Violence Prevention Commission
April Quarterly Meeting
SUPPORT VICTIMS. BUILD TRUST. ENGAGE COMMUNITIES.

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week | April 18–24, 2021
Today’s Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Comments from Mayor Tishaura Jones’s Chief of Staff
- VPC/Wash U Study of Vacancy & Crime
- Policy Updates
- MU Extension Infographics
- Youth Safe Spaces Taskforce Update
- Municipal Engagement Taskforce Update
- Service Delivery Committee Home Repair Program
- Communications & Cobranding Committee Update
- Cure Violence Update
- Partner Announcements
- Quarterly Meeting Evaluation
Mayor Tishaura Jones’s Chief of Staff
Jared Boyd
Assessing the Differential Impact of Vacancy on Criminal Violence in the City of St. Louis, MO

Branson Fox¹, Anne Trolard¹, Mason Simmons¹, Jessica E. Meyers², and Matt Vogel³
Vacancy and Violence
Risk Terrain Modeling in the City of St. Louis
“The determinants of violence are multiple, complex, and often interrelated. A successful strategy must include the participation of a broad group of individuals and a range of activities that link with, build upon, and add value to each other.”

-Preventing Violence: A Primer by Prevention Institute
Adapted from: Healthy People 2020
Purpose

• Support and partner with existing organizations and align with ongoing work to prevent violence in St. Louis (*shared research agenda, local evidence base*)

• Apply a public health lens to violence with a focus on root causes, including concentrated disadvantage, systemic racism, and environmental risk factors
Purpose

Does vacancy contribute to criminal violence in the City of St. Louis?

Does the relationship differ in the north versus south?
The Team

- Branson Fox - Institute for Public Health, WUSTL
- Jessica Meyers - St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission
- Mason Simmons - Institute for Public Health, WUSTL
- Anne Trolard - Institute for Public Health, WUSTL
- Matt Vogel - School of Criminal Justice, University of Albany
Research has found that vacancy is related to violent crime

- In Baton Rouge, LA, homicides clustered around vacant properties\(^1\)
- In Philadelphia there were significant reductions in crime around vacant properties that had been restored compared to those that remained blighted\(^2\)

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Vacancy in the City of St. Louis
Vacancy in the City of St. Louis

18941 vacant lots
• 81% north

6398 vacant buildings
• 84% north
Risk Terrain Modeling
What Places are Higher Risk for Violent Crime?

- Vacant Lots and Buildings
- Bars & Liquor Stores
- Convenience & Grocery Stores
- ATMs
- Public Housing
- LIHTC
- Parks
- Metro Stops
- Schools

- Banks/Credit Unions
- Check Cashing Establishments
- Restaurants
- Motels/Hotels
- Pawn Shops
- Laundromats
- Gas Stations
- Auto Mechanics
- Rec Centers
- Scrap Yards
Risk Terrain Modeling

Homicides

Vacant Lots

Convenience Stores
Homicide
Convenience Store
Vacant Lots
Risk is Multiplied By Each Risk Factor
## Highlighted Results - Homicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Relative Risk Value</th>
<th>North RRV</th>
<th>South RRV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Buildings</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Housing</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATMs</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Lots</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not Significant
Significant relative risk values for homicide

- **VACANT BUILDINGS**: 4.6 (RRV), 2.1 (RRV North), 3.1 (RRV South)
- **PUBLIC HOUSING**: 4.6 (RRV), 6.7 (RRV North), 0 (RRV South)
- **ATMS**: 4.5 (RRV), 4.4 (RRV North), 2.8 (RRV South)
- **VACANT LOTS**: 4 (RRV), 10.6 (RRV North), 2.2 (RRV South)
### Results - Aggravated Assault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Relative Risk Value</th>
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<th>South RRV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience Stores</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Housing</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Buildings</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Lots</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrolink Stations</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not Significant
SIGNIFICANT RELATIVE RISK VALUES FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>RRV</th>
<th>RRV North</th>
<th>RRV South</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience Stores</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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Findings & Recommendations

• Violent crime occurs around vacant lots and properties, also differently in north St. Louis compared to south

• Further study: Explain the heightened risk of violence around vacant lots

• Policy: how can we use this evidence to help make vacancy a top priority, and plan to evaluate current vacancy remediation efforts and plan for future efforts?
What Next?

• Participants living near treated vacant lots reported significantly reduced perceptions of crime (−36.8%, \( P < 0.05 \)), vandalism (−39.3%, \( P < 0.05 \)), and safety concerns when going outside their homes (−57.8%, \( P < 0.05 \)), as well as significantly increased use of outside spaces for relaxing and socializing (75.7%, \( P < 0.01 \)).

• Significant reductions in crime overall (−13.3%, \( P < 0.01 \)), gun violence (−29.1%, \( P < 0.001 \)), burglary (−21.9%, \( P < 0.001 \)), and nuisances (−30.3%, \( P < 0.05 \)) were also found after the treatment of vacant lots in neighborhoods below the poverty line.
Acknowledgements

- Emily Blackburn
  St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department

- Poli Rijos, MSW, LCSW
  Manager, Center for Community Health Partnership and Research
  Lead, Gun Violence Initiative, WUSTL

- Richard Rosenfeld, PhD
  Curators’ Distinguished Professor Emeritus Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice University of Missouri
## Policy Updates - Mayoral Priorities

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>VPC Mayoral Priorities</th>
<th>Tishaura Jones</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure Priorities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain the Office of Children, Youth &amp; Families in the Mayor’s Office with continued focus on violence prevention programs</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit to funding public health infrastructure to support the public health approach to violence prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assign staff to participate in the VPC Quarterly Meetings and committees as appropriate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Investment Priorities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to fund Cure Violence, St. Louis’s co-responder model, and 911 call diversion as an alternative-supplement to traditional enforcement policing</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in remediation of known, evidence-based drivers of violence in St. Louis including vacancy abatement &amp; remediation</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invest in safe spaces for youth and young adults</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a rigorous, comprehensive strategy to allocate Prop S funds</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policing Priorities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Infuse community voice in police department collective bargaining negotiations and a comprehensive police department policy &amp; procedure reviews</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revamp the police performance evaluation process to include community policing</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement a rigorous mental health program for officers including mandatory preventative mental health evaluations by qualified clinicians and access to adequate resources to meet their mental health needs including time off and available mental health professionals from outside the department</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
The St. Louis Police Officer Association Collective Bargaining Agreement has been removed! It interfered with police discipline and diversity.

To every citizen, organization, and officer that fought to remove the CBA never think your voice is not powerful.

7:35 PM · Apr 11, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone
- **Civil Service Title XIX**
  - “Allows all officers facing punishment of less than a 15-day suspension to appeal the matter to a three-person ‘summary hearing board.’”
  - “If the measure is repealed, all police disciplinary appeals would be decided by the Civil Service Commission, a three-member civilian body appointed by the mayor.”
- same disciplinary process as other City employees
- Public Hearing on May 2 at 4:30 p.m.
Policy Update - SB 57

- Creates the Economic Distress Fund to support nonprofits working to combat crime in high-crime areas.

- Establishes the Critical Incident Stress Management Program through the Department of Public Safety. This program will provide services to police officers dealing with stress and potential psychological trauma resulting from serving on the job... also requires all peace officers to meet with a program service provider once every three to five years for a mental health check-in.
How do we disseminate these to neighborhood residents?
Youth Safe Spaces Taskforce Update

To join, email Lisa
(lpotts@stlmhb.com)
Municipal Engagement Taskforce

To join, email Jessica (jessica@stlareavpc.org)
Gun Violence Response Network

- Now working on home repair program
Communications & Cobranding

To join, email Jessica (jessica@stlareavpc.org)
Cure Violence Update
Partner Announcements
Quarterly Meeting Survey

Next Quarterly Meeting:
Friday, July 23 from 1-3pm