



A Community Policing Plan for the 43rd Ward

Our 43rd Ward team made public safety our top priority. We took immediate steps to help address the issue right away:

- Invested in strategically placed security cameras and license plate readers that experts say are proven to deter crime
- Built strong relationships with CPD commanders so that our needs are communicated directly to leadership and issues are quickly addressed
- Co-sponsored ordinances to crack down on illegal guns, improve safety on the CTA and protect first responders

This is a problem that also requires long-term solutions. That's why we:

- Helped pass a city budget that increased anti-violence investments by \$100 million and that added \$20 million to fund more officers
- Supported programs that address the root causes of crime and supported economic development projects in communities that have been disinvested in for too long

We will continue to advocate for anti-violence investments and economic development projects in disinvested communities that help reduce violence in the long term. The primary focus of this plan is to outline immediate strategies to get officers back on the beat in our neighborhoods and reduce the immediate harm that violence causes in our community.

We're about to elect a new mayor and hire a new police superintendent. This is an opportunity for our aldermen and other local leaders to work together and advocate for a public safety plan based on community policing that gets more officers on the beat in our neighborhoods, empowers our local commanders to implement policing strategies tailored to our local needs, and holds those leaders accountable to our residents.

Here is our plan:

1. Move more police staff to the 43rd Ward – and have more of them walk the beat

The number of officers on staff for CPD has dropped precipitously over the past few years – due to attrition and slow recruitment results – and that must change ASAP.

CPD leadership reversed some strategies implemented by Superintendent Charlie Beck – who rightly wanted to move more officers into our police districts. Our current and outgoing leadership instead created centralized units, which drew staffing out of our local districts, and slowed the process of putting civilians in the right roles.

I'll fight to put more patrol officers in the 18th and 19th districts, allow more autonomy for our local commanders, and ensure that our superintendent, chiefs and deputy chiefs follow data-driven workforce plans developed by experts. By some estimates there are hundreds of officers who could be moved to patrol in the districts in coming months, creating much-needed additional manpower before we are able to hire the additional officers that our city and our ward need.

ACTIONS

1. **Return to Superintendent Charlie Beck's district-focused system** and get officers to the street.
2. **Find ways to reduce time spent on non-policing calls** by investing in programs like CARE,¹ which allows officers to do policing work and mental health workers to take over the work that is more appropriate for them to handle such as nonviolent, mental health-related calls. In addition, we should encourage OEMC to better train our call takers to be aware of all of our safety resources across the city and in our districts so that they know what needs to go to police and what can go to service providers.

¹ **Expanding the CARE program to decrease officers' workload:**

It is estimated that 20% of all calls to the 911 system involve someone experiencing a mental health crisis ([Source 1](#), [Source 2](#)). In Chicago, our police department receives roughly 175 mental health-related calls per day, or over 63,000 per year.

Our officers are spread thin as it is – with over 1,000 ordered to work 11 or more consecutive days ([Source](#)), which cost our city \$100 million in overtime this past year. And yet, we ask them to handle situations in which they do not specialize, such as mental health incidents.

Many cities have adopted a model where 911 calls about these types of incidents can be rerouted to specialized crisis teams, who are solely or partly made up of mental health professionals. Recent data from New York City's version of this program shows that when these teams respond, people accept help more often, have to visit a hospital less, and that 911 receives fewer repeat calls to the same locations ([Source](#)).

Chicago has its own version of this program, called the CARE program (Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement) – but it has only responded to 600 calls in a year and a half of being live – less than two per day.

Not only are mental health specialists more effective at responding to 911 calls, but also by taking over 63,000 calls per year off the plate of our officers, we can free up more of their time to remain within their beat, building community relationships rather than responding to calls that are best served by other specialists.

3. **Reboot the civilianization process** that started under Superintendents Johnson and Beck. In modern policing – especially in places like New York and Los Angeles – desk, law, and data jobs are done by civilians, which allows sworn personnel to focus on what they do best: build relationships in the neighborhoods they serve. While this process was identified as part of Superintendent Johnson’s 2019 Strategic Plan and accelerated by Interim Superintendent Beck, many civilians left the department under Superintendent Brown (the data analytics unit, for instance, was decimated). We need to get civilians back into key support roles at CPD.²
4. **Focus more full-time resources in 018.** Downtown districts (018 and 001) are chronically some of the lowest staffed districts by officers assigned directly to the district – often getting credit for coverage for centralized units that spend much of their time helping out downtown. However, this leads to less authority for our commanders. If there are officers assigned to 018 and 019, they should report to our local leaders.

2. Create better connection and accountability to geographies

While it is important to have more officers in general, we have to ensure they stay where they are assigned and community members get to know who walks their streets.

I will push to ensure that more officers stay on their beats, so we create more ownership for commanders for officers in their geographies by reducing reliance on centralized units (these types of units are best reserved for citywide challenges, like homeland security or gun trafficking). I’ll also work to hold our districts accountable while supporting the implementation of their community policing strategies.

ACTIONS

1. **Put as much authority for moving staff and keeping patrol in the districts** in the hands of those who know what’s happening on the ground: our commanders. Local authority brings greater safety and accountability.
2. **Hold commanders accountable to their community policing plans.** Every year, CPD districts summarize community policing efforts in annual plans and strategies.

² **Civilianizing key non-policing roles within CPD:**

I was proud to vote in favor of our last city budget, in part because we put \$36 million toward hiring civilian employees for administrative roles that help make the Chicago Police Department compliant with federal regulations such as the consent decree.

Officers’ staff hours are far better spent in the field, on their local beats, rather than behind a desk, where the use of administrative hires would be more efficient. I believe it is crucial that we undertake a comprehensive audit of CPD staffing, evaluating where we can free up uniformed officers to make use of their skill sets and be out in the community making our neighborhoods safer, rather than stuck doing administrative tasks.

Monthly meetings should be held on these plans to track key performance metrics, and determine how our residents and police can partner to improve safety.

3. **Challenge CPD leadership to improve “beat integrity.”** It is crucial for the 43rd Ward, and Chicago broadly, to support ‘beat integrity’ – the ability for CPD officers to be assigned within a community beat for extended periods of time. This type of officer deployment supports our police’s ability to be proactive rather than reactive – getting to know community members over time, becoming a known presence to residents, and to truly understand a neighborhood and the way it wants to be served. We can maintain beat integrity and achieve real community policing by reducing the burden on our officers from tasks that are best done by other city employees, decreasing their time spent on inefficient activities, decreasing officers getting pulled from their beats, and investing in other areas of CPD.
4. **Maximizing Neighborhood Policing.** Over the past few years CPD has struggled to identify what its overarching community policing strategy is. At its worst, the Independent Monitor stated publicly that it was unclear what CPD’s approaches were to community engagement, community policing, Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy, and its Neighborhood Policing Initiative (“NPI” or, as it is often called, the “DCO Program”). Of these pieces, NPI is one of the most compelling models to be tried in modern community policing. Essentially, the program works to establish roles (District Coordination Officers or “DCOs”) who have responsibility for coordinating problem-solving in a district. This model encourages greater beat integrity, time off the radio for officers to spend time partnering with residents to identify intractable problems to solve them, and highlighting resources in the neighborhood to enhance providing non-policing resources to individuals who need them. NPI has been tried in a number of districts in Chicago with positive results, and I want 018 and 019 to take roles as “gold standard” districts for the program.
5. **Create better alignment between CTA and the district commanders** through meetings and better coordination with Strategic Decision Support Centers (SDSCs). It is critical that CTA maintains a unit for trains, but districts need to take more responsibility for the stations.

3. Prioritize promoting internal CPD leaders to improve department morale

As most of us sadly know, morale at CPD has suffered precipitously under recent leadership. It is time for a leader from within CPD to take over as Superintendent – someone who understands how to motivate front line officers and models courageous and reform-minded leadership. We need someone who knows what it means to walk the beat, lead a district, and partner with communities to reduce crime.

ACTIONS

1. Beyond internal leadership, officers respect hearing from their elected leaders in their own environments – getting to know what it means to drive a patrol car or staff a midnight shift. That’s why as alderman I commit that either myself or my office will:
 - Attend a roll call monthly in our districts and multiple ride-alongs to keep my finger on the pulse of the safety in the 43rd Ward.
 - Attend CAPS, DAC and (future) NPI meetings as well as meeting with community groups – key community partners include the Near North Unity Project and the Old Town Triangle Neighborhood Association – because community safety must be a partnership.

4. Reinvigorating the SDSCs and ATCs in our districts and across the city

From 2016-2019, Chicago saw a historic drop in violence and crime across the city – some of which was attributed [STUDY] to better management at CPD and the creation of Strategic Decision Support Centers (SDSCs) in each CPD district in partnership with the University of Chicago Crime Lab. These SDSCs coordinated resources through the analysis by civilian data analysts and coordination with sworn decision makers in policing, and they were later expanded to Area Tech Centers (ATCs) for detectives to rapidly process evidence and resolve cases faster. Over the last four years, these systems have drifted and can be reinvigorated if city leadership pushes for it. SDSCs can be the “nerve center” for better coordination with community resources (where much of our COVID-19 dollars have gone) and neighborhood policing staffing to advance safety.

ACTIONS

1. Reboot civilian analyst roles at CPD and create reinvigorated accountability for the SDSCs.
2. Deploy more dollars (for example, by leveraging local businesses and aldermanic menu dollars) toward more neighborhood cameras to provide greater coverage for the 43rd ward creating faster response for crime as it happens.
3. Host collaborative meetings between SDSC leadership in the districts and community resources to create better response for safety issues.

4. Push for the reestablishment of relationships between the University of Chicago Crime Lab and CPD to improve data analysis, management, and workforce allocation.

5. Guns

In late 2022, I co-sponsored an ordinance that would enhance penalties for illegal guns.

ACTIONS

1. As alderman, I will continue to partner with both our local and state leadership to keep up pressure to enhance accountability for illegal possession of firearms, stop the inflow of firearms into Chicago, and partner with all local law enforcement agencies to promote “swift and certain” responses to firearm possession.
2. I will partner with our local elected leaders at the city, county, and state levels to reduce youth possession of firearms, and diminish the overall availability of deadly weapons. Our best course of action is to limit the amount of chances younger folks have to come into contact with firearms — a critical step in making our community safer.

6. Accountability

Much ink has been spilled about the importance of the consent decree and community oversight bodies in improving accountability for CPD and safety issues in Chicago. As an attorney and believer in effective government, I fundamentally believe in both of these steps. Now it is time to move beyond buzzwords and boards. We must implement data-driven strategies to ensure our systems are truly working to make us safer and our agencies accountable. To do so, I will focus on the following:

ACTIONS

1. Work with the new District Council members to develop easy ways for our neighbors to digest CPDs strategies to address our most pressing safety issues and if they are working.
2. Prioritizing the parts of the consent decree that make us safer quicker:
 - Unity of command and span of control
 - Training
 - Data analysis and capacity
 - Performance management

3. Using the city's Violence Reduction Dashboard, Community Policing Strategic Plans, and Sentiment Dashboards, I'll push for transparent data that helps us understand if we're becoming safer and if residents' concerns are being addressed.
4. Summer in Chicago is a time of challenging violence, crowds, and event management for CPD and OEMC. I'll partner with our commanders – as I already have – to prepare ahead of time so we know about summer staffing in May and understand the biggest weekends in the 43rd that require citywide attention.