

PREVENTION

To prevent crime over the long term, we must build a City where every child goes to a good school, where every adult can get a job, and where every family can live in a healthy, stable, and safe neighborhood. In neighborhoods where the population is poor, uneducated and unemployed, crime rates are higher, which in turn, feed a cycle of violence. Several new studies and reports have gone to great lengths to prove what many of us already recognize: most people commit crime as a last resort, not a first choice.

Our City has come a long way in recent years on each of these fronts. Our public school system and quality public school options have improved. New businesses have increased job opportunities. Neighborhoods that were once losing residents have stabilized or even increased. But, we still have a lot of work to do if we are going to prevent the conditions that lead to crime.

We start with our youngest residents – children. For years, the public school system failed our children. Thousands of families left the City to find higher quality schools, and those who chose to stay were left with few good options. When Mayor Slay took office, public education in the City of St. Louis was in freefall. Thankfully, through teamwork and new leadership, the course largely has been corrected. St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) have emerged from state control with strong leadership and a flexible approach. Parents in the City also have embraced high-performing charter schools, with 35 charter schools serving kids throughout the City.

Mayor Slay and SLPS Superintendent Dr. Kelvin Adams are working together to promote effective public education. For example, the City, ARCHS, and SLPS collaborated in the After School for All Partnership (ASAP), which has expanded effective after-school programs to help with homework, teach life skills, and provide health and character education. The City also has invested much of its state and federal grant funding in after-school programs and recreation centers.

We also know that we can prevent crime in the long term only if everyone in our City has an equal opportunity to move up the economic ladder. We work hard to encourage private sector investment in the City. The City's development agencies help to identify opportunities to attract new businesses and promote existing ones. The Mayor and several aldermen have crafted legislation to ease the burdens on small businesses, entrepreneurs, and self-starters. But, we can't rely on the private sector alone.

The City has promoted new programs to match young people to opportunities in the private sector. Over the past two years, the City built a program called Stl Youth Jobs, which now connects nearly 1,500 young people from poor neighborhoods to public and private sector jobs. And, the City funds the St. Louis Internship Program, which provides an eight-week, paid summer internship for 30 high school students in financial need. The City also obtained a \$1 million grant to hire young people to learn construction skills and then put them to use building new affordable homes for low-income families.

Furthermore, our Community Development Administration funds and collaborates with community groups that support and empower the community, and the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment gets unemployed people the skills, training, and connections they need to get a steady, well-paying job.

Merely providing jobs won't be enough to end poverty or prevent crime. Jobs must pay a living wage, so the City is supporting a statewide increase in the minimum wage. Jobs must be accessible, so the City is supporting a North-South Metrolink expansion. And people must have the financial literacy they need to make wise choices with the money they do earn, so the City, led by Treasurer Tishaura Jones, is working to build financial literacy and to bring banking services to underserved neighborhoods.

Finally, we must build a City with healthy, stable neighborhoods. That requires investing in key health programs where they are needed the most. Project LAUNCH, for example, improves mental and behavioral health services for children in key areas of our City. The City and the Regional Health Commission have launched the Alive and Well initiative designed to raise awareness of trauma and its effects and also to improve the ability of our residents to recover from traumatic events instead of engaging in harmful behavior to themselves and their communities. And, knowing that lead paint poisoning is a major cause of mental health challenges and child development, the City created LeadSafe St. Louis, which performs free lead testing for children and also inspects and remediates homes for free.

While we focus on improving the health of our neighbors, we also must stabilize every neighborhood. That means transforming vacant houses into homes for new residents, empty storefronts into vibrant business districts, and open land into community assets. To do this, the City is developing a wide-reaching approach to address the vacant properties that are often breeding grounds for crime and lower property values. We're also working with the Circuit Attorney to expand the Neighborhood Ownership Model, which incorporates everyday St. Louisans in the City's crime-prevention efforts.

These are just a few of the City's programs designed to prevent crime over the long term, recognizing that if people have the support and assistance they need to make a better life for themselves, the crime rate will go down. These prevention programs are coordinated with the City's efforts to intervene with at-risk populations, strategically enforce the law, and reduce crimes by those re-entering our community from incarceration.

A Stronger City is a Safer City

Economic Opportunity

The City is committed to making sure that every resident has the skills and opportunity to get a steady job. That starts with residents who are about to enter the workforce for the first time. The Stl Youth Jobs program connects roughly 1,500 young adults from the poorest neighborhoods in St. Louis to local jobs. By

holding down a summer job, the young adults gain hands-on experience that helps them develop good work habits, professionalism, and financial literacy so that they are better prepared to land a long-term job. Also, the Community Development Administration (CDA) funds the St. Louis Internship Program, which places 30 young people with financial need in paying and productive internships in non-profit and public organizations.

Helping our young people is a start, but we also need to help the neighborhoods where they live and go to school. Too many neighborhoods across the City have been ravaged by private disinvestment. When bigger businesses close or move, they affect small businesses. The City of St. Louis has implemented innovative new programs to create jobs all over town. One program, a partnership with Ranken Technical College funded in part by a \$1 million grant, trains young people in the construction trade and employs them building houses. In this way, young people gain employment, skills, and a paycheck, but also contribute to rebuilding the neighborhoods they call home.

Partnerships have been a key to great success. The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) partners with contractors and construction workers' unions on Building Union Diversity, a program to increase the number of minorities and women who work in construction by providing pre-apprenticeship skills. A strong collaboration with the Demetrius Johnson Charitable Foundation trains young people as painters and custodians. And, the award-winning Harambee Youth Training Program, which is funded in part by the CDA, teaches young people leadership and life skills through tuck-pointing training. The CDA is searching all the time to expand these partnerships and start new ones.

The efforts in St. Louis haven't gone unrecognized. The City recently won a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to implement the Career Pathways Bridge Program, which will train 3,000 young adults in North City and North County and offer them meaningful, permanent jobs, while an additional 3,400 more will receive hands-on job readiness training.

Most of all, the City recognizes that the best way to create economic opportunity isn't to use government funds or programs to create jobs – it's to strengthen the entire City's economy and make sure that workers are paid a living wage. That's why the Mayor strongly supports an increase in the minimum wage at the state level, and has advocated in Jefferson City and to Gov. Nixon for worker's rights. It's also why the City passed an ordinance in August that raised the minimum wage to \$11 by 2018.

Transportation Barriers

There are a lot of reasons why climbing out of poverty and to the middle class is hard. But, one of them is a lack of access to good paying jobs. Many people who are willing to work hard do not live near good jobs, and do not own a car. Some of them spend as much time commuting to their job as doing the actual work itself.

So, a great job means little if you can't get to it. The City of St. Louis is looking into many ways to improve public transportation so that residents can always get to work.

Right now, East-West Gateway and the City of St. Louis are working together to execute a feasibility study for a Bus Rapid Transit line that would better connect the City. Mayor Slay's number one transportation priority, though, is making the proposed North-South Metrolink expansion a reality. This new line would connect workers from North St. Louis County to jobs in downtown and all the way out to I-55 and Bayless Avenue in South County. Improving transportation makes more jobs available and strengthens the City and its residents.

Recognizing that housing and transportation accounts for the top two household budget costs for families, Mayor Slay directed the City's Affordable Housing Commission to set aside \$1 million to spur housing development near Metrolink stations and bus lines. Doing so makes it easier for people to get to work and improves upward mobility among low-income residents by lowering the combined cost of housing and transportation.

Education

People with more education have more opportunities, and people with more opportunities commit less crime. Investing in education now will make our City safer, smarter, and more innovative for years to come.

We need to make sure that every young child can get an effective education. To do this, the City is funding initiatives and engaging in partnerships that open opportunities for kids in every neighborhood. The CDA funds the Guardian Angel Settlement so that needy infants and toddlers can start school as early as possible.

Mayor Slay is dedicated to increasing the number of quality education options in the City of St. Louis. He believes that there should be so many good schools in this City that every parent could choose the one that's right for their child. There are now 35 effective charter schools in the City, which is more than anywhere else in Missouri. And it's working. This year, for the first time in 50 years, enrollment in the St. Louis public school system has increased.

All parents know that education doesn't end when the school bell rings. Some of the most important lessons are taught after school, during summer break, and in the neighborhood. The After School for All Partnership (ASAP) is all about making sure young children have a fun, safe, and enriching space to do homework, make new friends, and learn outside the classroom. It's a completely free service provided by the City to help our youngest residents.

Education is the key to success and the key to an enriching and healthy lifestyle. No public service is more important, because education for our children makes everyone safer, smarter, and able to achieve greater things in life.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Mental health is a vital component of overall well-being. Anyone can be burdened with poor mental health, but there are very few supports for people struggling with their mental health in low-income neighborhoods.

Mental health services shouldn't be hard to find no matter where you live, so the City is expanding mental health services to underserved neighborhoods across St. Louis. In the 63106 and 63107 ZIP codes, where many residents have low incomes and high mental health needs, the City is building a comprehensive mental health support and education network to especially focus on addressing young people's mental health needs.

Poor mental health can also contribute to violent behavior, but it can also be its effect. People who are shot or stabbed are not the only victims of violent crime – their families and loved ones are victims, too. Constant exposure to violence and poverty has toxic consequences for mental health and well-being. In an effort to prevent crime before it happens and respond proactively to its far-reaching consequences, the City of St. Louis and the Region Health Commission are launching Alive and Well. This collaborative and innovative program employs community-based mental health treatment strategies to support people who live in neighborhoods where poverty and violence are all too common. Alive and Well not only supports individuals, but also empowers the community.

Also, a four-year, \$3.7 million grant secured by the City of St. Louis will help the Mental Health Board expand mental health services for children, youth, and families with severe and persistent mental health issues by implementing the System of Care Expansion to the City's current services.

Building Strong Neighborhoods

Everyone, everywhere, from Baden to Patch, should feel safe in the neighborhood they call home. Parks, rec centers, and community spaces all need to be safe, stable, and secure.

First off, City services should be delivered to the areas that need them most. This is why the Police Department sends extra resources to "hot spots" where crime is occurring at the moment. When the police recognize a hot spot, that also triggers an increase in social services to that area, which supports neighbors and neighborhoods when they become victimized.

Nearly as important is rebuilding deteriorated neighborhoods. Since 2001, the Affordable Housing Commission has spent and leveraged more than \$500

million in public and private funds to rehabilitate the housing stock in the City. Another \$1 million has been dedicated to help low-income individuals pay for home repairs. This equals new and nicer homes for residents, which in turn creates stronger, more stable neighborhoods. Investment can drive out crime and bring in productive new neighbors.

The Federal Government is lending a helping hand with the \$500,000 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant, which will allow the City to make the initial seed investment in housing and social services in the Near North Side.

It's no secret that crime happens in weak neighborhoods, and that it also weakens neighborhoods. By investing in housing and public space, the City can help break the cycle of crime and disinvestment, which is often the first step in turning a neighborhood around.

Problem Properties and Problem Neighbors

Most residents in this great City comply with codes and laws and do their best to help out their fellow neighbors. But sometimes, there are properties and owners that just keep causing problems, and that's when the City needs to bring them into compliance. The Problem Properties Task Force combines the skills of police officers, prosecutors, building inspectors, and neighborhood stabilization officers to hold property owners responsible for neglect, crime, and other conditions that send the signal that crime is OK and disorder is tolerated.

The best way to help a neighborhood is to empower it to solve problems by itself. That's the goal of the Neighborhood Ownership Model, an innovative citizen-led program that receives considerable help and support from the Circuit Attorney's Office, the police department, and the Problem Properties Task Force. Under this model, neighborhood leaders work together with City officials to combat the conditions that lead to crime. This makes the quality of life in their neighborhoods better all around. Residents get trained to identify problems and help the police come up with innovative solutions.

Neighborhood Stabilization Officers are often integral to the Neighborhood Ownership Model. They are leaders in the effort to keep neighborhoods safer by working as liaisons to police, aldermen, City agencies, other communities, and their own neighbors to build constructive, long-term solutions to persistent problems.

The most dangerous buildings are usually condemned, derelict, or abandoned, and the City makes special efforts to rid neighborhoods of these problem properties. The Building Division demolishes buildings that attract crime. Nearly 10,000 dilapidated and condemned buildings have been torn down since 2001.

The City is also exploring targeted demolitions and the outcomes of removing such blight from neighborhoods. For example, the City tore down 26 vacant,

condemned buildings near Ranken Technical College with a goal to both reduce crime and prime the area for redevelopment. The demolitions leveraged private investment by Ranken, which put students to work building new homes where derelict buildings once stood. Ranken has already committed nearly \$10 million in redevelopment to the neighborhood, including purchasing more than 200 parcels of land and constructing 56 new homes with its carpentry students.

Community Development

The City will do everything it can to create economic growth and community development in St. Louis. Public-private partnerships, like the collaboration between the CDA and Better Family Life, are crucial to long-term revitalization. The Better Family Life Neighborhood Alliance model, in which caseworkers go door to door in the City's most challenged neighborhoods, empowers individuals to create change and also connects them to vital and needed City services that can vastly improve their lives.

The CDA has many other effective and innovative partnerships. For example, it funds Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri in order to give young people a role model to look up to and a strong relationship of trust and support. A partnership with Community Health-In Services trains teens to be peer health educators, which is proven to lower rates of depression and violence. And, the Resources for Learning Program takes a creative, research-based approach to education. Children helped by RLP gain from early exposure to science, technology, and math, which helps prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow. They are also encouraged to engage their creative side through critical thinking and art and music classes.

Ultimately, the best crime fighting tool is not the police. It's a strong community with neighbors who care about one another, children who are educated and given the tools to be innovative, and institutions that help residents get back on their feet whenever they get knocked down. All City services are meant to empower neighborhoods to build themselves up, because research shows that our common sense is right: crime is a last resort, not a first option. If we create jobs, expand social services, and support our citizens, crime will drop.