



Tacoma Violent Crime Reduction Project

Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

City Council Study Session
July 12, 2022



Presenters



Dr. Michael R. Smith

Dr. Rob Tillyer

Dr. Brandon Tregle

Tacoma Violent Crime Reduction Project
Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
The University of Texas at San Antonio

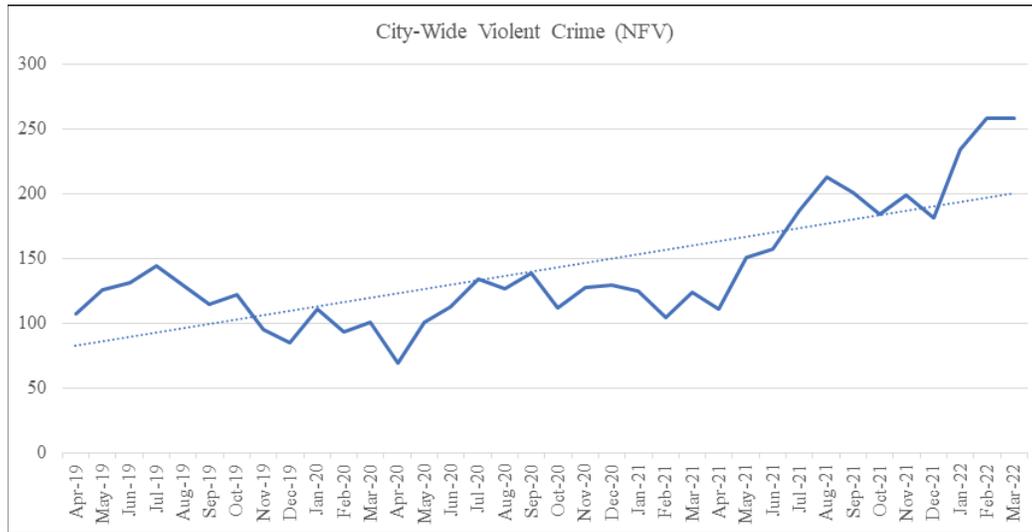




BACKGROUND



In the last 12 months, violent crime in Tacoma has nearly doubled.



Crime Concentration



Consistent with a large body of literature describing urban crime, violent crime in Tacoma is geographically concentrated in a relatively small number of places within the city.

For example, just 24 addresses accounted for roughly 12% of the City’s reported violent crime over the last year.

Similarly, research indicates that a relatively small number of offenders (5%) account for the majority of violent crime.





Evidence-Based Solutions



Combined, these two factors suggest that carefully-tailored, *place-based* and *offender-focused* strategies will be the most efficient and effective at reducing violent street crime.

This requires a police-led, community-wide response to reducing violence and arresting and prosecuting violent offenders in the short term.

Long term solutions include a more comprehensive set of public safety solutions.

To ensure effectiveness, those solutions must address the social and physical disorder, crime, and fear of crime related to homelessness.



Crime Plan Components



1. A near term hot spots policing strategy meant to substantially increase police visibility at addresses where violent crime is concentrated and prioritize street-level deterrence in these areas
2. A mid term strategy focused on violent places within the City using a Problem-Oriented, Place-Based Policing approach
3. A longer term strategy that will utilize a focused deterrence strategy to help break the cycle of violence among the small number of repeat and high-risk offenders who are responsible for committing most of the violent crime in Tacoma.



Goals and Objectives



By implementing these strategies, and in building partnerships with other community stakeholders and agencies, TPD seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- Reverse the increasing trend in reported violent crime
- Advance the Mayor, Council, and Chief Moore's stated goal to reduce the annual number of victims of violent crime
- Increase community trust and engagement with the TPD
- Improve place-based conditions that contribute to violence
- Increase the percentage of residents who feel safe



Keys to Success



To achieve sustained success, several additional factors need to be present:

- Engagement and support from City leaders to include:
 - commitment of resources to support the plan
 - mobilization of city services to underpin aspects of the plan (i.e., the mid-term and long-term strategies)
 - willingness to evaluate and change current legal and social practices as needed to address the underlying challenges that facilitate and contribute to violent crime
- Inter-city/governmental conversation and collaboration
 - including with, as examples, the Puyallup Tribe, Metro Parks, Tacoma Public Schools, courts, and State and Federal partners



Keys to Success



- Community support to include businesses, faith-based leaders, neighborhood associations, and other professional organizations/communities (i.e., health, education, etc.)
- Consistent, honest evaluation of implementation and impact to facilitate modifications, as needed, to promote success
- Broad recognition that violent crime is a community problem that can be partially addressed by TPD but requires action taken by the City and community to tackle deep-rooted social problems (i.e., homelessness, employment opportunities, domestic violence, education, etc.)



Near-Term Hot Spots Policing



With this in mind, the TPD will employ a hot spots policing strategy that:

- Focuses on violence-prone addresses
 - 16 addresses in Period 1
- Increases police visibility at or near those locations to deter violent offenders
 - Lighted patrol cars – 15 mins at a time during peak crime hours
- Drives down violent crime in and around these areas thereby impacting crime levels within larger geographical areas (e.g., patrol sectors)
 - Substantial evidence suggests there will be little to no crime displacement but this will be carefully tracked

Hot Spots Policing Evaluation



UTSA researchers will:

- Evaluate changes to crime every 90 days. Emerging hot spots will be added and “cooled” hot spots will be removed.
- Conduct quarterly and semi-annual analyses of violent crime (within hot spots, sectors, and city-wide), calls for service, catchment areas, and plan fidelity.
- Provide quarterly reports to TPD and stakeholders



Mid-Term Strategy



Problem-Oriented, Place-Based Policing

Problem-oriented strategies carefully tailored to address underlying conditions that contribute to recurring problems in crime-prone locations

Require the involvement of other stakeholders who can help address the conditions that make a particular location attractive for crime.

Reducing social and physical disorder can be a powerful deterrent to would-be offenders and stimulate guardianship through the increased, pro-social use of space.

Theoretical Foundation



- Three elements must come together in time and space for a crime to occur:
 1. A vulnerable victim,
 2. A motivated offender,
 3. The lack of a capable guardian.



POPBP



- TPD, in coordination with other city agencies and departments will invite stakeholders to advise on the implementation of a POPBP process in Tacoma to complement the hot spots strategies it will implement in the shorter term.
- Estimated time frame: 6 – 12 months

Potential Stakeholders	Possible Roles and Responsibilities (Guided by the Advisory Group with Stakeholder Buy-in)
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene POPBP advisory group • Gather intelligence • Conduct criminal investigations • Make arrests • Deter criminal activity • Analyze crime and public-safety related data
City Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal review of recommended intervention strategies as needed • Drafts municipal code changes as needed
Community and Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood investment • Economic development
Community Stakeholder Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garbage and trash pick up • Environmental hazards
Equity and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement • Review of interventions for equity
Fire Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify/address fire hazards and fire code violations
Metro Parks Tacoma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address design or re-development of parks as needed • Park improvements • Programs and activities
Government Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD -- partner government entities and agencies of all levels with an interest in community safety
Neighborhood and Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code enforcement • Community problem-solving • Provision of services/shelter • Impact and needs assessments
Planning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning and land use • Traffic and street use • Assess infrastructure changes to reduce opportunity for crime • Crime prevention through environmental design
Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and cleanliness • Street repairs
Tacoma Public Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before/after school activities • Facility availability and use





POPBP Evaluation



The UTSA researchers will:

- Conduct process and impact evaluations of the POPBP.
- Continue to follow key outcome metrics over time (e.g., 24-36 months) to track long-term impacts.
- Provide reports semi-annually following POPBP implementation.



Long-Term Strategy



Focused Deterrence

Focused deterrence strategies intervene with repeat and high risk *violent offenders* to offer them alternatives to a violent lifestyle (preferred) or to prosecute those who continue to offend

Prosecution is a collaborative effort between local, state, and federal partners

Service provision requires local, state, non-profit, and business partnerships





Focused Deterrence



Mechanism

- Offender call-ins – high risk offenders on probation/parole are called in quarterly for meeting with criminal justice officials, “moral voices,” and service providers
 - Those not on active probation/parole are contacted at home or on the street
- A deterrence message is given; harm caused is conveyed; services are made available
- Follow-up is done by case managers and/or street-level outreach workers



Focused Deterrence



Service Provision

- Counseling
- Job training
- Education (e.g. GED)
- Housing
- Job placement
- Substance abuse treatment, etc.



Focused Deterrence Evaluation



The UTSA research team will be engaged to conduct an independent evaluation of the strategy.

Key indicators include:

- Process
 - Prosecutions/convictions/sentences received
 - Services provided
- Outcome
 - Before-and-after measures of crime and violence
 - Arrests/re-arrests among targeted offenders



Timeline



- Hot Spots Policing
 - July 2022
 - Adjustments made quarterly
 - Reports made quarterly and semi-annually
- Problem-Oriented, Place-Based Policing
 - Ideally 6-12 months after hot spots policing begins
 - Implementation will be flexible depending upon budget requirements
 - Training needed (UTSA); coordination through POPBP Advisory Group
 - Semi-annual reports on implementation and impact by UTSA



● ● ● Timeline Cont'd



- Focused Deterrence
 - 6-12 months after POPBP begins
 - Implementation flexible
 - Federal, state, local partnerships must be formed; resources identified; costs budgeted
 - Federal and local prosecutions, when needed, must be coordinated
 - UTSA to provide training; process and impact evaluations

● ● ● Equity and Fairness



The City of Tacoma has adopted a violent crime plan that:

- Is data driven
- Relies on objective indicators of crime, offending, and victimization
- Is racially and ethnicity-neutral

The plan does not rely on over-policing or practices such as stop and frisk, stereotyping, and/or discretionary/proactive stops.

Equity and Fairness



These modern strategies are designed to reduce violence in violence-prone places and among violence-prone people while also improving the place-based conditions that contribute to violent crime.

This is accomplished through visibility and deterrence rather than discretionary or proactive police stops.

- Enforcement, when needed, is strategic and surgical

Efforts are informed by objective criteria (e.g. reported crime, previous violent convictions, gang membership) rather than the race and/or ethnicity of neighborhoods or individuals in Tacoma.



Tacoma Violent Crime Reduction Project

Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

City Council Study Session
July 12, 2022

