

NEWS



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MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

John F. Street, Mayor
Joe Grace, Acting Director of Communications
www.phila.gov

City Hall - Room 216
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215-686-6210
Fax: 215-686-2170

Mayor Street and Police Commissioner Johnson Convene Editorial Meeting with Weekly Newspapers to Discuss the City's Efforts to Prevent and Reduce Violence

Philadelphia, PA – On Wednesday, September 6, Mayor Street, Police Commissioner Johnson, Managing Director Pedro A. Ramos, members of the Mayor's Cabinet and other City officials involved in Operation Safer Streets met with editor and reporters from nearly two dozen weekly newspapers to discuss the violence in Philadelphia and the City's efforts to prevent and reduce it.

"Violence is increasing in cities across the Country," Mayor Street said. "Major crime is down 16 percent in Philadelphia during my tenure, but we are not immune to a national increase in violence. Baltimore, Birmingham, Detroit, Kansas City, Richmond, St. Louis and Washington each had higher homicide rates than Philadelphia last year. It is affecting large and small cities in all parts of this Country."

During the two hour meeting, the Mayor and members of his Administration discussed Operation Safer Streets, the City's four-pronged effort to address violence. Police Commissioner Johnson shared police data and explained the strategies and flexibility of deployment the City is using. Managing Director Ramos discussed efforts to engage community members through Town Watch, the faith-based community and other activities. Division of Social Services Director Julia Danzy and Department of human Services Commissioner, Cheryl Ransom-Garner discussed the supports the City's social service agencies are providing, in particular the Adolescent and Youth Violence Reduction Partnerships. Secretary for External Affairs, Loree Jones talked about the City's plans to lobby for stricter gun laws and additional funding for proven violence prevention programs.

In addition to detailing the components Operation Safer Streets, the Mayor's team shared the data and research that was used to create this comprehensive program. Historical data

on homicides, shootings, violence, police personnel and deployment were discussed. Statistical information on the City's children and youth were as well.

“This is not the first time this City has experienced an increase in homicides,” continued Mayor Street. “This is a complex issue which is why we are approaching it from a comprehensive standpoint. There is no one single answer. We are working to support and strengthen families, educate and train ex-offenders, engage and motivate the community to stand up for their communities and join Town Watch. Our Police Department is the best in the Nation, but they alone will not solve this problem. We must all work together.”

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mayor Street asked the attendees if they would be willing to come back and further delve into the issues of truancy, curfew, parenting and antiviolenace programs. Each reporter/editor agreed and was willing to come back for further discussion to help inform their reporting as the entire City of Philadelphia works to prevent and reduce violence. Details for this meeting are being addressed and invitations will be issued in the near future.

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