



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

100 Holliday Street, Room 250
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

June 3, 2022

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor
State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Hogan,

From my first day in office as Mayor, improving public safety by reducing crime, and addressing the underlying root causes that create a vicious cycle of violence and trauma have been my top priorities.

In Baltimore, year-to-date gun seizures are up 11 percent, gun seizures related to violent crimes are up 19 percent, the homicide clearance rate is up 3.7 percent, and we are clearing warrants quicker than we did in 2021. The Baltimore Police Department's (BPD) Warrant Apprehension Task Force (WATF) has cleared murder warrants in an average of 13 days, which is an 18 percent improvement from 2021. And even the recent gun arrest data shows that gun arrest over the last 28-day period is up 17 percent over last year.

Through January homicides were up 33 percent and nonfatal shootings up 29 percent. Although, through May 1st these numbers are trending in the right direction, dropping to 13 percent and 21 percent respectively. As of June 2nd, those numbers are at 2 percent and 6 percent respectively compared to last year's figures. Still far too much violence but we must realize the immediate reductions we are seeing. To not acknowledge them would be disrespectful to the work of our police officers, detectives, violence interrupters and community members who are working every day to reduce violence in our streets. However, it is clear that we have much more work to do.

When we met last February in Annapolis, we reviewed these same statistics and you expressed surprise at the marked improvements reflected in many of our public safety outputs. That is why I very much welcome your request for additional information. As such, I would again invite you to come to Baltimore and spend some time with me to gain insight and a better understanding of how we are working day in and day out to confront violent crime, address trauma, and cure the disease of gun violence under my Administration.

As my public safety agency, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement (MONSE) is charged with working in tandem with my law enforcement agency, BPD, to co-produce public safety through strategic coordination. Spearheaded by MONSE and in close partnership with BPD under my leadership, we are hard at work to ensure that our Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRs) is implemented in a strategic and sustainable manner. To-date, the pilot that we launched in the Western District just a little over four months ago is yielding optimistic results. This district has historically been Baltimore's most violent district. As of May 28, 2022, homicides are down 33 percent and non-fatal shootings are down 24 percent. In fact, total crime is down 11 percent. We are simultaneously continuing to scale this work in the Western and plan for expansion into subsequent districts. As you should know from reviewing my Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan, GVRs is only one half of our dual approach to gun violence reduction. We are in the midst of cultivating Baltimore's first-ever Community Violence Intervention Ecosystem that mobilizes Baltimore's community-based organizations (CBOs) and world-renowned medical systems to help curb the tide of violence and address the needs of residents

in real time. Baltimore currently stands as a national leader in the CVI space and has support from the Biden Administration's Community Violence Intervention Collaborative (CVIC). This includes our community- and hospital-based partners, frontline Safe Streets Violence Interrupters, and law enforcement officers.

Mr. Governor, consider this letter as a formal invitation for you to come to Baltimore to see some of our work as mentioned above in community violence interruption. I would also welcome the opportunity for you to join me on a visit to some of our traditional crime prevention and law enforcement operations, including our new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Baltimore Police Department's Watch Center. You would also benefit from visiting one of our four Baltimore City Intelligence Centers (BCICs), which are embedded in our police districts and provide real-time data and intelligence to our officers on the street. By visiting Baltimore to see first-hand the full extent of the work being performed daily, I believe you will better understand our efforts to deter, prevent, and reduce violent crime in our city.

In your letter, you also referenced accurate counts of felony warrants. To that end, we have contracted with a firm to modernize and clean up our historical warrant database to ensure that our efforts can remain focused on those repeat violent offenders that are causing the vast majority of violent crimes in our city. In fact, we have already been working with your Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services (GOCOPYV) to leverage the state grant award for Warrant Apprehension for FY2022 to complete this task. I would also like to take time to recognize the great partnerships being built with MONSE, BPD and representatives from your agencies participating in CJCC. They are working together on systems change and innovation that, while long overdue, will benefit Baltimore and Maryland long after you and I are no longer in office.

As to your characterization of BPD's refusal of the assistance of Maryland State Police, I have spoken to the BPD and believe that this information is inaccurate. We are unaware of the particular instance(s) of BPD rejecting MSP investigative assistance in ongoing and active cases. However, BPD works with the MSP constantly on a variety of deployments, investigations and task forces. As a general matter, we welcome additional MSP and State assistance and have even proactively requested it, such as for the reinstatement of the bi-weekly MSP and MDTA patrols within the city. The same goes for investigatory assistance and would love if we can get additional detectives embedded with our own to help with cases. Additionally, MSP does provide valuable assistance in warrant execution efforts as part of WATF (which we will be enhancing with the State Warrant Apprehension grant), and we continue to leverage MSP assistance on federal task force efforts alongside FBI, DEA, and ATF. In addition, starting on July 1, and according to a newly enacted state law, the MSP will begin policing I-83 and I-295, which will allow the BPD to redirect its resources to the rest of the City. I would like to commend the work that your troopers contribute to the BPD and the City of Baltimore. They provide a significant value-added in our efforts to establish greater police visibility and improve our city's public safety. In fact, we value their assistance so much that I would repeat my earlier request to bring back the bi-weekly MSP and MDTA Police patrols in the city that were discontinued last year. However, it is my understanding that MSP, like law enforcement agencies across the country, are dealing with staffing shortages and currently do not have the manpower to offer patrol support to the city.

We have submitted to GOCOPYV our plan for the use of the regular block grant, to include ongoing technology improvements. This year, BPD is requesting the funding to be used for dash cameras that have the potential to be License Plate Reader (LPR) capable. All LPR reads captured by BPD readers are transmitted to the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC). MCAC stores the reads for statewide inquiries, and what makes the program so effective is that every law enforcement agency is part of the same state-wide network. However, MCAC has expressed reluctance to expand its capacity to accommodate additional LPR vendors. We request that you provide MCAC with the necessary direction to allow these new dash cameras to become connected to the statewide network, which will transform nearly 300 patrol cars into Mobile LPR-capable units.

In closing, there continue to be opportunities for the State to provide valuable assistance to my Administration's efforts to combat violent crime in Baltimore that I would urge you to consider:

- Enhanced support from MSP, MdTA, and MTA for greater visibility in targeted areas of the City. The BPD has already begun reaching out to these partners to determine whether and how additional resources can be leveraged over the summer months. The BPD and the City are willing to leverage a portion of the State allocations received in FY2023 to provide overtime hours to accomplish this.
- Parole and probation violation notifications (to include geographic zone violations) need to occur much sooner than the current process. BPD is only notified 24 hours after the violation has occurred. This is particularly necessary for violent offenders that have been identified as risks for recidivism. We would also request increased partnership around enforcing violations.
- Active participation of State Law enforcement agencies in the Warrant Apprehension effort that is being funded by State appropriations. Overtime resources can be made available to any and all agencies that have concurrent jurisdiction in areas of Baltimore City that can provide personnel to assist BPD in their efforts. However, we will also need the encouragement of their officers to participate in this effort. Anything you and your state police resources can do on this front would be appreciated.

Last General Assembly session, and to your credit, you did make a financial investment into several proposals I put forward to enhance police efforts to reduce violence in Baltimore. We received the award for the FY22 Warrant Apprehension grant only last week. Moreover, the FY23 allocation for Warrant Apprehension and SAPP will not be available until July 1, 2022. When these funds are made available, the BPD will better be able to demonstrate how outputs have improved.

Furthermore, as I have stated many times, we must have a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of violence in our City. While many, including yourself, continue to focus on additional policing as the only answer, time and again, in every major city in America, my Administration and my residents know that we absolutely can not and will not police our way into public safety. We know that the true way to achieve sustainable reductions in violent crime is to augment traditional law enforcement with policies and programs that interrupt violence before it can occur, reduce poverty, address trauma, provide access to mental health services, and strengthen the educational system. I have made an unprecedented hundred-million-dollar investment in these areas because we know they will be the game-changer for communities that have experienced decades of disinvestment.

Mr. Governor, by visiting Baltimore outside of events of pomp and circumstance, you can see first-hand the full extent of the work being carried out on a daily basis. I truly believe you will gain a greater understanding of our efforts to deter, prevent, and reduce violent crime in our City.

The path forward for Baltimore is clear. We must work toward a comprehensive solution that can not only address violence, but also create new opportunities for Baltimoreans. It is my hope that you share that vision and understand the deep need for a community-centered and public health-oriented approach to building a safer Baltimore. I will continue to use all available resources to achieve this goal, and will continue to ensure that you and your Administration are made aware of any opportunity to partner with the City where possible.

I look forward to scheduling your tour(s) and visit(s) to Baltimore at your earliest convenience.

In partnership,



Brandon M. Scott

Mayor

Baltimore City