



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

GREG FISCHER
MAYOR

Monday, April 7, 2014

Dear Citizens:

Throughout Louisville, there is concern over the random nature of the March 22 teen violence that started on the Big Four Bridge — as well as the city's plan to ensure there is no recurrence.

There will be accountability for both those who committed a crime, as well as negligent parents and guardians. Concurrently, we are enhancing programs to develop the youth in our community. The starting point for all conversation on this matter is that violence of any form will not be tolerated.

The following are actions that are either in place or under consideration.

Increased public safety presence: We have significantly increased our police presence downtown and at Waterfront Park (on bikes, foot, horseback, and in patrol cars — including an around-the-clock presence at the Big Four Bridge). A highly visible new police substation will soon be located in or near the arena/Fourth Street Live district. We also will be using personnel from Louisville Fire, EMS and Corrections to be eyes on the street and notify the police of any suspicious activity. In addition, the Downtown Partnership has increased the times its ambassadors walk the streets, the Waterfront Development Corp has added security and TARC has enhanced security on specific bus routes. These systems will ensure that our city is safe every day, in addition to being prepared for the city's many events and festivals.

Early warning systems: Twenty-six (26) cameras that will be monitored in real time will be installed at Waterfront Park, including the Big Four Bridge, before Thunder Over Louisville on April 12. A review of the need for other cameras downtown is underway. LMPD and the Downtown Partnership are examining the possibility of accessing private cameras at local businesses that are focused on public spaces. Existing public cameras are part of the overall system.

We have increased our social media monitoring capability since that is one method used to organize large gatherings. And since some of those involved with the recent violence used public transit to move about the city, LMPD has enhanced communications with TARC to be made aware of unusual activity.

We also ask all 750,000 citizens to be part of our early warning system. If you see something unusual, say something by contacting police at 574-LMPD or calling 911.

Accountability: Arrests have been made, more are expected, and the investigation is ongoing. Those who have committed crimes will be held accountable through the adult and juvenile justice systems. Where appropriate, restorative justice approaches may be offered to assist non-violent youth in accepting responsibility for their actions and identifying ways to make amends to the victim(s) and the community. We recognize the central role that parents and families play in preventing delinquency and supervising their children. We are exploring methods to hold parents/guardians accountable through legal avenues and are seeking creative ways to enhance parental involvement and responsibility. We will evaluate other measures that may be effective, including enhancements to the city's curfew law.

Youth development: We can all agree that youth and young adults who commit serious and violent acts should be removed from the streets, however there is not a "one size fits all" approach to juvenile delinquency. In fact, research indicates that locking up nonviolent youth for long periods may only turn them into future adult criminals. We do know that investing in our youth leads to more resilient and productive adults.

The city's Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods initiative, which was created following the May 2012 triple homicide in the Parkland neighborhood, has been working directly on the street, with mentors, churches and young adults to reduce crime. Last summer, for example, the initiative partnered with police to host the Gentlemen's Academy, an intensive six-week overnight program for 40 male at-risk teens between the ages of 12 and 17. The program delivers some tough love and exposes these young men to what is possible in their lives. (Read the Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods plan at <http://louisvilleky.gov/safeneighborhoods>)

Our city is also among the charter members of Cities United, a new national partnership to eliminate violent deaths of African-American males aged 15-24. This partnership allows us to benchmark national best practices with violence reduction.

In addition, we are working on other efforts to develop teens:

- **Summer Jobs.** SummerWorks started in 2011, the first year of my administration, and has grown from initially employing 200 teens to this summer's goal of 2,000. Giving a teen a job — and the experience that comes with it — can change a young person's life. Be part of the solution by hiring a teen or by donating \$2,000 to sponsor a youth's employment at a local non-profit. Call 502-574-3069 to get involved.
- **Out of School Time.** Working with the Out of School Time Coordinating Council -- a partnership between Metro United Way, Louisville Metro Government and Jefferson County Public Schools--we offer many excellent programs. I encourage all parents to get

your kids involved (for a list of programs by zip code and neighborhood, visit <http://services.louisvilleky.gov/youthservicesdirectory/programsearch.aspx>).

- **Community Centers.** Our centers will extend their hours this summer. Details will be released before school dismisses in June. We are looking for volunteers to help with staffing -- call (502) 456-8178 to help.
- **Mentoring.** Research shows that pairing an adult mentor with an at-risk student makes a real impact. The city is in immediate need of 200 mentors for a program called Right Turn, which targets youth ages 16-19. It requires a firm commitment of at least one hour per week for one full year and our team will provide the training to ensure that the mentorship is successful. To become part of this important initiative, contact Anthony Smith (anthony.smith2@louisvilleky.gov).

In addition to these efforts, we need the community to help -- especially parents and guardians. Family members need to know where their children are, who they are with, what they are doing, and when they will be home.

I will communicate the financial details associated with the programs above during my May 22 speech to the Metro Council, which will address the new fiscal year budget that starts July 1. In the meantime, adjustments will be made to pay for these initiatives for the balance of this fiscal year.

Public safety is my top responsibility. The data shows Louisville is a safe city. The FBI's most recent comprehensive national crime report, from 2012, shows that of the 18 cities with a population between 500,000 and 800,000, Louisville ranks as the 5th safest city. In addition, due to the good work of LMPD and many community partners, crime in Louisville has decreased two years in a row.

That being said, the random violence of March 22 merits a forceful response, blending both strength and compassion. My administration will continue to work with great vigor to ensure the health, vibrancy and safety of our city.



Mayor Greg Fischer