

A Plan for Public Safety in Chicago

Public safety is the most basic function of government. When I am mayor, Chicago will get a fully funded, modern police department that engages in real community policing, constitutional police policies and practices, and comprehensive

community violence interruption efforts. The department will work with community partners across the city. Officers will know the communities they serve. For the first time in decades, trust will be built in every neighborhood, and crime will go down.

We know what strategies work. They have worked elsewhere. Many of them are written into the historic Consent Decree imposed upon the city. In my administration, that decree will be a floor not a ceiling to our aspirations for policing in Chicago. Meanwhile, the Lightfoot Administration's efforts at compliance have only put our communities and police officers in harm's way.

We know that building trust with the community is the path to increasing arrests and convictions for homicides.

The Lightfoot record:

Violence is up significantly since she took the helm as Mayor. In her three full calendar years as Mayor, she has AVERAGED over 758 homicides—a level not seen since the early in 1990s and among the worst averages in the city's history.

In addition to being on the increase, **violence has spread** across the city.

Homicide clearance rates are unacceptably low, and CPD's use of "clearance" hides many cases that remain unsolved.

Chicago has 5 times the homicide rate of New York; 3 times the rate of L.A. In the neighborhoods with the worst violence murder cases are not cleared, but CPD writes a whole lot of parking tickets.

Chicago **spends more on police misconduct settlements than on violence interruption efforts.**

Historic Consent Decree **compliance is far behind schedule.**

Chicagoans see all of this. And we all know it does not have to be this way.

We know that spending more on misconduct than on violence prevention is outrageous and counterproductive. We know that constitutional policing is effective policing, and we know that a restored CPD and vibrant community violence prevention are two sides of the same coin we need to build safe and healthy communities.

Chicago's public safety problems have been decades in the making, and the city will not be made safer overnight, but there is work that can and should be done immediately, and if we unite around a set of evidence-informed and promising strategies, we can make demonstrable and lasting progress.

Here are the elements of my approach:

I. Build a modern, fully staffed, data-informed police department

- *Replace Superintendent Brown.* Superintendent Brown has failed in his mission of leading the Department. He is not trusted by his officers or by the public. He will be replaced with a leader who shares my vision of modern policing. The new superintendent of police must be a leader who inspires the rank and file, understands modern policing strategies, can lead a cultural and professional transformation, is eager to build trust with our communities, and who understands our city. It is my hope that we can find that new leader from within the Department's ranks.
- *Invest in the next generation of command leadership.* Many young police supervisors, a group that reflects the diversity of our city, are eager to help build the kind of Department that works in and for a complicated multi-racial and multi-ethnic city like Chicago. Impatient with what they see as resistance to the reforms spelled out in the Consent Decree, they want to see a Department that values transparency, collaboration, and data-informed decision-making.
- *Lead a Police Department that plans and learns.* The response we've seen from CPD leadership has been ineffective. Instead of learning, planning, and practicing, leaders continue to double down using failed methods. In my administration we will learn from events, and leaders will be accountable for their decisions.

The lack of planning also served to unmask old departmental prejudices as CPD opted essentially to abandon Black and Brown neighborhoods to police downtown, however ineffectively. This was not an evidence-informed decision. It was not even a strategy.

- *Demand administrative excellence across the Department.* My administration will immediately address the longstanding lack of accurate data collection, implement effective auditing standards, and end the lack of effective record-keeping, poor management standards and outdated administrative systems.
- *Improve the experience of rank and file.* The job of police officers in a diverse urban community is one of the most essential and most difficult jobs in our nation. Those who choose this career must have our respect and our support if we expect them to perform effectively. This includes mental health resources, sensible shift structures, and additional training in modern police tactics and policies. Every police suicide is extraordinarily tragic, and every resignation due to bad management is a loss to the community, the officer's family, and to the Department. We must listen to our officers about their needs and provide the resources to address the challenges they face daily in this most challenging job.
- *Increase staffing levels and focus on patrols.* Modern effective policing begins on the streets and in our communities, yet less than half of CPD staff is assigned to patrol, often not in the parts of the city where they are most needed. *I will insist that the Department move resources back into patrol from city-wide teams.* To improve efficiency, equity, and transparency in patrol staffing, the University of Chicago Crime Lab developed a data-driven workforce allocation model. CPD ignored it. Mayor Lightfoot refused to answer reporters' questions about it.

CPD has fewer civilian employees than other larger cities. Sworn officers fill administrative posts that do not require the training and expertise they have and often do require training and

expertise these officers lack. *I will demand that CPD fill its administrative positions with civilians as appropriate and return the sworn personnel to patrol.*

Department staffing levels are down and recent years have seen record numbers of retirements. I will direct the use of hiring and retention incentives to restore staffing levels. *I will demand that we use this new hiring as an opportunity to close the gap between the diversity of police personnel and the communities they serve.*

- *Transition mental health and other interventions to civilian teams that are appropriately trained for the purpose.* This issue received a lot of lip service from the administration, but inadequate action. Some behavioral intervention pilots were implemented, but they keep getting undermined and delayed by CPD leadership. I will move expeditiously to deploy trained civilians where appropriate and deploy the more expensive and scarce sworn personnel for crime prevention and criminal law enforcement.
- *Strategies designed to increase arrests are not the same as strategies designed to make us safer.* The current directive of Superintendent Brown’s “Community Safety Team” is to increase traffic stops to search for contraband and to engage in low-level drug buys. This is not making us safer. Indeed, this strategy does exactly the opposite, it erodes the public trust that is essential for effective public safety. I will insist that Department planning efforts are driven by data-informed approaches that have one goal: make us safer. This should not be controversial.
- *A modern police force does not engage in a one-size-fits-all strategy.* Consider that, although the impact and fear of crime is felt citywide, crime disproportionately affects a handful of predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods. The levels of violence are such that children often experience high levels of trauma that go untreated. Strategies designed to reduce violence in these communities will differ. I will insist that the Department develop strategies and tactics that fit the unique needs of all our communities including trauma responsive and public health strategies in gender-based violence cases. I will insist that the Department build relationships of trust across all of our communities.
- *All the necessary reforms require better data, and a commitment to use data to inform planning.* The recent BGA report detailing failures at every level of risk management is just one example of the kinds of things we can no longer tolerate. Improved risk management was another mainstay of candidate Lightfoot’s campaign four years ago. Yet as the BGA reported, data is still poorly formatted and unusable for decision-making. Meanwhile, the city spends more than twice as much on law enforcement misconduct settlements as it does on community violence intervention. CPD got rid of the data analysts dedicated to reform and crime strategy—including its Director of Data Analytics.

These steps can all be achieved with good leadership, and they will make a measurable difference in the lives of Chicagoans. Taking them will make us compliant with the Consent Decree. But we can and must do more because public safety is not solely a policing issue.

II. Invest in community intervention and preventative efforts:

Chicago is home to some of the most innovative Community Violence Intervention efforts in the nation. But they are under-resourced. Even worse, they are undermined by Mayor Lightfoot and her administration.

The tragedy is that Mayor Lightfoot knows this. She talks about increased cooperation. But lip service is not leadership. The city needs a Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and an Office of Violence Reduction that are properly staffed, led by someone with violence intervention experience. Today those functions are poorly staffed and ineffective.

The results are devastating - there is little community safety coordination, there is little trust between the community and the police, and violence intervention programs must compete for private foundation funding with little or no City support.

In addition, because of the poor leadership and administration, almost 97 percent of the ARPA funds sent to Chicago for violence prevention are still sitting unused in the bank. There is no excuse for this lack of coordination and leadership.

- Make violence reduction a goal and commit to measurable outcomes.
- Properly staff and resource the Mayor's office to coordinate violence intervention efforts.
- Develop more robust pathways to social and economic services to help community leaders connect young people to these opportunities.
- In coordination with County and State governments, and with private philanthropy, scale community violence intervention to cover the 15 neighborhoods most impacted by violence.
- Invest in re-entry efforts: former offenders face many barriers to successful re-entry into the community. Instead of seeing those who are formerly incarcerated as perpetual perpetrators of crime, I will work with the State to improve the re-entry process.

III. Build stakeholder relationships. Maintain constructive relationships between all the actors involved in criminal justice. Coordination between CPD, the County, the Sheriff, the Public Defender's Office, the Illinois Department of Corrections and the County Courts is at an all-time low. Mayor Lightfoot was absent from involvement in Springfield on the Safe-T Act, and other bills that impact our public safety. Worse, her combative approach has made it impossible to develop a whole-government strategy to reduce crime. We cannot move forward when elected officials opt to point the finger at each other rather than to work together. I will bring us together to improve public safety and to provide policymakers and the public with clear, accurate, and timely data.

IV. Long-term efforts to address longstanding inequities must be at the front of the agenda. This is not just an ethical imperative. It is a requirement for sustaining lower levels of violence and crime across our city. My administration will lead the way in investing in communities and combating the root causes and social determinants of health. One of the metrics I will use to determine progress is the level of private investment that flows to communities that have lacked capital for too long.

My community development plan is described elsewhere. But it is important to note here that we cannot become a safe city without at the same time moving to become a just one. We will promote economic opportunity, housing security, and green and community spaces. We will invest in youth workforce development, education, and employment programs. We will enhance the capacity of community-based and also youth-led organizations. We will work tirelessly to attract investment from Chicago's business and philanthropic leadership and build structural support for community-based organizations. For example, I will include an incubator and accelerator program within the city for community-based organizations just (as the private sector does for startups).

V. Transparency, accountability, and milestones

Improving public safety means committing to produce outcomes. No mayor has been willing to set goals, and that leaves everyone feeling helpless. It does not have to be that way.

Let's set milestones that residents understand and support, as make data publicly available so that progress can be measured, and government can all be held accountable.

More on the Lightfoot Record:

- Big Picture Takeaways from Monitor’s Report on compliance with the Consent Decree
 - As of July 30, 2022 the City of Chicago, the Chicago Police Department, and other relevant City entities reached at least Preliminary Compliance with about 78% of the monitorable paragraphs in the Consent Decree. Preliminary compliance, however, is only the first step toward full and effective compliance, and the City and its entities still need to achieve Secondary and Full compliance with the majority of the monitorable paragraphs in the Consent Decree.
 - The Monitor continues to hear from community members, including officers, that reforms are lagging, and that progress is urgently needed.
 - Major Issues
 - Staffing
 - Retention of talent (support services for personnel)
 - High quality training
 - Accuracy, reliability, and efficiency of its data collection and analysis to demonstrate full and effective compliance with Consent Decree
- Police leadership, all the way up to the Mayor's office, lacks the curiosity let alone the capacity to learn and has destroyed relationships with trusted research partners. How do you build on any success if you have no idea where it came from? Do they even ask, what role did CAPS play? What was the impact of city-wide units? Where is the evidence? They have not even asked.
- There is no strategy for public safety. Mayor Lightfoot announced an “Our City, Our Safety” plan, but the leaders who designed it are all gone. She talks of “a whole of government response” but has not explained what that means or how it will be implemented. What has worked? What has not? No one knows. In the Daley years we had CAPS. In the Emanuel years we had data-driven decisions through the Strategic Decision Support Centers (SDSCs). Today these live on only as poorly resourced vestiges of former ideas. They are not priorities. But what has replaced them? 1.5 million happy interactions between police and citizens? A gang forfeiture failure? Midnight curfews? She is not serious.
- Meanwhile CPD has hemorrhaged leadership. Exempt rank losses are staggering. Rank and file numbers are down. Morale crashed, suicides are up, and what is the response? The response is to deny, deflect, and double down.
- There is no strategy to make CPD more effective and responsive in solving crimes or working with communities to make them safer. Up to one-third of 911 calls are non-criminal issues including behavioral problems, environmental and traffic related that can be handled in other ways to free up officers. Chicago has fewer civilian employees than any other major city. The expectations and responsibilities of officers along with unmanageable scheduling makes the jobs unsustainable. The police leadership and the Mayor have barely asked what can be done.
- Recognizing the multidisciplinary nature of community safety, [some cities](#) have created civilian “community safety agencies” or “neighborhood safety offices” whose purpose is to fund, research, and coordinate interdepartmental work on non-carceral safety. Richmond, Calif. was one of the first U.S. cities to create an Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) in 2007. According to [a Center for American Progress report](#), roughly a dozen other cities have since created ONSs. Data on these institutions’ effectiveness is still emerging, but outcomes from Richmond are promising; research associates the city’s ONS with a [55% reduction in gun homicides and a 43% reduction in firearm-related crimes](#).