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# Violence Prevention Commission April Quarterly Meeting



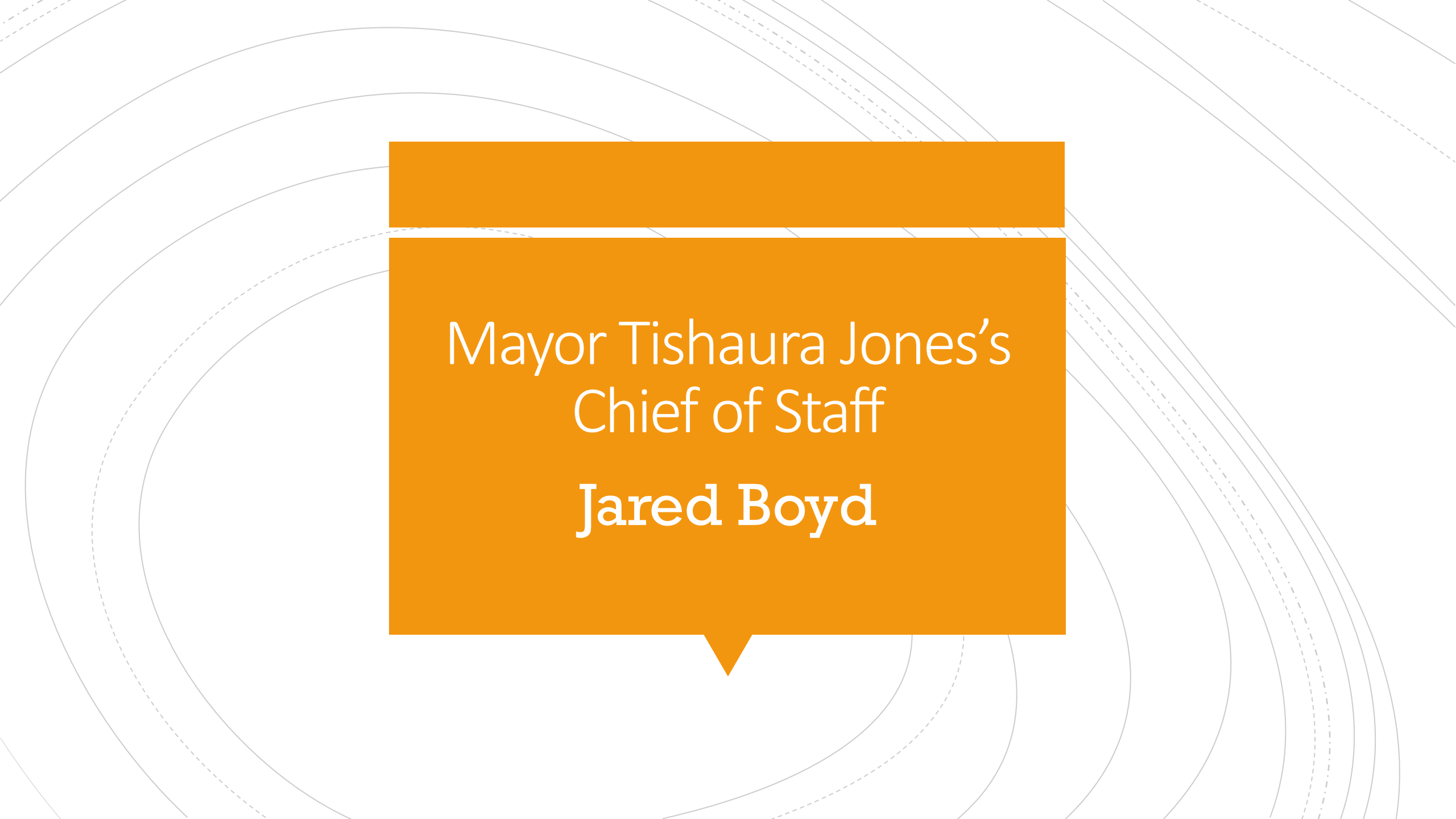
SUPPORT  
VICTIMS.  
BUILD  
TRUST.  
ENGAGE  
COMMUNITIES.

**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

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Mayor Tishaura Jones's  
Chief of Staff  
**Jared Boyd**

# Vacancy & Crime in STL

*Original Article*

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## **Assessing the Differential Impact of Vacancy on Criminal Violence in the City of St. Louis, MO**

**Branson Fox<sup>1</sup>, Anne Trolard<sup>1</sup>, Mason Simmons<sup>1</sup>,  
Jessica E. Meyers<sup>2</sup>, and Matt Vogel<sup>3</sup>**

Criminal Justice Review  
1-17

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# Vacancy and Violence

Risk Terrain Modeling in the City of St. Louis



Public Health Data  
and Training Center

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY





“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



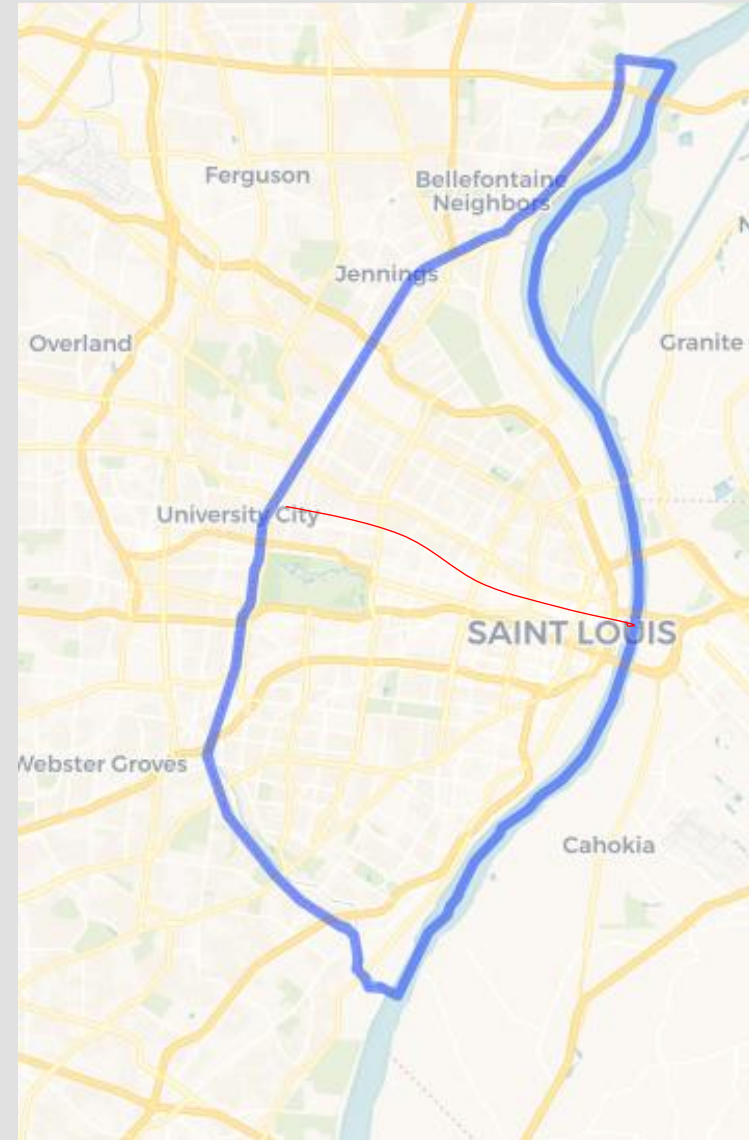
# Purpose

- 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

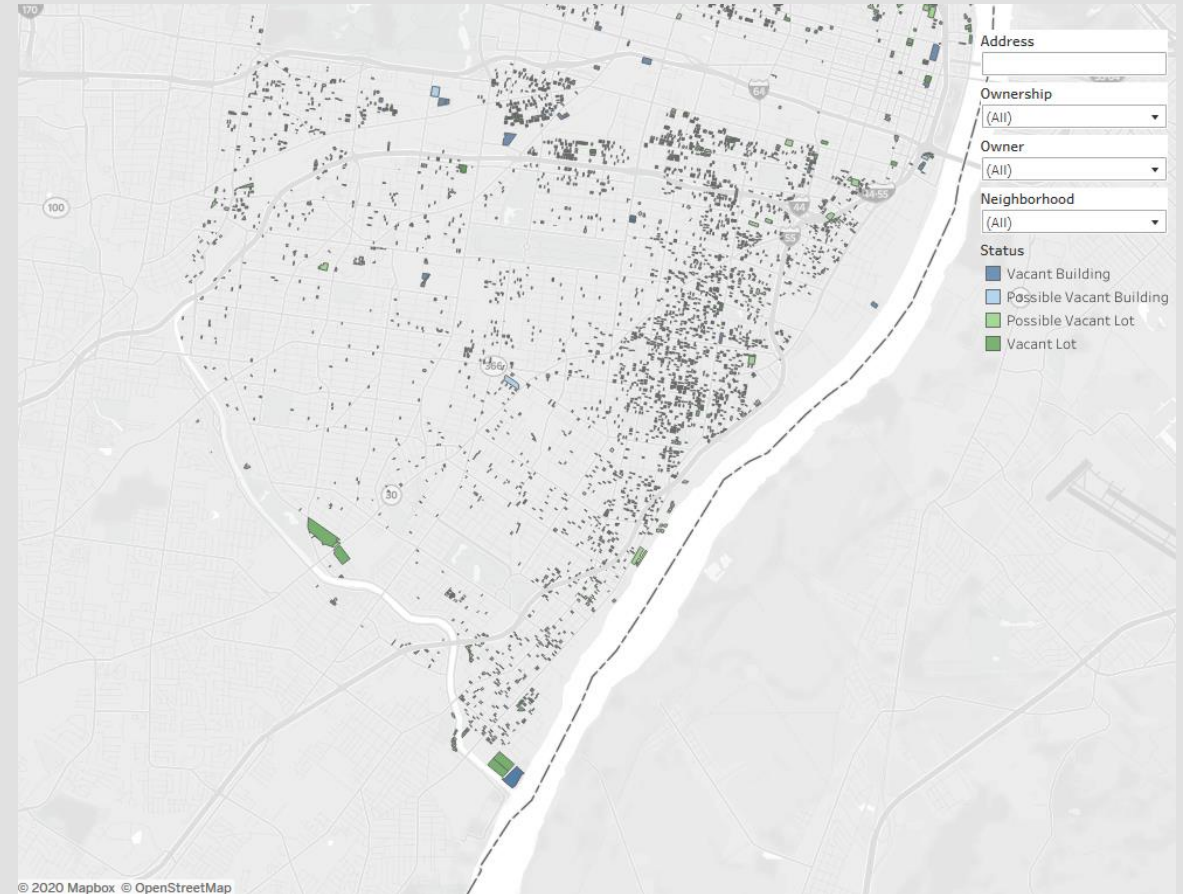
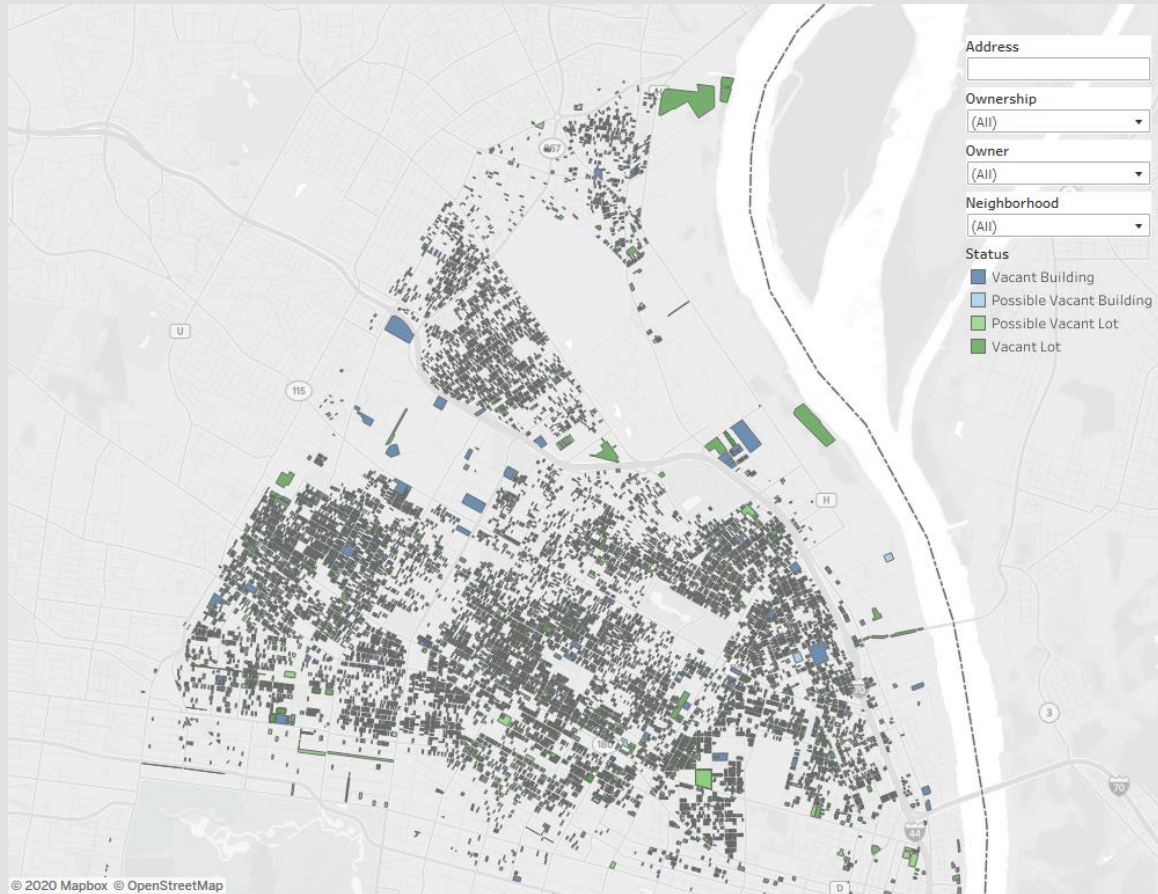


- In Baton Rouge, LA, homicides clustered around vacant properties<sup>1</sup>
- In Philadelphia there were significant reductions in crime around vacant properties that had been restored compared to those that remained blighted<sup>2</sup>

1-Valasik, M., Brault, E. E., & Martinez, S. M. (2019). Forecasting homicide in the red stick: Risk terrain modeling and the spatial influence of urban blight on lethal violence in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. *Social Science Research*, 80, 186–201.

2-Branas, C. C., South, E., Kondo, M. C., Hohl, B. C., Bourgois, P., Wiebe, D. J., & MacDonald, J. M. (2018). Citywide cluster randomized trial to restore blighted vacant land and its effects on violence, crime, and fear. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(12), 2946-2951

# 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

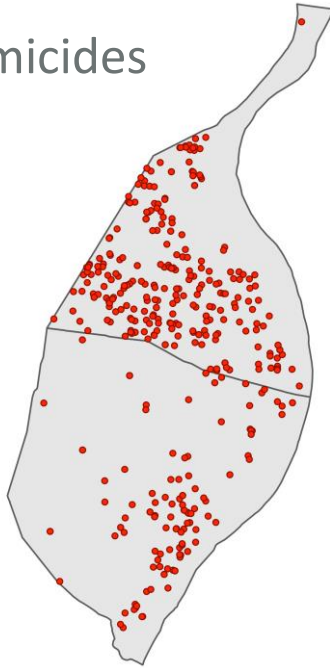
What *Places* are Higher Risk for Violent Crime?

- 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

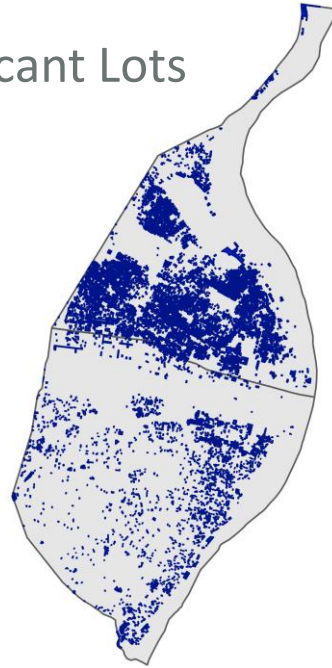
# Risk Terrain Modeling



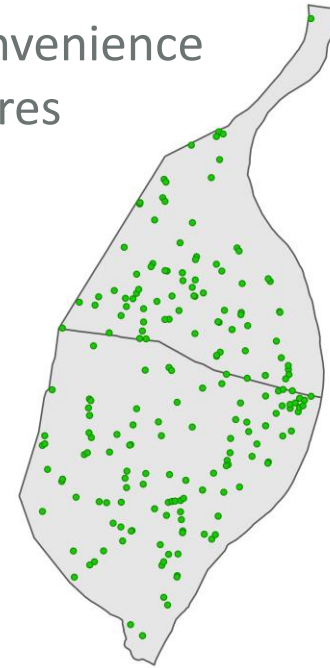
Homicides

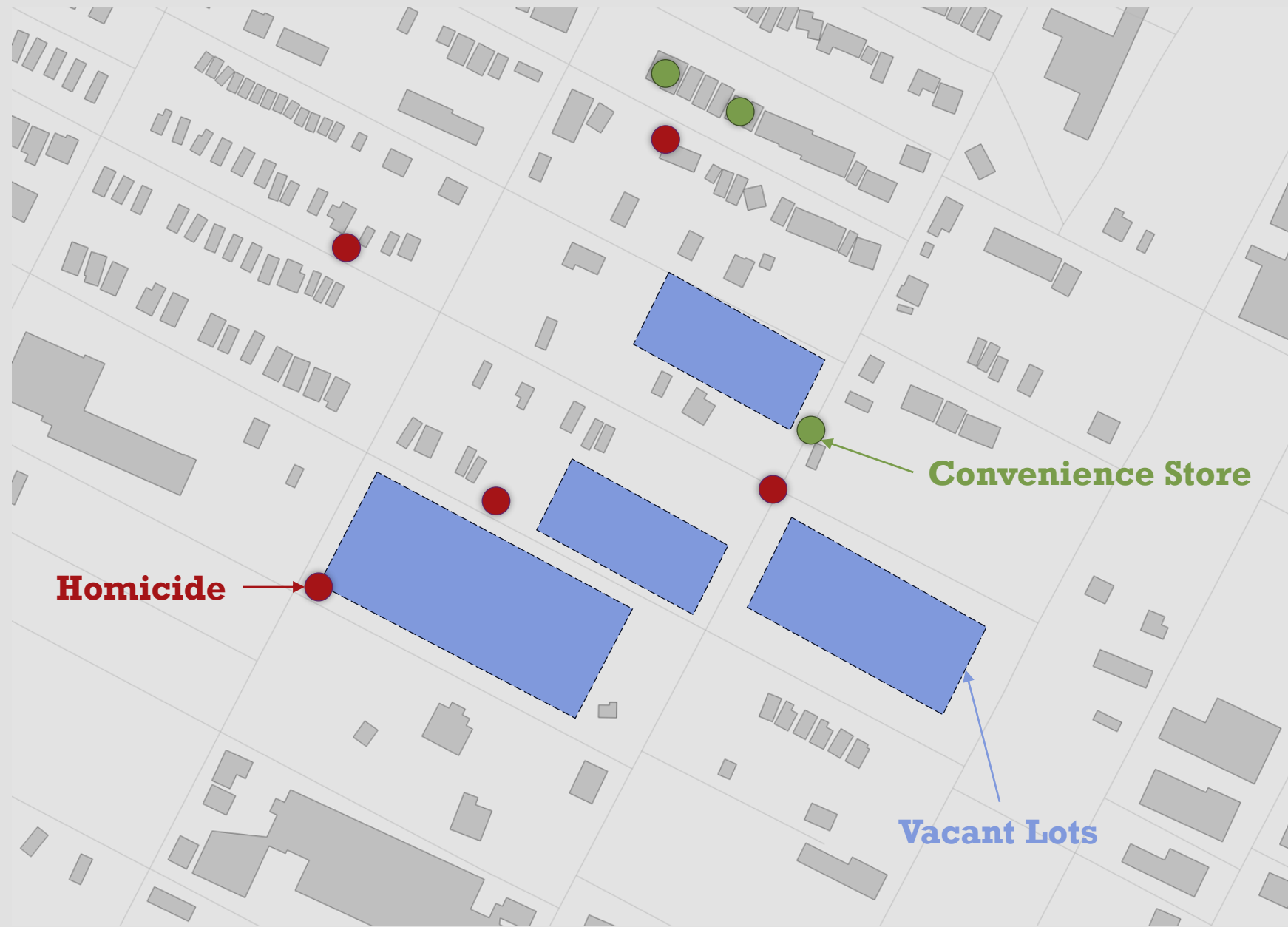


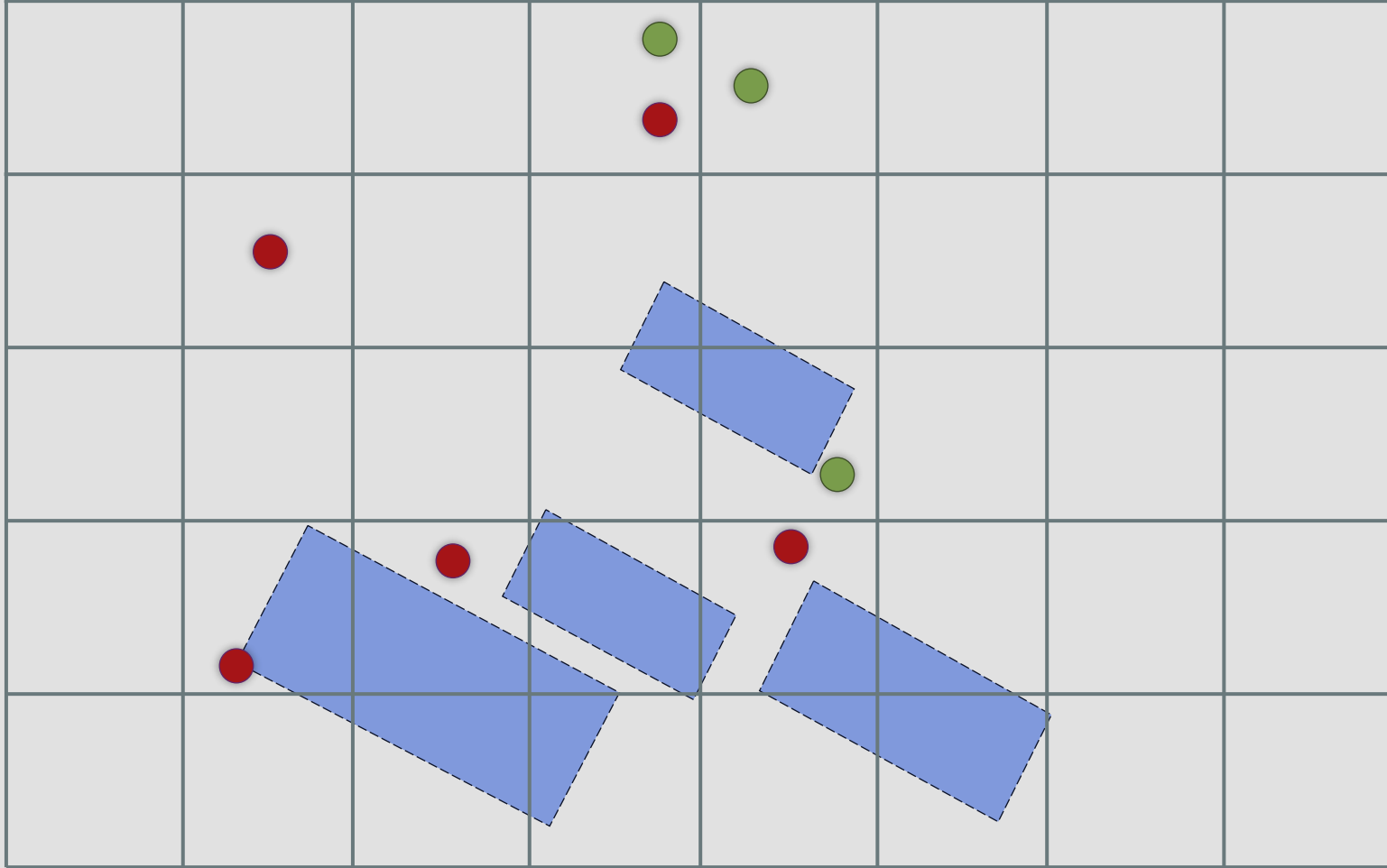
Vacant Lots

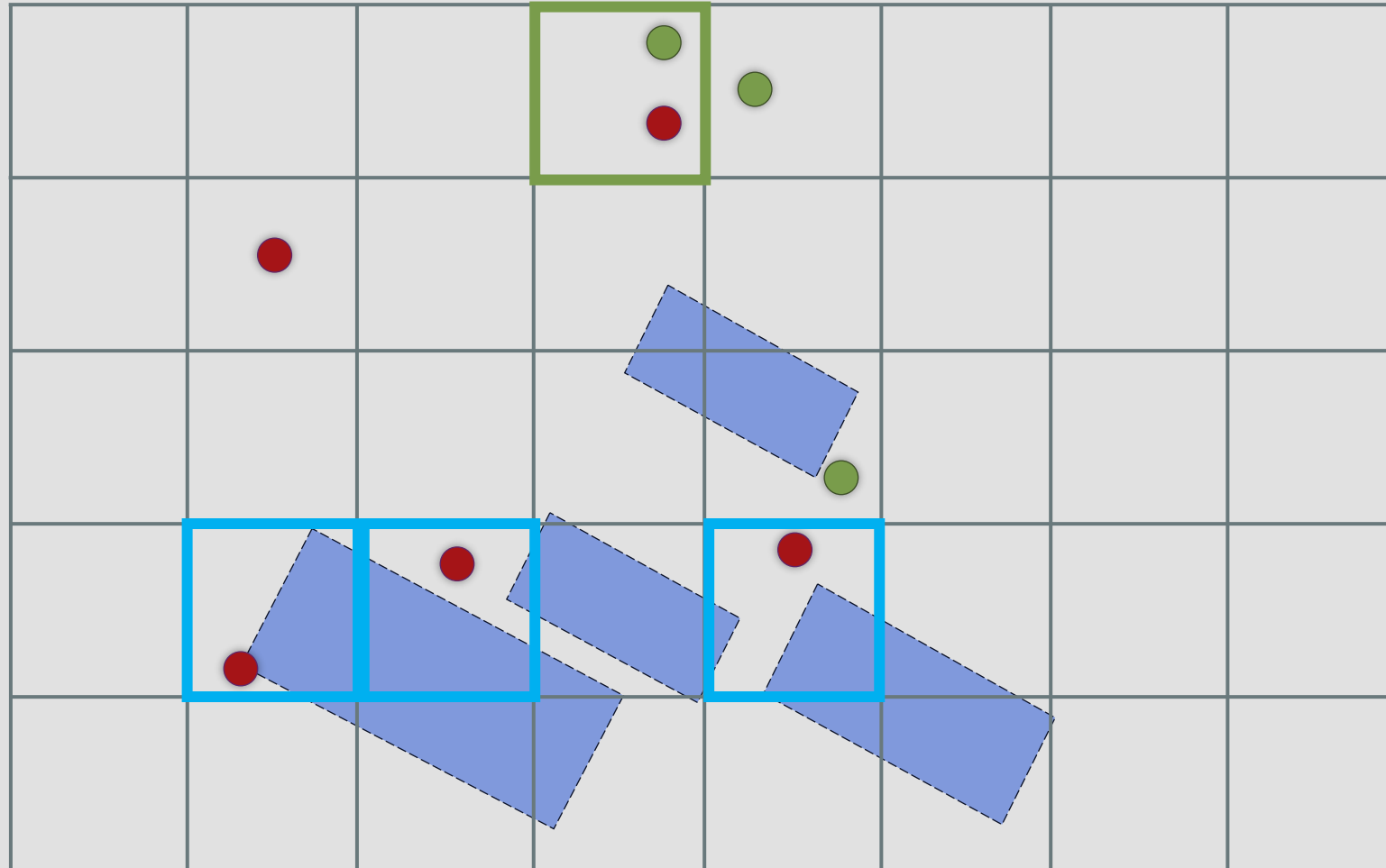


Convenience  
Stores





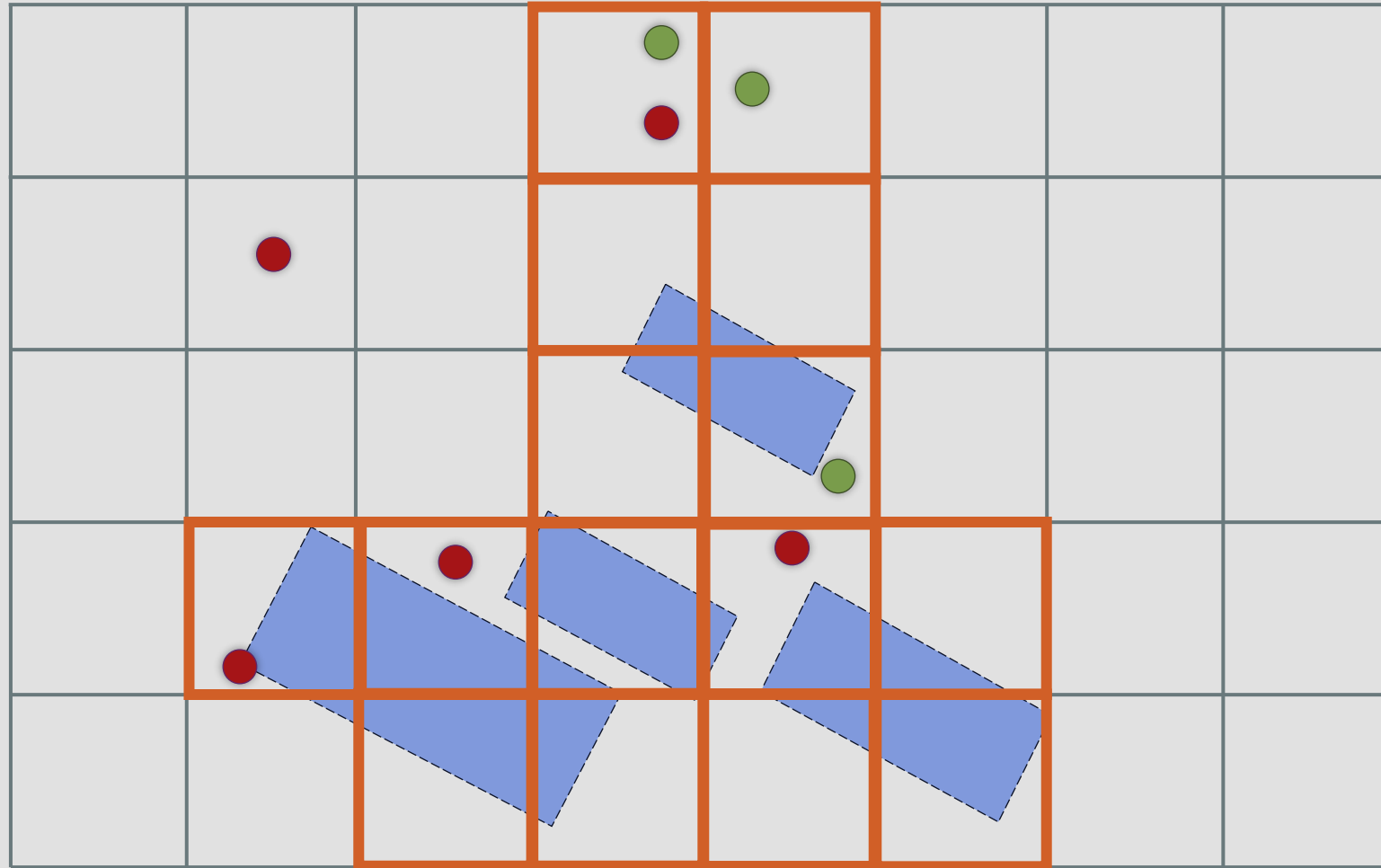




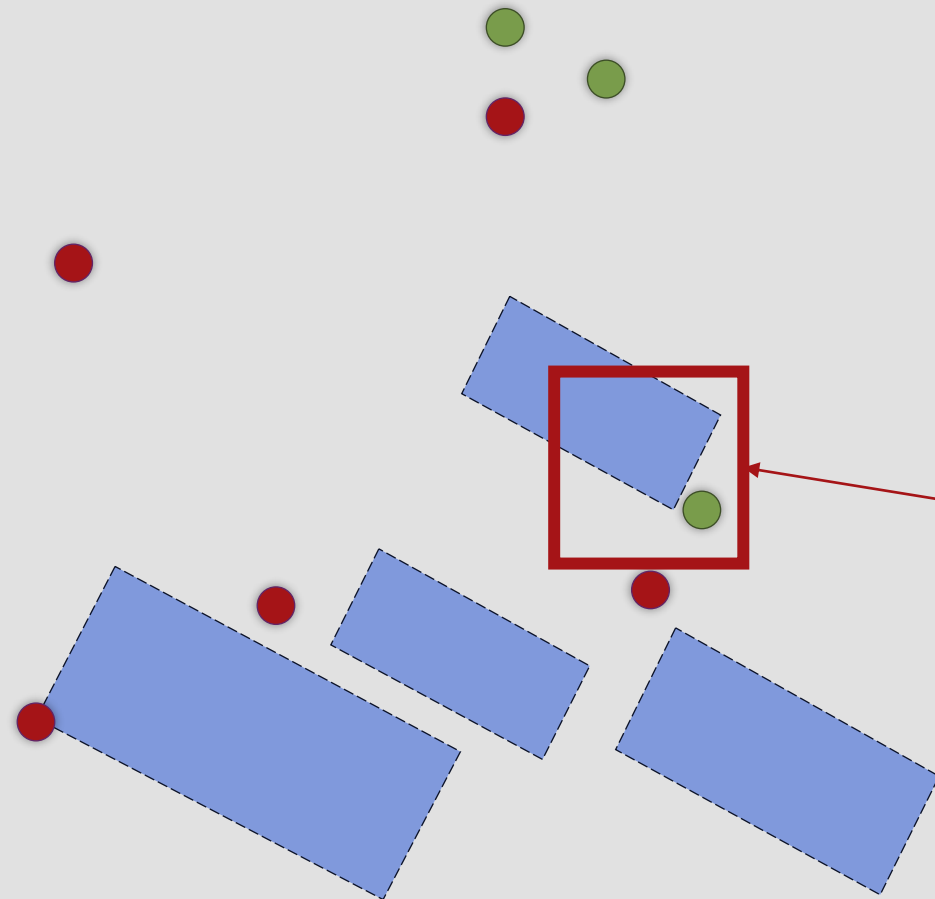
**Risk of Vacant Lots**



**Risk of Convenience Stores**



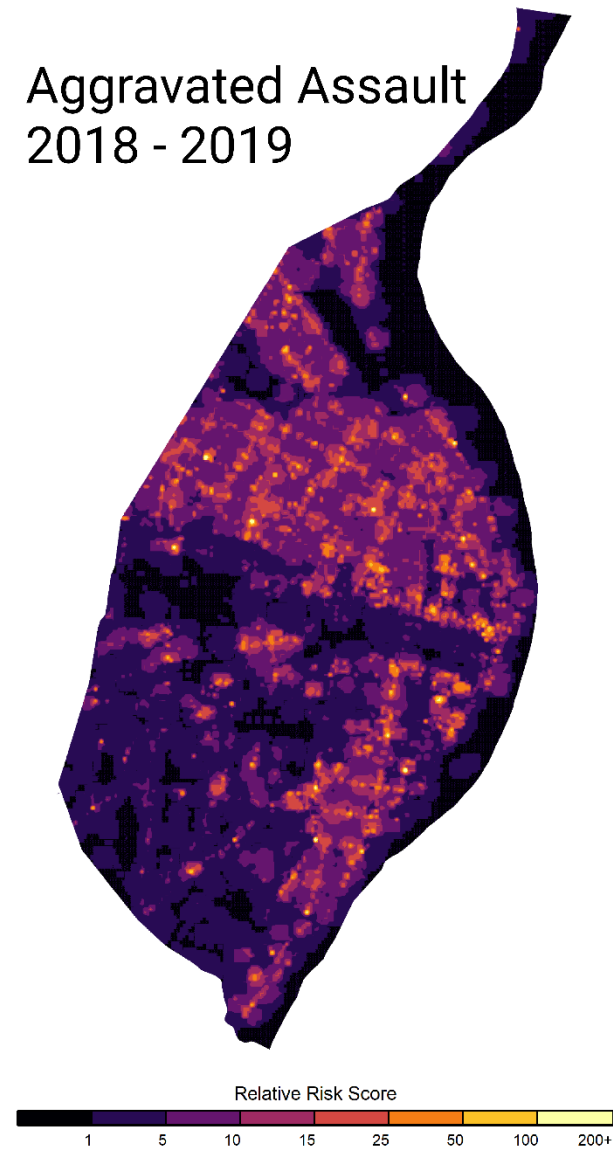
**Risk Model**



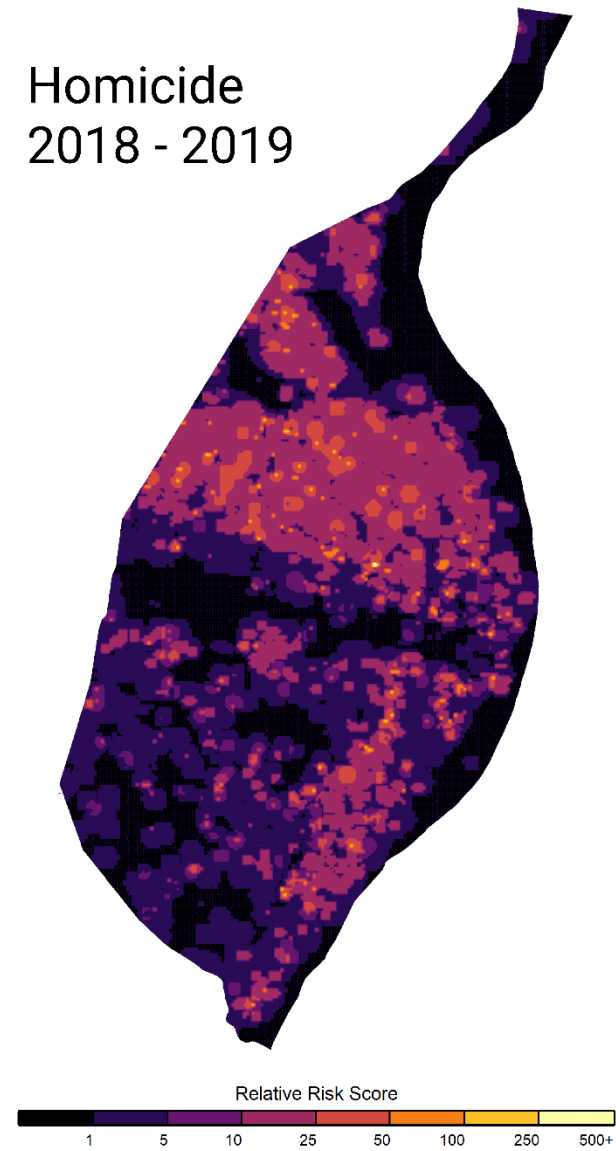
**Risk is Multiplied By  
Each Risk Factor**



Aggravated Assault  
2018 - 2019



Homicide  
2018 - 2019



# Highlighted Results-Homicide



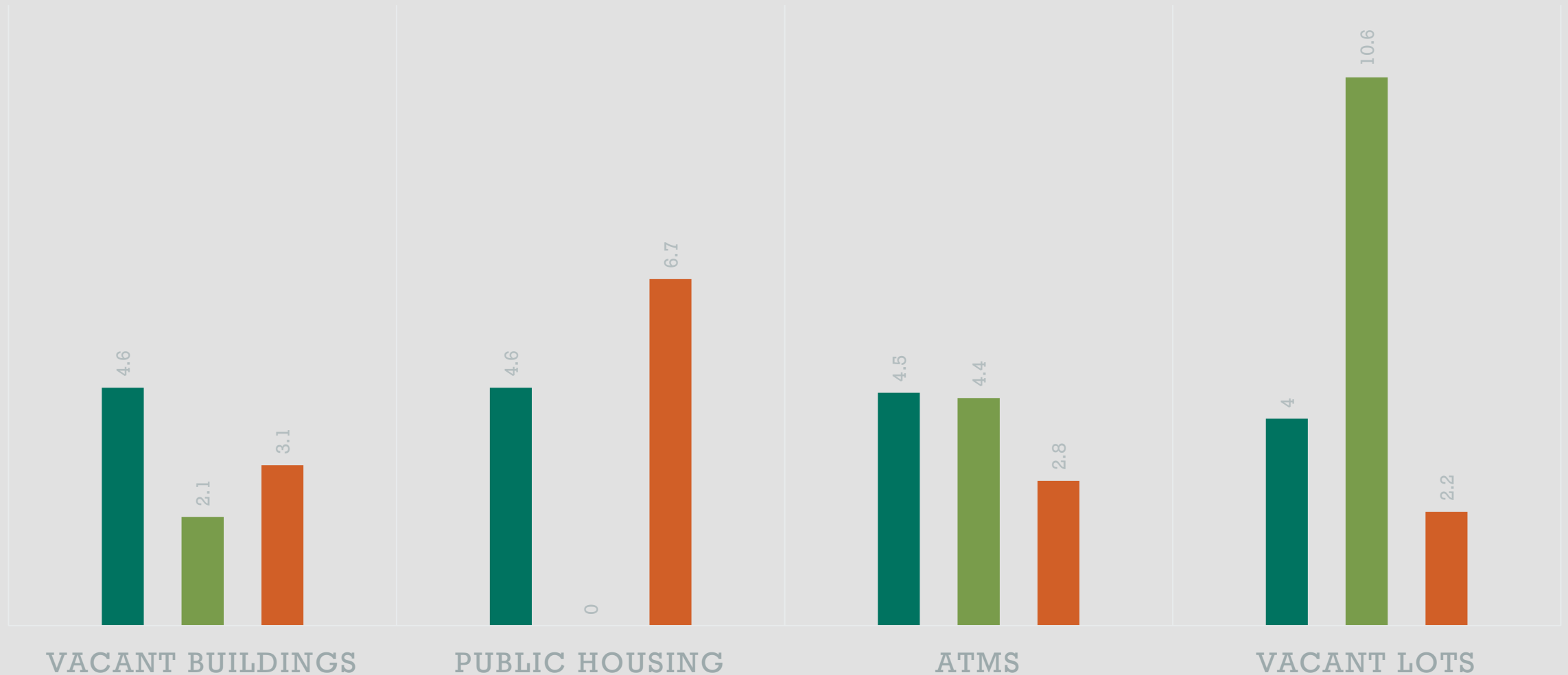
Risk Factor	Relative Risk Value	North RRV	South RRV
Vacant Buildings	4.6	2.1	3.1
Public Housing	4.6	*	6.7
ATMs	4.5	4.4	2.8
Vacant Lots	4.0	10.6	2.2

\* Not Significant



## SIGNIFICANT RELATIVE RISK VALUES FOR HOMICIDE

■ RRV   ■ RRV North   ■ RRV South



# Results-Aggravated Assault



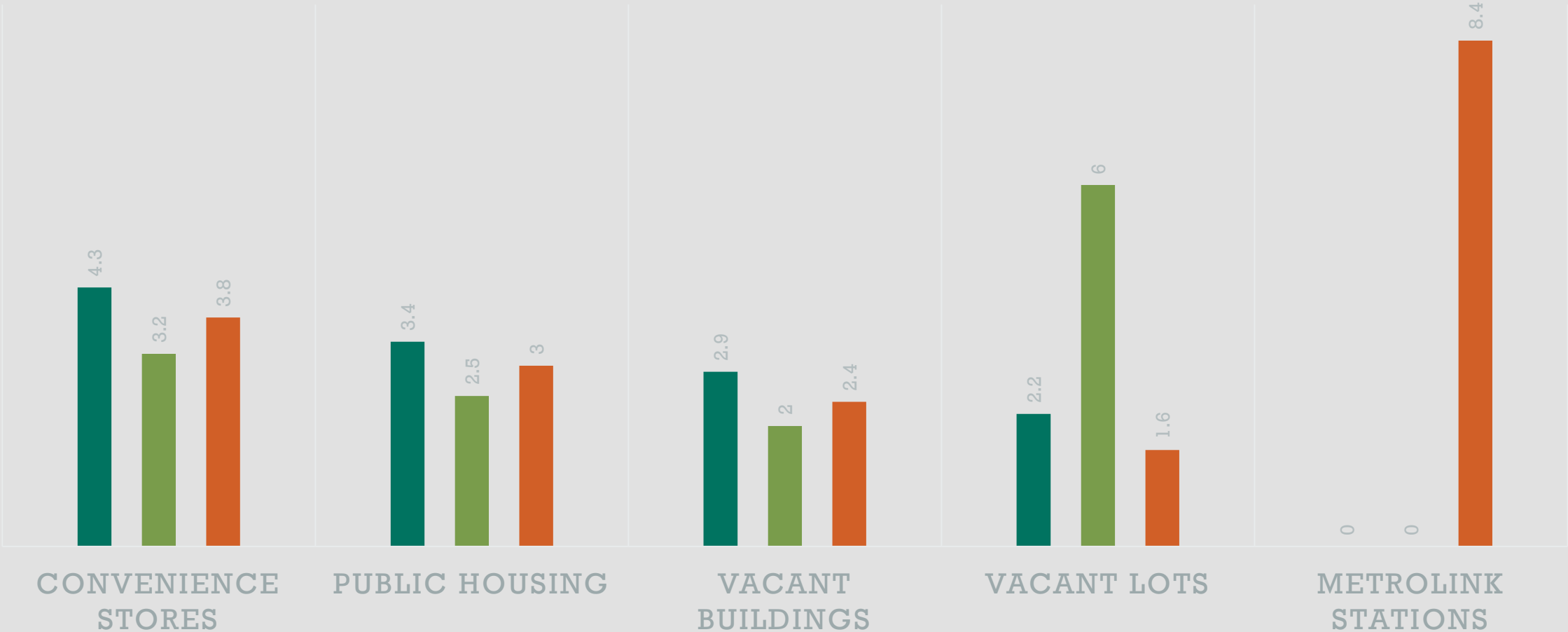
Risk Factor	Relative Risk Value	North RRV	South RRV
Convenience Stores	4.3	3.2	3.8
Public Housing	3.4	2.5	3.0
Vacant Buildings	2.9	2.0	2.4
Vacant Lots	2.2	6.0	1.6
Metrolink Stations	*	*	8.4

\* Not Significant

# SIGNIFICANT RELATIVE RISK VALUES FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT



■ RRV   ■ RRV North   ■ RRV South





# 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?



## Citywide cluster randomized trial to restore blighted vacant land and its effects on violence, crime, and fear

Charles C. Branas<sup>a,b,1</sup>, Eugenia South<sup>c</sup>, Michelle C. Kondo<sup>d</sup>, Bernadette C. Hohl<sup>e,f</sup>, Philippe Bourgois<sup>g</sup>, Douglas J. Wiebe<sup>b</sup>, and John M. MacDonald<sup>h</sup>

- 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

	VPC Mayoral Priorities	Tishaura Jones
Infrastructure Priorities	Maintain the Office of Children, Youth & Families in the Mayor's Office with continued focus on violence prevention programs	✓
	Commit to funding public health infrastructure to support the public health approach to violence prevention	
	Assign staff to participate in the VPC Quarterly Meetings and committees as appropriate	
Investment Priorities	Continue to fund Cure Violence, St. Louis's co-responder model, and 911 call diversion as an alternative/supplement to traditional enforcement policing	✓
	Invest in remediation of known, evidence-based drivers of violence in St. Louis including vacancy abatement & remediation	?
	Invest in safe spaces for youth and young adults	?
	Use a rigorous, comprehensive strategy to allocate Prop S funds	✓
Policing Priorities	Infuse community voice in police department collective bargaining negotiations and a comprehensive police department policy & procedure reviews	✓
	Revamp the police performance evaluation process to include community policing	✓
	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	✓

↻ You Retweeted



**Ethical Society of Police - ESOP**  
@ESOP\_STL



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

Policy Updates-  
CBA

## ■ 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  
Updates-  
CBA

# 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.

# MU Extension Infographics

How do we  
disseminate  
▶ these to  
neighborhood  
residents?



# ▼ Youth Safe Spaces Taskforce Update

**To join, email Lisa  
([lpotts@stlmhb.com](mailto:lpotts@stlmhb.com))**

# Municipal Engagement Taskforce

To join, email Jessica ([jessica@stlareavpc.org](mailto:jessica@stlareavpc.org))

## IF YOU'RE DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH OF EXPERIENCING OR WITNESSING GUN VIOLENCE:



**Dial  
2-1-1**

**Press “2”  
to speak  
with a  
navigator**

**Get connected with the  
support and assistance  
you need**

**Whether you need:**

- Emotional support or counseling
- Help navigating the criminal justice system
- Help getting financial resources for healthcare costs
- Referrals to community resources

# Gun Violence Response Network

- **Now working on  
home repair  
program**

# Communications & Cobranding

To join, email Jessica ([jessica@stlareavpc.org](mailto:jessica@stlareavpc.org))

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# Cure Violence Update



# ▼ Partner Announcements

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# Quarterly Meeting Survey

<http://bit.ly/vpcapril2021>

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