

## Public Safety in our Neighborhoods – Some Suggestions for Immediate Action

As we search for effective long-term strategies for dealing with disorderly behavior and criminal activity in our neighborhoods, particularly by young people, we cannot ignore actions that we can take now to address the problem. Here are seven suggestions that we can implement right now:

1. Pass and enforce Board Bill 29 now before the Board of Alderman that will provide for certain limitations on the open carry of weapons. While this will not solve the problem of gun violence, it will give police a tool to get stolen guns off the street and will send a message to those who menace our community by openly brandishing guns.
2. Pass and enforce an effective ordinance to limit the number of short-term rental properties, hold owners/hosts accountable for problems caused by renters, and make booking platforms responsible for monitoring compliance and collecting and remitting taxes and fees to the City.
3. Start aggressively holding landlords accountable for allowing insecure properties and for renting space to people responsible for repeated security incidents. Revoke occupancy permits if necessary.
4. Get serious about shutting down nuisance properties that are staging areas for criminal activity. Start with the Tucker Shell gas station that has been the locus of multiple security events, including several homicides, in recent years. The City has been slow and indifferent about dealing with these properties that are creating chaos in the community.
5. Do not allow liquor licenses to be granted to establishments that could lead to more instability in a neighborhood. Board Bill 60, now under consideration, would create loopholes that would allow almost anyone to get a license without consent by the neighborhood or any substantive limitations. This is an existential threat to our neighborhoods.
6. Pass and enforce an ordinance to provide for physical security such as fences and gates for large surface parking lots in downtown and other commercial that are staging areas for cruising and large late-night gatherings.
7. Invest in more regulatory capacity so that the Excise Division, Building Division, SLMPD, and the City Counselor can effectively carry out their duties to deal with problem properties, liquor licenses, traffic enforcement and other important precursors to criminal activity.

We would not argue that the above steps are the answer to the generational problems that have created the violence and instability in our community. However, we can at least take steps to reduce the opportunity for such violence to happen as we search for long-term solutions. We can send a message to property owners and those who commit violence that there will be consequences for actions that undermine public safety and the stability of our neighborhoods. All it will take is the will to act.

Most importantly, our elected officials need to start putting the health and welfare of the community first. Time to put aside rhetoric, ideology, and politics and act now.