacity, pilot programs and lateral partnerships.

9. Build in Transparency and Accountability at the City Council Level.

We propose setting a reporting schedule for progress made on the new Community Safety plan by the new Community Safety Director. The Portland Police Bureau should present on Enhanced Community Safety Team and gun violence

prevention and activity on a quarterly basis to Council—including data. Council will commit to progress on the Council-endorsed plan provide quarterly reports that are easily accessible to the community.

10. Expand reporting on gun violence

Our offices are also interested in enhancing the City’s transparency of data sharing on gun violence to include demographic data where possible, so the community has accessible information about the extent of this epidemic. The new Community Safety Director will support media and external communication with the community and work closely with other jurisdictions to create a dashboard available to the public.

Conclusion

Overwhelmingly, the community has asked for thoughtful, considered, and proactive leadership--and they deserve no less. This Council cannot prioritize any new investments to the Portland Police Bureau or the Office of Violence Prevention until we develop a comprehensive plan and timeline to build a community-centered safety system that is right for Portland and co-led by the community. Once we have that vision, we will evaluate for its cost.

We believe urgent matters should be approached collaboratively. We also feel strongly that Council must be aligned to actualize our goals for transformation. We expect action on this proposal to occur immediately, with short term plans to be established by no later than April 30, 2021.