

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

After reviewing crime data and personal experience, Westwood residents identified the area in the immediate vicinity of the intersection of Harrison Avenue and Boudinot Avenue as a hot spot for crime and for conditions associated with or leading to crime. A team of residents was charged with an environmental scan, data analysis, and the development of recommendations for a reduction in crime at that location.

### **SCANNING**

Between January 2015-March 2016, crime data show that seven violent crimes occurred in our focus area. These crimes included aggravated assaults and robbery. While not as high as at another location under review, the incidents are indicative of a shift in the occurrence of crime as it moves to the borders with adjacent neighborhoods. Additionally, blight and crime factors were observed throughout the location, including litter, panhandling, loitering, public intoxication, and illegal drug transactions. The team conducted focused observation at properties in the area, held a focus group attended by business owners and organization leaders, interviewed our neighborhood police liaison officer, and reviewed additional crime data. Using the Cincinnati Police Department PIVOT survey, residents were asked about their public safety experience.

### **ANALYSIS**

The team then analyzed the data, considering scope, causes, physical locations, and, for example, what it knows about victims and offenders; strategies that business owners use or reject for deterring crime and problem behaviors; physical conditions that contribute negatively; and gaps and opportunities for citizen, community, and city engagement that would have a positive impact. Noteworthy findings include the following:

- Properties that have a higher incidence of litter and loitering typically also have additional, more serious issues of crime and negative community perception. They tend to pay little attention to their exterior space.
- Business owners and managers who consider themselves neighbors and hold the interests of the community in mind take responsibility for their sites and, generally, have fewer violent crimes.
- All of the crimes in the past year have involved male offenders, of various ages and ethnicities. Most of the loitering involves male teens and young men.
- The businesses that are open 24 hours per day attract more problem behaviors and, in some cases, enable these behaviors.
- Vacant properties, alleyways, and the public right of way attract deviant behavior and lack routine oversight.
- Limited evening business and social activity in the immediate area, except for use of a fast food restaurant and convenience stores, means fewer eyes on the street and more negative behavior.
- Businesses that sell alcohol and drug-related paraphernalia have higher incidents of criminal activity.

### **RESPONSE**

Recommended action steps are detailed in the report, along with potential partners for the resolution of issues. The goal is a significant decrease in incidents of violent crime in the coming year, along with increased civic engagement and collaboration with city departments and other partner organizations to address the conditions that contribute to violence and other crimes.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Success will be measured by an improvement in citizens' sense of safety based upon specific targeted improvements on several properties to result in a reduction in violent crime; improved community-business relationships; less loitering; a reduction in litter; a decrease in public drinking; and evidence of increased code enforcement.