



**2020 Annual
Report**

Memphis Shelby Crime Commission

**Safe Neighborhoods.
Safe Community.**

Introduction

A non-profit, private corporation governed by a diverse 50-member board of directors, the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission is the leading community-based entity focused on public safety. It has created unprecedented partnerships with businesses, schools, neighborhood organizations, public safety agencies and local violence prevention organizations working to make Memphis and Shelby County a safer place.

A key part of fulfilling the Crime Commission's mission is to spearhead development of the Safe Community Plan to significantly improve public safety in the Memphis area, galvanize diverse leaders and stakeholders in the implementation and support of the plan, monitor progress toward implementation, and measure the plan's impact. It is not a government plan. Neither is it a Crime Commission plan. Rather, it is a community-based and community-driven plan developed with input from 400-500 involved citizens.

The non-profit design of the Crime Commission provides much more flexibility in strategic thinking and development of collaborations among diverse organizations, sheltered to a large extent from the periodic changes in political administrations.

Launched in 2017, the current Safe Community Plan is composed of five key goals and sixteen objectives. It is an ambitious but realistic plan to reduce crime in the Memphis community. District Attorney Amy Weirich chairs the overall implementation effort.

We hope this Annual Report will help you learn more about the Crime Commission and the Safe Community Plan. To learn even more, visit www.memphiscrime.org.



Our Mission

The Crime Commission seeks to improve public safety in the Memphis and Shelby County community by identifying and promoting evidenced-based and evidence-informed best practices.

2020 OUTCOMES

The COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges to all of us in 2020. This was certainly true for those on the front line of preventing and reducing crime.

While there will likely be many studies on the impact of the pandemic, it is clear that it had a significant impact on 2020 crime trends in the Memphis community as elsewhere. Based on preliminary figures from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI), some of the impact resulted in declines in certain categories of crime, but it resulted in disturbing increases in other categories. In addition, restrictions imposed by the pandemic made it more difficult to move forward on a number of Safe Community Plan objectives.

On the POSITIVE side, we saw a significant decrease in the **major property crime rate**. (Major property crimes include burglaries, vehicle thefts, and other felony thefts.) This was driven by a decline of over 25% in reported burglaries. This decline may be due to more people staying at home during the pandemic.

▼ 8.9%

An **overall crime rate** is determined by looking at 54 separate categories of crime tracked by the TBI. The overall crime rate dropped slightly in 2020.

▼ 1.5%

On the **violent crime** side, reported robberies dropped significantly. ▼ 12.1%

Of course, we had some SETBACKS in 2020 as well, to a large degree caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. After dropping during the first quarter of the year before the pandemic hit in full force, for the entire year, the **major violent crime rate** increased significantly. (Major violent crimes include murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults.) This increase was driven by alarming increases in murders and reported aggravated assaults. (In 2020, Memphis set an unfortunate record of 332 homicides.)

▲ 24.3%

The increase in these categories of violent crime did not occur just in Memphis but in cities across America. Both murders/homicides and aggravated assaults often involve perpetrators and victims who know each other. In the coming years, studies will be conducted on the impact of the pandemic on these types of violent crimes. It is safe to say, though, the pandemic has caused increased stress among many family members, friends, and acquaintances, with the unfortunate result of increased violence. (As noted above, reported robberies – which normally involve perpetrators and victims who do not know each other – declined significantly.)

Mayor Strickland is correct when he says that violent **gun crime** is our biggest challenge. In Memphis, 79% of the homicides last year involved guns. Gun violence continues to drive our violent crime challenge. Based on Memphis Police Department figures, the number of reported violent incidents involving guns increased significantly in 2020.

▲ 24.4%

While continuing to be our biggest challenge, there were some positive steps in tackling **gun violence**. At the federal level, the U.S. Attorney's Office was successful in taking many serious gun crime offenders off our streets and out of our neighborhoods, with a conviction rate of almost 90%. And the Crime Commission was in the forefront of creating and pushing a community-wide movement to stand against gun violence through highly successful Community Walks Against Gun Violence. **87.5% conviction rate**

Recidivism is defined as the percentage of convicted felon inmates who are reincarcerated within three years of when they were released from incarceration. The rate for 2020 in Shelby County was substantially lower than the statewide rate. **25.5% recidivism rate**

After two straight years of net gains, Memphis suffered a net loss of police officers in 2020. In part, that is attributable to the cancellation of one class of new recruits due to the pandemic. The City Council has set a goal of 2500 officers. As part of the Safe Community Plan, the Crime Commission supports intensified recruitment efforts, including expanding the pool of qualified applicants by loosening residency requirements.



In 2021, the Crime Commission will be advocating and pushing for significant progress on various parts of the Safe Community Plan, including:

1. Scaling up the focused deterrence effort led by District Attorney Amy Weirich, which focuses on those individuals responsible directly or indirectly through their influence over others for a substantial part of our violent crime challenge;

2. Continuing to build on the community-based movement against gun crime through Community Walks Against Gun Violence and other steps to involve residents;
3. Continuing efforts to meet our local law enforcement shortage of officers;
4. Developing an approach to assess and, where appropriate, provide treatment for juvenile offenders upon their first encounter with law enforcement in order to reduce the high repeat offender rate in Juvenile Court and address issues effectively before behavior escalates into violence; and
5. Working to develop a stronger network to connect domestic violence victims with support services.

In 2021, we will launch a community-based planning effort to develop a new 5-year Safe Community Plan. This will not be a Crime Commission plan but rather a true community plan based on input and support from key stakeholders and the community at large.

Every resident of our community deserves to live in a safe neighborhood and work or go to school in a safe environment. We do not have to accept high crime rates. Working together, we can make our community safer.



Research Partnership With the University of Memphis

Monitoring progress and assessing the impact of the Safe Community Plan is aided by a partnership between the Crime Commission and the University of Memphis Public Safety Institute (PSI). The Institute is housed in the University's School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy and draws on researchers from multiple disciplines and departments across the University, including the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. One of the hallmarks of this collaborative effort is to bring academic rigor to assessment of the crime reduction objectives of the current Safe Community Plan.

The PSI plays a key role in independently evaluating and assessing the success of Safe Community Plan objectives as they are implemented.

Thus far, the PSI has issued evaluations or assessments on data-driven policing, gang safety zone injunctions, the plan's Neighborhood Safety Initiative, the SafeWays program, the FED Up communications campaign, and the effectiveness of domestic violence services.

Safe Community Plan

Status Report

- Strengthen community engagement in crime prevention efforts.
 - Create a “Neighborhood Safety Initiative” to strengthen neighborhood watch and community partnerships with law enforcement and other public agencies. **Slightly Behind**
 - Assign prosecutors to targeted geographic areas to pursue local public safety priorities through a community prosecution model. **On Track**
 - Build trust through community policing and more interaction between law enforcement and the public. **Slightly Behind**
 - Expand the SafeWays crime prevention program in apartment communities. **Slightly Behind**
- Strengthen law enforcement’s ability to reduce violent street crime.
 - Hire and retain more law enforcement personnel. **Slightly Behind**
 - Expand data-driven, proactive policing. **On Track**
 - Enhance law enforcement training. **On Track**
 - Enhance the Multi-Agency Gang Unit and information-gathering to reduce gang violence. **Slightly Behind**
 - Effectively initiate a violence intervention focused deterrence model to curb violent crime. **On Track**
 - Address gun crime through tougher state penalties, vigorous federal and state prosecution, and communicating the consequences. **On Track**
- Strengthen intervention programs for ex-offenders.
 - Provide jobs, life skills and support programs for high risk ex-offenders. **Slightly Behind**
 - Implement swift, certain and fair administrative sanctions for violating certain conditions of probation and parole. **On Track**
- Enhance domestic violence prevention and intervention efforts.
 - Evaluate and expand the Family Safety Center and support services to reduce the number of repeat offenders. **On Track**
 - Effectively initiate a domestic violence intervention model to deal with repeat offenders. **Slightly Behind**
- Enhance interventions for juveniles committing delinquent acts.
 - Establish a youth assessment system for non-violent juvenile offenders. **Significantly Behind**
 - Create a system of Evening Reporting Centers to serve delinquent youth. **Slightly Behind**

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ben C. Adams, Jr., Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC;
Crime Commission Board Chair
Louis "Bo" Allen, First Horizon Bank
James (Jim) Baker, Owen Brennan's Restaurant
Melanie Blakeney, Marx-Bensdorf Realtors
Jerry Blum, AutoZone
Sheriff Floyd Bonner, Shelby County Government
Vinessa Brown, LifeLine to Success
Essica Cage, Memphis Police Association
Judge John Campbell, TN State Government
Tom Campbell, Consultant
Dave Carlson, Smith & Nephew
Thomas Cleves, International Paper
Chief Gerald Darling, Shelby County Schools
David Dart, Terminix
John DeBerry, TN State Government
Rob DePriore, Mid-America Properties
John Dudas, Belz Enterprises
Greg Duckett, Baptist – Memorial Healthcare
U. S. Attorney Mike Dunavant, United States Government
Ryan Ehrhart, Raymond James
Mayor Lee Harris, Shelby County Government
Terry Harris, Federal Express Corporation
Jeffrey Higgs, Lemoyne-Owen College Community Development Corp.
Henry Hooper II, State Farm Insurance
Larry Jensen, Commercial Advisors
Rev. James Kirkwood, Memphis Christian Pastors Network
FBI Special Agent in Charge Douglas M. Korneski, U.S. Government
Pierce Ledbetter, LEDIC Management Group, LLC
Mayor Keith McDonald, City of Bartlett Government
Judge Dan Michael, Shelby County Government
Commissioner Amber Mills, Shelby County Government
Johnny Moore, Jr., SunTrust Bank
Stevie Moore, Freedom From Unnecessary Negatives (F.F.U.N.)
Paul Morris, Jack Morris Auto Glass
Albert Mosley, Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare
Rev. Keith Norman, First Baptist Church – Broad
Mayor Mike Palazzolo, City of Germantown Government
TDOC Commissioner Tony Parker, TN State Government
MPD Director Michael Rallings, City of Memphis Government
TBI Director David Rausch, TN State Government
David M. Slott, American Residential Services
Mayor Jim Strickland, City of Memphis Government
Blair Taylor, Memphis Tomorrow
Coleman Thompson, Pyramid Recovery Center
Dr. K. B. Turner, University of Memphis
Jeff Warren, City of Memphis Government
Daniel Weddle, ProTech Services Group, Inc.
District Attorney Amy Weirich, TN State Government;
Safe Community Plan Chair
Craig Weiss, Central Defense Security/Tower Ventures
Dorcas Young-Griffin, Shelby County Government

PARTNERSHIP to PROTECT



Pledge to do your part and
stop gun violence in the community.

COMMUNITY WALK
AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Take the first step in *pledging to protect* your community.



memphiscrime.org

Follow Memphis Crime for event details.