



PUBLIC SAFETY INSTITUTE

Downtown Safety Plan Fall 2023

WILLIAM L. GIBBONS

Executive Director,
Public Safety Institute

JOHN GNUSCHKE, Ph.D

President, 901 Economics

STANLEY E. HYLAND, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus, Department of
Anthropology, and former Director,
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

JANINE HEINER

Director, SafeWays Certification
Program

MARTIN E. LIPINSKI, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus, Department
of Civil Engineering

MICHAEL RALLINGS

Former Director,
Memphis Police Department

JAMES 'MAX' HELMS

Research Assistant,
Public Safety Institute



Message From the Executive Director

The Public Safety Institute (PSI) at the University of Memphis is an interdisciplinary part of the University community committed to identifying and advancing best practices in the field of public safety.

Under an agreement between the University and the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC), the PSI created a planning team to oversee development of this Downtown Safety Plan.

We give special thanks to Lawrence Green, DMC director of Safety and Hospitality, who served as a liaison with the DMC and an invaluable supporter of our efforts.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bill Gibbons'.

Bill Gibbons, Executive Director
Public Safety Institute

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction		
9	Pedestrian Main Street	28	Aggressive Panhandling
11	The Beale Street Entertainment District	30	Coordination, Cooperation, and Information Sharing
13	Police Presence in the Beale Street Entertainment District	31	Appendix
15	Parking Facilities	59	References
17	The Blue Suede Brigade		
18	Crime Hotspots		
21	Downtown Tours/Connectivity		
22	Tom Lee Park and Other Memphis River Parks		
24	Traffic Control/Mobility		
26	Street Performances and Perceptions of Downtown Safety		
27	Downtown Homelessness		

INTRODUCTION

Last fall, the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) entered an agreement with the University of Memphis to develop a public safety plan for Downtown Memphis. The University of Memphis Public Safety Institute took the lead in pulling together a team to develop the plan.

The overall goal of the project was to ensure that a safe environment exists so that Downtown Memphis is a place people want to live, work, invest, visit and enjoy. Crime is a complex issue, and crime reduction and prevention plans cost money that is scarce at best. Reducing and preventing crime does have a positive economic payoff for the community. While many studies indicate that Memphis ranks among the nation's most dangerous cities and has an incredible cost of crime, it also has a wealth of Downtown assets, including the Mississippi River, its parks, its heritage and architecture, museums, its civil rights history, music venues, and entertainment and sports arenas. These assets lay a solid foundation for building a more engaging and safer Downtown for all.

The Approach

In addition to the planning team, development of the plan included a review of previous studies, including one by the DMC in 2021, a 2022 University of Memphis Urban Anthropology Class Study of Assets Downtown, and recent survey results and social media monitoring by Memphis Tourism (Convention and Visitors Bureau); an advisory council made up of key stakeholders; and multiple experts, business leaders, and other Downtown leaders who participated in numerous focus groups. An extensive survey with over 600 responses was conducted to examine the public safety issues and identify specific concerns facing the Downtown area. The team looked at what other cities are doing to address public safety, as well as what Memphis is doing or has done in the past.

With input from the Downtown Memphis Commission, for purposes of developing a plan, the following boundaries were agreed upon to define Downtown:

- The Mississippi River on the west
- Danny Thomas on the east
- Carolina on the south
- A.W. Willis on the north

Based on input received, the team quickly decided to take a broad, somewhat holistic approach to addressing Downtown public safety. Of course, the plan includes enforcement steps the team feels need to be taken. But the team also recognized the importance to public safety of Downtown's environment (cleanliness, proper maintenance, etc.); the importance of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design; the belief that a more pedestrian friendly Downtown with wayfinding signage will engage more residents and visitors, especially families, in discovery and learning activities; and the importance of addressing traffic and parking issues.

The Public Safety Challenge

Like many downtowns, Downtown Memphis faces challenges. There is the direct challenge of crime – especially property crimes such as vehicle break-ins and vehicle thefts – and the perception that Downtown is not safe, due in part to aggressive panhandling; homeless individuals, many of whom have behavioral health and/or drug addiction issues, and who are aggressive in their encounters with people; and roaming groups of youth, especially in the Beale Street Entertainment District.

As in other cities, many businesses – including investment firms, law offices and banks – have moved from Downtown to other parts of the city. And with some exceptions like Bass Pro, major retail has moved out of Downtown. This has reduced pedestrian traffic, created unfortunate empty building spaces, and affected many small businesses such as restaurants. The result is a sense that Downtown is less safe than it once was. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath escalated a trend that had begun pre-pandemic.

To address public safety in their downtown cores many major cities are focused on downtown safety plans.

In April of this year, Seattle issued its Downtown Activation Plan designed to make downtown “...safe, welcoming, and active...” In Seattle’s case, a major focus is disruption of the distribution, sale, and use of narcotics, with the fentanyl crisis on downtown streets “causing death and disorder.” Seattle’s plan is not about restoring the downtown of the past but focusing on what is possible for the future. Proposed steps include (1) incentives to fill vacant storefronts, (2) more opportunities for food truck operators and pop-up vendors, (3) better street and sidewalk lighting, (4) increased trash and litter removal, (5) repurposing office buildings for housing, (6) making downtown a hub for arts and entertainment, and (7) increasing the number of downtown ambassadors (similar to Memphis’ Blue Suede Brigade).

In February of this year, San Francisco issued its Downtown Safety Plan, with the goal of “...ensuring that everyone feels at ease...downtown.” The plan calls for (1) an enhanced public safety presence, (2) a more coordinated response to homelessness and behavioral health challenges, (3) support for small entrepreneurs, (4) parking garage security, (5) clean sidewalks, (6) police access to privately owned live video footage, and (7) an increase in community ambassadors.

Sometimes, cities face public safety consequences as a result of official actions taken with unintended consequences. For example, Oregon voters backed decriminalizing hard drug possession. The result has been the open use of hard drugs by a growing homeless population that is drug dependent. In 2018, the U.S. Court of Appeals covering west coast states ruled that cities could not prevent people from sleeping outside if alternative shelter was not available. Officials have allowed tents on streets because they have little to offer in terms of housing. The city of Portland has experienced an increase in homicides and other acts of violence involving homeless victims as well as a steep increase in drug overdoses due in large part to the prevalence of fentanyl. San Francisco and Seattle face similar challenges.

In Memphis, the number of vehicle break-ins Downtown is arguably the result at least in part to action by the Tennessee General Assembly in 2014 to allow handguns in vehicles without the need for a handgun carry permit, meaning more people are carrying firearms in vehicles and leaving them there. It did not take long for the criminals – in many cases using groups of juveniles who face very little consequence –

to take advantage of the change in the law. Vehicle break-ins and theft of firearms from vehicles have skyrocketed. This is especially a challenge in Downtown with multi-story parking garages.

In 2022, the Memphis Police Department (MPD) Downtown wards (Wards 621, 622, and 623) reported 2,165 Part One crimes (defined as murders, rapes, robberies/carjackings, aggravated assaults, burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, and other felony thefts). This included four murders, 10 forcible rapes, 11 carjackings, 139 aggravated assaults, 49 residential burglaries, 23 business burglaries, 541 vehicle thefts, and 617 thefts from vehicles.

For the first half of 2023 (January-June), the Downtown wards reported 1,306 Part One crimes, including four murders, five forcible rapes, five carjackings, 75 aggravated assaults, 25 residential burglaries, 24 business burglaries, 445 vehicle thefts, and 297 thefts from vehicles.

Memphis Tourism tracks perceptions of crime Downtown through both a website survey and through social media posts. For 2022, only five percent of social media about Memphis mentioned something about Downtown Memphis crime, although social media conversations about crime Downtown have increased. About 34 percent of social media posts about Downtown crime mentioned key tourism landmarks, such as Beale Street, the National Civil Rights Museum, and Bass Pro. Only five percent mentioned Beale Street, 10 percent mentioned vehicle-related crime, 10 percent mentioned gun violence, and eight percent focused on negative personal narratives and individual perceptions of Downtown. Posts referencing Downtown's key tourism landmarks tended to be positive. Social media users often understand the appeal of visiting "downtown demand drivers" like Bass Pro and Beale Street but feel unsafe venturing much further.

Economic Challenges and Opportunities

In May of 2023, the Property Club ranked Memphis as the most dangerous city in America. While probably defining it in broader geographic terms than we do, it included Downtown as among the most dangerous parts of the city. (The Property Club report is in contrast to other reports and listings that rank Downtown Memphis as one of the top tourist destination stops in 2023.)

It is difficult to balance the crime coverage with sustaining the growth of Downtown business, tourism, and residential development. Memphis has always been a community challenged by economic and demographic barriers to growth and prosperity. After the Great Recession of 2008-10, Memphis resumed its traditional pattern of slow steady economic growth and had recovered economically from the recession by 2019. Traditionally, Memphis grows fastest and best when the national economy is growing at a rapid pace. After the Great Recession, the nation had slow steady economic growth, and so did Memphis.

Much like an intense version of the Great Recession, the COVID-19 disaster of 2020 set the Memphis community back as the nation headed into another recession. The recovery from the depths of the pandemic recession has been rapid for the nation and for Memphis. The rebound has generated a full employment economy last seen in 2019. The national and local recovery has created an environment where jobs are in abundance, workers are in short supply, wages are increasing, and inflation is

troublesome. Supply chain imbalances, energy shortfalls, and excessive post pandemic stimulus created an economy faced with rising prices and the shortage of workers, goods and many services.

Downtown Growth Tied to Public Safety

While the recovery did generate employment and income opportunities for people willing and able to work, the 2021-23 recovery has not addressed many of the structural barriers to the community's growth. Unmet health needs, low performing public schools, high poverty rates, rising crime rates, and poor publicity make promoting the city as a destination for new businesses and new tourists more difficult. Evidence is clear that the outmigration of city and metro area residents is closely related to the higher crime rates in the city and particularly the core of the city. While some initiatives may simply displace crime, it is true that small steps forward can begin in the core of the city. Downtown Memphis is a high-profile place where we can make a special effort to address public safety.

Downtown crime hotspots are highest in areas where people park and gather for special events and entertainment. These areas and other areas like Main Street, the riverfront, and places where the issues of homelessness and panhandling are special problems are of concern because they are areas where people work, visit and walk frequently. Expanding businesses, increasing the number of residents, and more visitors and tourists are essential ingredients to the economic development of Downtown Memphis and are threatened by the problem and perception of crime. (Fear cannot be overcome solely by data.)

Crime has an impact on the cost of government and the taxes that must be generated to pay for community services. Increasing competition for resources reflects the mismatch that exists between the demand for social services to address structural barriers to growth and the tax revenues available to pay the bill. Nothing is free, and it is difficult to generate support for higher taxes for any reason. Making investments in the community, including efforts to reduce crime Downtown, will have a positive impact on the growth of the community and ultimately tax revenues. Expenditures for crime prevention and reduction in Downtown will generate increases in tourism, increases in business revenues, crime related cost reductions for businesses, and increases in housing values. Each of these benefits and many others will generate tax revenue increases that offset the cost of the crime prevention and reduction initiatives.

The economic damage to the city from crime has been accelerating. The numerous nationally publicized crimes and our crime statistics overall are having a negative impact on the future of the community and Downtown Memphis. The development of a Downtown plan to address public safety challenges is an essential part of the broader actions required to promote the economic growth and prosperity of the city.

Crime erodes the economic base of every neighborhood by having a negative impact on residential, commercial, and business property values. Homeowners in particular watch the value of their homes decline as crime increases. The fear of high crime rates increases the supply of homes for sale as residents flee to safer areas and decreases the demand for the same properties. High quality homes in Memphis either slowly increase in value or decline in value as the incidents and severity of crime in the community increase. Everyone in Memphis is impacted negatively by crime and should be aware of the

damage being done to their economic assets even if they are not a direct victim of crime. Every crime generates a loss to the victim, the victim's family, friends, businesses, tourism and the community in general.

Barriers to success are not exclusively linked to crime. For example, education, poverty, and lack of civic engagement are factors that limit the pace of economic growth. Memphis has a long history of under investing in education and failing to address the poverty problem, and both issues are positively related to the crime levels that exist in the community.

The problems associated with crime are not unique to Memphis. Other cities have similar problems and face similar difficulties reducing crime. For example, the Property Club's top ten list of the most dangerous cities in the nation included St. Louis, Oakland, Albuquerque, Baltimore, New Orleans, Detroit, Lubbock, Chicago and Stockton. By any measure, Memphis and these cities rank among the cities with the most challenging crime problems.

Memphis does not have to continue to lead the nation in crime. Many other cities have much less crime, incur lower costs of crime, and benefit from increased opportunities generated by a safer environment. Increasing our efforts to reduce crime, especially in Downtown, will help Memphis improve its ranking as a safe community, improve its economic performance, and enhance the opportunities that exist for people who live here.

The Economic Cost of Crime in Downtown Memphis

The economic cost associated with crime is very high in Memphis. A recent national study by Deb Gordon (both an Aspen Institute Health Innovators Fellow and an Eisenhower Fellow) for Money Geek, "Safest Cities in America 2023: Violent Crime Rate Increases Drive Per Capita Cost of Crime," is particularly negative. In this report published on May 1, 2023, Memphis has the fifth highest cost of crime among 263 cities with a cost of \$7,184 per-capita. Only St. Louis, Mobile, Birmingham, and Baltimore have higher per capita crime costs. Numerous other studies and sources of information on the cost of crime exist (Cohen, 2020; Anderson, 2011; Miller, et al., 2021; Fe, et al., 2022).

Crime rates in Memphis are consistent with the presence of other indicators of social distress. The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) data generated by the Centers for Disease Control is a vulnerability measure of the socio-economic status, household characteristics, racial and ethnic minority status, housing type, and transportation issues that face every census tract in the community relative to other census tracts in the state. In a study conducted by the University of Memphis Sparks Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Dr. Ryan Hansen mapped the SVI index numbers for census tracts in Memphis and found that Downtown census tracts were among the most vulnerable areas of the community.

The team believes that Downtown safety is the key to more and better jobs, a growing population, and a growing tax base in Downtown. The cost of crime can be reduced by Downtown crime reductions and the positive impact of future growth. Crime prevention and reduction measures are an investment in the community. The community spends millions on policing and crime prevention, but this spending is not

enough. Much of the Downtown plan and its recommendations – but not all - cost money, and each investment must be evaluated for its impact and its cost effectiveness.

We acknowledge that addressing the long-term issues facing the community such as an improved education system; providing compensatory education; tax and other incentives for employers; community development initiatives, especially related to housing; and aggressive zoning and code enforcement will create economic growth and progress. Crime prevention and reduction is only one part of the puzzle. But helping businesses reduce their crime-related costs and residents reduce their fears and apprehension is critical to making lasting changes to the community.

Building on Momentum

While Downtown Memphis has lost much of its office occupancy and major retail outlets, it has rebounded (1) as an entertainment and tourist destination place, with a significant increase in new hotel space, and (2) with increased residential space along with supporting smaller retail outlets. Planned conversions and renovations of former office spaces into hotel, residential, and small retail spaces reflect this shift. The FedEx Forum is the area's top entertainment venue, and other public investments such as AutoZone Park (a Minor League Baseball stadium and home to the Memphis Redbirds) have added to Downtown as a destination point. The new Brooks Museum will bring more visitors Downtown. Planned redevelopment of the 100 North Main Building, the Sterick Building, and the Falls Building are prime examples of converting former office space and will dramatically increase pedestrian traffic. The planned conversion of the old Royal Furniture building into a Dream Hotel along with floors for apartments is an example of converting former retail space. This rebound is promising for the future of Downtown, and with the expansion of the St. Jude Research Hospital campus, along with expansions at LeBonheur Children's Hospital and the UT Center for Health Sciences, the core Downtown area is surrounded by a growing medical community. The opening of the renovated and completely reimagined Tom Lee Park in the fall of 2023 is a massive \$61 million dollar project that is expected to completely transform the Memphis riverfront and hopefully draw thousands of residents and visitors with their families.

By addressing public safety, Downtown can build on existing momentum. According to the Downtown Memphis Commission's (DMC's) 2022 Annual Report, over 40 projects were under construction Downtown, with almost 30 other projects in the planning phase. In 2022, the DMC hosted or sponsored over 200 free events attended by more than 500,000 people. The DMC is working on new loan products to provide access to capital for developers and is responsible for the opening of the new mobility center at Front and Beale. And the DMC is leading an effort to compensate at \$250 per musician for events booked Downtown and give Downtown hospitality workers a discount on parking. Over 26,000 residents are living Downtown, with almost half being millennials.

While not as robust as many downtowns pre-pandemic, Downtown Memphis arguably does not have as far to go to get back to a level of pre-pandemic activity. A study conducted of cell phone activity in downtown areas shows that Memphis is in the middle of the pack. Cell phone usage was measured for March-May of 2019 (pre-pandemic) and again for March-May of 2023 (post-pandemic). A percentage greater than 100 percent reflects full recovery and increased cell phone usage compared to pre-pandemic levels. A percentage less than 100 percent means that a downtown has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels of cell phone use. Salt Lake City has the best recovery percentage at 139 percent. Only

four cities, though, out of 66 cities measured had percentages over 100 percent. Memphis was in the middle at 65 percent recovery. Our sister city of Nashville was at 56 percent, and New Orleans was at 48 percent. Portland was at 37 percent, and San Francisco was last at 32 percent. (San Francisco is especially hard hit by the loss of major retail and offices, an example being the decision by Elon Musk to stop paying rent for Twitter's downtown office space.)

Downtown is equally blessed with community activists who actively work with law enforcement, the DMC, and local governments. The Memphis Downtown Association is the oldest neighborhood association in the city and has over 500 active members. The South Main Neighborhood Association is equally active and is now collaborating with the adjoining South Memphis Community Development Corporation on public safety.

Also, Memphis has a unique and powerful asset which most downtowns do not enjoy, namely a group of local entrepreneurs, key employers, and philanthropists absolutely committed to Downtown. Few cities can point to support for their downtowns similar to the likes of Henry Turley, the Belz family, the Carlisle family, Billy Orgel, the Hydes, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, FedEx and AutoZone, just to name some. Most downtowns rely on transient, non-local businesses and investors. We are blessed by local private sector leaders committed to Downtown Memphis, not only at the scale of those mentioned above but by many smaller scale investors and owners motivated by a commitment to Downtown.

The growth of employment opportunities, such as in the medical field, a rapidly expanding housing base, new commercial developments, and expanding tourism and entertainment venues position Downtown Memphis as both a vibrant and growing economic engine for the community. But the continued growth of Downtown Memphis is being threatened by the impact of public safety concerns and the negative implications of social distress so evident along Downtown streets. The rebound can take a dive if visitors, employers, employees, and residents are not engaged with law enforcement and the DMC in co-producing a safer Downtown.

While the combination of criminal activity, homelessness, aggressive panhandling, and traffic issues are significant challenges in Downtown Memphis as well as other downtowns, this plan advances doable strategies and possible action steps that can legitimately reshape the Downtown narrative as a safe, welcoming, and engaging place for residents and visitors, including children; businesses; and other entities. Downtown has a wealth of assets that can be built upon for generations to come.

Plan Parameters

Making Downtown more attractive to employers, employees, residents, visitors, and investors is the basic purpose of this Downtown public safety plan. The economic benefits from growth of Downtown Memphis are huge, and the payoff in new taxes; higher property values; and increases in optimism, employment, and income opportunities make any investment in the safety and security of Downtown an investment that pays dividends to the community.

The Plan includes recommendations and strategies in a number of areas which the team felt deserved specific attention, including:

- The pedestrian part of Main Street

- The Beale Street Entertainment District
- Police presence in the Beale Street Entertainment District
- Parking facilities
- The role of the Blue Suede Brigade
- Increasing pedestrian traffic and tying Downtown together through wayfinding signage and tours
- Tom Lee Park and other river parks
- Traffic control and circulation
- Specific crime hotspots
- Increasing pedestrian visibility through regular street performances
- Downtown homelessness
- Aggressive panhandling
- The need for more coordination, cooperation and information sharing

In August of 2021, the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) issued Downtown Public Safety Strategies based primarily on a series of six focus group conversations with Downtown partners and stakeholders. This plan includes many of the recommendations and strategies set forth in that 2021 document but also builds on it and includes new ideas.

The research team decided not to specifically address two areas of concern in Downtown Memphis but also of concern throughout the community – juvenile crime and vehicle noise. These are areas that need community-wide attention. (The plan does address specific aspects of juvenile crime applicable to Downtown in particular, such as curfew violations.)

Along with the recommendations and proposed strategies, an appendix lists possible action steps for stakeholders to consider. Some of these action steps originated with the team. Others are simply a reflection of what was articulated in the various focus groups conducted and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the team. They are presented in an unfiltered, unedited form.

With the release of this plan, our hope is that key stakeholders will step forward and that a specific stakeholder will assume responsibility for each of the strategies set forth. Accountability for results will be key. We believe the DMC should take the lead in making this happen.

Pedestrian Main Street

Recommendation:

Improve safety and perceived safety on the pedestrian only part of Main Street by proper maintenance, increased foot traffic, and stepped-up enforcement activities. (The pedestrian only part runs from Exchange on the north to Peabody Place on the south.)

Strategies:

1. Enhance maintenance and oversight of the pedestrian part of Main Street by executing a new, revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the City of Memphis, Downtown Memphis Commission, Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) and possibly other key parties regarding responsibilities for maintenance, with a clear understanding of the responsibilities of each party.
2. Give priority to increased police presence on the pedestrian part of Main Street through walking, bike and/or mounted patrols, including early evening hours, and increased enforcement of parking violations, including revising the current ordinance (Section 2-84-13) to clearly grant authority to Downtown Memphis Commission employees to issue citations for illegal parking.
3. Promote vibrant and clean public spaces on pedestrian Main Street that encourage increased pedestrian traffic usage.

Downtown Memphis is blessed with a robust south end, including Beale Street, the Orpheum, FedEx Forum, and a growing commercial and residential South Main. The north end of Downtown is witnessing growing activity with the newly renovated convention center, an ever-expanding St. Jude campus, and Bass Pro.

The pedestrian only part of Main Street is the main connector to these two ends of our somewhat long and narrow Downtown. Both residents and visitors need to be safe and feel safe enough to be on the pedestrian only part of Main Street to move from one end of Downtown to the other, either by trolley or on foot.

Comments by focus group participants reflect the concern and the need to address the challenges to Main Street. Some the comments include:

- "I wouldn't recommend that anyone walk from the convention center to the Peabody Hotel at night."
- "Lighting on the Mall is important. Darkness inspires crime."
- "We need more people out and walking on the Mall."
- "We need to create more events in the Downtown areas that are underutilized, such as Main Street. We don't need more events on Beale Street."
- "We need to maintain Main Street infrastructure."

- "There's not as much foot traffic on the Mall as there once was."
- "Illegal parking 'gives permission' for people to do other illegal things."
- There are a lot of vagrants and unauthorized traffic on the Mall."
- "I never see police on the Mall."

The Memphis Police Department (MPD) tracks Part 1 crimes throughout the city and is able to break data down by street. We asked MPD to provide a breakdown of reported Part 1 crimes on the pedestrian only part of Main Street for calendar year 2022 and January – May of 2023.

For calendar year 2022, there were 131 reported Part 1 crimes on pedestrian Main Street. The number one reported crime was theft from vehicles (36), followed by theft of vehicles (34) and shoplifting (21). There were very few reported violent crimes (five robberies of individuals, one carjacking, and five aggravated assaults).

For January – May of this year, there were 76 reported Part 1 crimes, including 19 vehicle thefts, 10 thefts from vehicles, and 16 reports of shoplifting. There were 10 reported violent crimes – one robbery and nine aggravated assaults.

There are numerous studies supporting the premise that property conditions and the presence of pedestrians can have a positive impact on both crime and the perception of crime.

A very recent study reflected a relationship between both social and physical environments and crime (Thomas et al., 2022). A 2016 study concluded that abandoned buildings and vacant lots may create opportunities for violence by sheltering illegal activity (Branas, et al., 2016). And a 2011 study found that as parts of downtown Seattle were revitalized, they saw a greater reduction in crime compared to other areas that did not undergo revitalization (Kreager, et al., 2011).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the level of pedestrian traffic in major cities. While stay-at-home restrictions resulted in decreases in home burglaries in New York City, it resulted in increases in non-residential burglaries (Koppel et al., 2023). In Los Angeles, a study showed that, during COVID-19 restrictions, there was a significant crime increase in commercial areas of the city but reduced crime in residential areas. This coincides with routine activities theory, which broadly suggests that individuals' daily activities made them more or less pre-disposed to be victims of crime (Hill et al., 2022).

The Beale Street Entertainment District

Recommendation:

Reduce crime and improve actual and perceived safety in the Beale Street Entertainment District. (Also see the separate section on Police Presence in the Entertainment District.)

Strategies:

1. Enforce the curfew ordinance. The evidence suggests that curfews are effective at reducing both violent and property crimes committed by juveniles below the statutory curfew age. Youth curfews have become a popular tool for combating juvenile delinquency. The Memphis Police Department (MPD) and the Memphis City Council proposed new efforts to enforce curfews for teenagers that were established decades ago. However, these efforts appear stalled.
2. Enhance the existing surveillance systems or implement new ones with high-quality cameras strategically placed throughout the district. This can aid in monitoring activities, deterring crime, and providing valuable evidence for investigations.
3. Ensure that the Entertainment District is well-lit with appropriate lighting to improve visibility and discourage illicit activities. Maintenance and improvement of infrastructure, such as well-maintained streets, sidewalks, and signage, can also contribute to a safer environment.
4. Foster collaboration with local businesses to implement security measures such as private security guards, training programs for staff, and establishing clear protocols for reporting and responding to incidents. Security officers' presence and security metal detector wandering after 10 p.m. should be maintained as long as businesses are open to the public inside the Beale Street Entertainment District.
5. Work closely with bars, clubs, and other establishments in the district to enforce responsible alcohol service practices. This may involve training staff to identify and prevent over-intoxication, ensuring proper ID checks, and addressing issues related to underage drinking. These efforts should also include ending alcohol service no later than 2:00 a.m. and cutting outside music.

Beale Street is one of the most well-known streets in America and is an official National Historic Landmark. It is one of the state of Tennessee's major tourist attractions, with its nightclubs, restaurants, and shops. The Entertainment District includes FedEx Forum and the Orpheum Theatre and is the primary anchor for the south part of Downtown.

There are growing concerns about safety in the Entertainment District, primarily related to gun violence, vehicle break-ins, and traffic issues. Comments by focus group participants reflect these concerns, including the following:

- "When special events occur at locations such as Beale Street...there is a need for more special law enforcement details..."
- "Beale Street has become a late-night block party. Bars are allowed to stay open until 5:00 a.m. while a lot of security leaves at 3:00 a.m."
- "Start enforcing the noise ordinance on Beale Street to curb loud music."
- "Beale Street needs more private security, barricades, and metal detectors."
- "Beale Street has become a babysitting tool."
- "We don't need more events on Beale Street. We need more events in other parts of Downtown."
- "There is a reluctance to be there after 10:00 p.m."
- "Beale Street needs to cease alcohol sales and outside music at 1:00 a.m."
- "Beale Street needs to be more like Overton Square."

The city of Memphis Data Hub reported 4,124 misdemeanor and felony criminal offenses, (May 23, 2022 – May 23, 2023). Boundaries drawn for the geofence included Peabody Place on the North, Danny Thomas on the East, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the South, and Riverside Drive on the West. The incidents are mapped in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below:

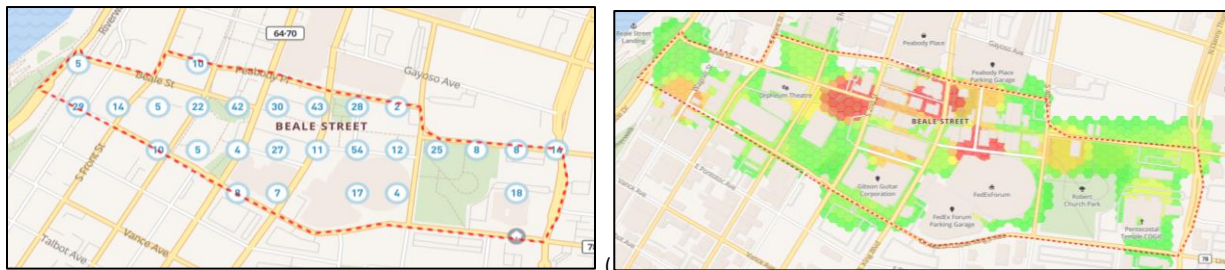


Figure 1 - Crime Map of Beale Street Entertainment District Pins) (Figure 2 - Map of Beale Street Entertainment District Crime Hot Spots)

Research has shown that effective security measures in entertainment districts, and around bars and clubs, can reduce violence and disorder. With the proposed strategies mentioned above, the Entertainment District will be safer and perceived to be safer and receive more visitors and attract more business. (Berkley, et al., 2000; Mazerolle, et al., 2012; Penn, 2019).

While these strategies have been supported by research and have shown promising results in various contexts, it is important to note that the effectiveness of any approach may vary depending on the specific characteristics and dynamics of the Beale Street Entertainment District. It is recommended that the City of Memphis and MPD conduct local assessments and engage in evidence-based practices tailored to the district's unique needs and challenges.

Implementing the strategies will require the cooperation and actions of key stakeholders. If all key stakeholders are involved in the planning and implementation, there should be minimal opposition.

Police Presence in the Beale Street Entertainment District

Recommendation:

Increase police presence and improve actual and perceived safety in the Beale Street Entertainment District. (Also see the more general section on the Entertainment District.)

Strategies:

1. Deploy more police officers and increase patrols in the Entertainment District, particularly during peak hours and on weekends. This visible presence can act as a deterrent to potential criminals and reassure the public. In addition to uniformed officers, this should include plainclothes officers as well.
2. Initiate a form of community policing that fosters a strong relationship between police officers and the community by encouraging officers to engage with local businesses, residents, and visitors. Regular foot patrols and positive interactions can enhance trust and cooperation, making people feel safer.
3. Formalize a partnership between law enforcement and local businesses, including bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues, to establish a network of communication. Sharing information about potential threats, suspicious activities, or known offenders can help prevent incidents and maintain a safer environment.
4. Implement and maintain a plan to manage pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the Entertainment District.

The Memphis Police Department (MPD) recently announced on the City of Memphis' website that it is implementing a new plan for Downtown to manage pedestrian and vehicular traffic on weekends. The plan establishes a Downtown "Pedestrian Corridor" for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, designed to improve public safety and the free flow of motor vehicle traffic and public safety in the Downtown space. MPD will have an enhanced law enforcement presence, supported by Shelby County deputy sheriffs, when the traffic plan goes into effect at 8:00 p.m. on Friday and throughout the weekend.

According to MPD, the new plan will involve an increased traffic enforcement presence to enforce the "No Cruising Zone Ordinance." MPD officers will have designated foot beat assignments in and around Beale Street, and some officers will have fixed post assignments that will control the ingress and egress for motorists desiring access to hotels and restaurants. Based on the plan, the officers assigned to key post positions will enforce a "zero-tolerance" policy for the following violations: cruising, drag racing, reckless driving, discharging a firearm, and reckless endangerment. Moreover, the department will not allow "pop-up" street parties in the Entertainment District. Safety zones will be established with officers visible at several Downtown Memphis street corners and surrounding areas (New Pedestrian Friendly Traffic Control Plan for Downtown, 2023).

This announcement is in response to a late-night weekend shooting where multiple individuals were shot inside the Entertainment District. These strategies and possible action steps set forth in the appendix are needed to respond to the challenge of keeping everyone safe inside the Entertainment District. No one action will adequately address the challenge of public safety. However, implementing all or most of the steps will have a positive overall impact.

Recent decisions by Memphis leaders may hamper enforcement efforts. The Memphis City Council recently passed a measure that ends police stops for minor traffic infractions. The ordinance, also known as the Driver Equality Act, ends pretextual police stops by reclassifying traffic stops, like broken tail lights or expired tags, so police cannot use them as the sole reason for pulling drivers over. Pretextual stops have historically been deployed nationally by law enforcement as an effective tactic to use minor traffic infractions as grounds to investigate motorists for more serious crimes. Police have defended those stops, saying they are crucial for fighting possession of illegal drugs, weapons possession, human trafficking, and drunken driving. More research is required to measure the impact of these decisions on traffic enforcement within the Entertainment District.

Parking Facilities

Recommendation:

Reduce crime and improve actual and perceived safety at Downtown parking facilities open to the public, including surface lots and parking garages.

Strategies:

1. Implement basic Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) at Downtown public parking facilities. Each property is different, and ideally a credentialed CPTED professional should evaluate each facility to determine what measures are appropriate. But every public parking facility should have proper lighting, access control measures, good signage, and regular cleaning and maintenance.
2. Implement effective mechanical surveillance measures at parking facilities, with all cameras being registered with or integrated into the Memphis Police Department's Connect2 Memphis system.
3. Implement organized surveillance measures in the form of random security patrols. The schedule for these should vary, as should the route taken by the patrol. Parking enforcement personnel can serve this purpose, so long as they are visible and report findings to the police as necessary. A parking enforcement team whose only duties are to drive through the facility and sticker or boot vehicles that have not paid is not sufficient.
4. Institute the District Attorney's Office Anti-Trespass Program in Downtown multi-story garages so that individuals who are not customers or authorized personnel can be charged with trespassing.

All strategies are part of an overall plan to add levels of security and make parking facilities – especially garages - less attractive to those engaging in criminal and antisocial activity and less threatening and intimidating to intended users of the space. Visitors will not travel Downtown by private vehicle, and local residents will not live Downtown if they do not feel comfortable leaving their vehicles in the available parking facilities, or if they do not feel safe inside those facilities.

Enacting crime prevention measures in garages in particular will reduce the amount of time police spend responding to calls in parking garages, freeing officers up to do more community policing in the greater Downtown area. With reduced crime and the changes to the physical environments mentioned above, the garages will be safer, perceived to be safer, and receive more use. Increased use actually increases safety, as more use of the space increases natural surveillance, which is the most critical aspect of CPTED. Increasing usage of the garages brings more users to Downtown in general, increasing natural surveillance for the entire area.

One of the main challenges to overcome in addressing crime in parking garages is the problem of unauthorized non-customers coming onto the property and causing trouble. The D.A.'s Anti-Trespass Program authorizes law enforcement and security guards to arrest an individual on the property who is

not a parking customer or authorized personnel. Persons under this program may be charged with criminal trespass.

Focus groups and other conversations have identified the problem of car thefts and break-ins in garages as a major concern.

Some of the focus group comments include the following:

- "Parking garage owners are reluctant to hire dedicated security."
- "MPD doesn't have access to parking garages. They need cameras and security guards."
- "Owners of parking garages need to take care of security. Charge a little more to cover the costs."
- "Look at increasing parking fees in return for more security."
- "The new parking garage at Front and Beale is going to be a crime hot spot with vehicle break-ins unless it has strong security plans on the front end."

Vigorous implementation of the strategies will take the cooperation and actions of parking garage owners and operators. These actions will cost money. Owners and operators will be concerned that increasing their operational costs will reduce the profitability of the garages unless parking fees are raised. However, it is possible that garages which are presently under-utilized (with unsatisfactory cash flow) due to negative perceptions of safety could become more profitable if improved property image and safety leads to increased usage. And the planning team believes firmly that most of the public is willing to pay a little more for Downtown parking in return for improved security.

The Blue Suede Brigade

Recommendation:

To increase safety in Downtown Memphis, enhance the power/authority, networking, training, and branding of the Blue Suede Brigade.

Strategies:

1. Clarity and strengthen the power/authority of the Blue Suede Brigade to improve safety, including issuance of parking citations.
2. Enhance networking with Downtown stakeholders through meetings and sharing information and best practices.
3. Scale up training for Blue Suede Brigade staff to improve safety.
4. Enhance branding of the Blue Suede Brigade to increase it's visibility.

As documented by the 2023 survey conducted by the planning team, the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) 2022 study, and the focus groups, the Blue Suede Brigade is truly the eyes and ears of Downtown Memphis. The above four strategies and possible action steps set forth in the appendix seek to better connect the eyes and ears to the Downtown Memphis body. Building upon it's proven record, the Blue Suede Brigade is the easiest way and the most cost effective way to have a direct and immediate impact on Downtown safety.

Focus group comments include the following:

- "MPD works closely with the Blue Suede Brigade. It needs to be expanded, with more ebikes."
- "The Blue Suede Brigade can play an important role."
- "There is no police presence. If called, they show up. There is Blue Suede Brigade presence, though."

The Blue Suede Brigade is a program with a proven track record of hospitality, information, and safety for visitors and residents. The Blue Suede Brigade covers the entire Downtown area and is easily identifiable by its signature blue uniforms and presence on the Downtown streets. They are typically the first line of contact for Downtown visitors and residents and have relations with the Memphis Police Department, churches, and social and health agencies.

The Blue Suede Brigade has a staff of 30 plus. Most of its staff have years of experience, and it has operated in the same zones for years. Its staff operates in 10 Downtown zones during the period of 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays; 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays; and 7 a.m. to midnight on weekends. It is currently recruiting for overnight staffing.

According to the DMC, in 2022, the Blue Suede Brigade provided 46,000 hours of patrolling, responded to 25,004 service calls, handed out 39,000 maps, and engaged with 511,000 visitors/stakeholders.

The DMC would have responsibility for the coordination and implementation of all proposed strategies and possible action steps.

Crime Hotspots

Recommendation:

Improve actual and perceived safety in and around crime hotspots in Downtown Memphis.

Strategies:

1. Promote and implement basic Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in crime hot spots.
2. Improve natural surveillance through appropriate lighting, open site lanes, and increased pedestrian traffic.
3. Establish and carry out appropriate maintenance protocols. Cleanliness and orderliness are critical.
4. Implement effective surveillance measures and other effective safety measures, both mechanical and in person, with Downtown residents encouraged to register all exterior surveillance cameras with MPD's Connect2 Memphis System, and Downtown businesses encouraged to integrate exterior surveillance cameras with the Connect 2 Memphis system.

Crime hotspots can change over time. The SafeWays team identified specific crime hotspots that existed in early 2023 and that needed special attention. Below are some specific examples.

- A. Beale Street Entertainment District.
This is a hotspot, in particular for vehicle thefts and break-ins. Because of its high visibility and usage, addressing crime in this area is critical. (See the separate sections on the Beale Street Entertainment District.)
- B. Area of Danny Thomas, Exchange, Poplar, and Washington Ave intersections. This area is a hotspot for disturbances after dark, man down calls, intoxicated person calls, mental consumer calls, panhandling, and daytime violence. Activity appears to center around the service stations at Poplar and Danny Thomas and at N. Lauderdale and Poplar. Most of these issues appear to be related to homelessness and drug addiction. The service station at Poplar and Danny Thomas is the most critical location to keep in check, as it is highly utilized by persons traveling to/from Downtown, and a bad encounter here can color one's entire Downtown experience. This property is doing much better in terms of crime prevention measures than it has in the past, but aggressive panhandling continues to be an issue. Strong law enforcement and private security presence is necessary. It will be important to ensure that these two service stations maximize natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement measures. Homeless services providers should be encouraged to focus on this area.

- C. Wagner between Talbot and Butler. This area is a hotspot for disturbances, vehicle thefts, and vehicle break-ins. This is a densely populated area with a lot of residential units, but it benefits from very little natural surveillance and is very poorly lit. Mechanical surveillance and motion-activated lighting would be beneficial in this area. Additionally, fencing between the DreamCatcher Hotel at 456 Tennessee St and 460 Tennessee St. would help control access to Wagner and make it more difficult for thieves to access cars parked in the lot between the buildings. See illustration below.



- D. Blocks surrounding Front and Peabody Place. This area is a hotspot for man-down calls, intoxicated person calls, vehicle thefts, vehicle break-ins, and violent crimes after dark.
- E. Blocks surrounding Union and Second. This appears to be a panhandling hotspot.
- F. Area bounded by AW Willis, Front, Overton and 3rd. This appears to be a hotspot for acts of violence.
- G. Tom Lee Park. We believe this is a potential hotspot if steps are not taken to ensure there are no ambush/hiding areas and other environmental issues fostering/facilitating unwanted activity.

Some of the comments by focus group participants reflect the need to address hotspots in particular, including the following:

- "Holes or pockets created by vacant, blighted properties encourage crime."
- "There is a reluctance to be downtown after about 10:00 p.m. There is a feeling that it can become dangerous."
- "Even early in the evening, there are very aggressive acts by people I perceive to be homeless asking for money, yelling, cursing, and stalking."
- "Groove on Demand is being used to transport juveniles to certain areas downtown to break into vehicles."
- "All the places for the homeless are downtown."
- "We need to tighten up things on Beale Street."
- "We need more cameras downtown."
- "Landlords and tenants need to keep their premises clean and secure."
- "Lighting is very important."
- "We need to clean up the place!"

This plan refers to and recommends CPTED- based practices and solutions throughout. The planning team feels such an approach is especially helpful in crime hotspots. CPTED principles- natural surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance- are aimed at conditions that foster and facilitate criminal and antisocial behavior (Fleissner, et al., 1996; Keizer, et al., 2008; Zalm, 2007; Crowe, et al., 1994; Book, 2010).

Downtown Tours/Connectivity

Recommendation:

To help create an atmosphere of safety, develop and implement Downtown wayfinding signage that illuminates existing and future tours, trails, and other assets that increase walking and bike travel where feasible in the Downtown core area and the Downtown parks.

Strategies:

1. Develop information databases and data sharing on Downtown assets and activities. Specifically, create a database of existing and anticipated Downtown tours, trails, and other heritage, cultural, and environmental assets that are accessible to visitors, residents, and organizations through a QU code.
2. Increase interagency cooperation on connecting Downtown assets and activities, specifically including development of wayfinding signage.
3. Improve training programs for guides and increase community engagement in Downtown assets.

In addition to the Beale Street Entertainment District, the South Main area, the riverfront, and sports and entertainment venues, Downtown Memphis has a wealth of historic and cultural assets that could draw more visitors, residents, and particularly students in discovery and learning activities. The challenge is to increase access through walking/bike tours and wayfinding signage. The signage would be linked to improved walking/bike paths. A beginning list of existing and possible Downtown tours is in the appendix.

The wayfinding signage for walking/bike tours will not only bring more visitors, residents, and particularly students Downtown but also increase the amount of time they spend learning about the heritage, environment, and other Downtown assets. Numerous studies show that more “eyes are on the street” can reduce the level of crime.

Tom Lee Park and Other River Parks

Recommendation:

Facilitate access to and use of the Memphis River Parks, especially Tom Lee Park, and the Memphis Riverwalk as a major component of Downtown attraction, engagement, and connectivity.

Strategies:

1. Increase the physical connectivity and safety of the east/west pathways from the Downtown core and mobility hub to the River Parks by:
 - a. Increasing lighting and walkability (improved sidewalks) connecting streets on Front and Main Streets to Tom Lee Park, including Beale Street, Butler, Talbot and Huling, Vance and Wagner;
 - b. Providing greenery on these same streets;
 - c. Designating bike lanes on these same streets; and
 - d. Improving the north to south pathways and site lines along the riverfront.

See appendix for additional possible action steps.

2. Increase the informational connectivity of the Downtown core and mobility center to the Memphis River Parks by:
 - e. Developing wayfinding signage that indicates Front and Main Streets are two walkable blocks from the river along with biking lanes with visible access points to park spaces;
 - f. Developing signage that informs residents and visitors of the history/heritage assets along the pedestrian pathway; and
 - g. Training Downtown businesses and residents to use already existing apps to send pictures of physical and behavioral conditions that can be sent to the appropriate City of Memphis divisions to remedy.

See appendix for additional possible action steps.

3. Increase social/emotional connectivity of the Memphis River Parks to the Memphis Downtown core by:
 - h. Enhancing accessibility of maps, signage and apps that tell a story of the heritage and assets of the Mississippi River;
 - i. Creating a “river district” where Tom Lee Park is the central node;
 - j. Publicizing Tom Lee Park as a place where people go to dine, relax, and engage in activities, as well as a place where exploratory play allows children to climb in and on large structures; and
 - k. Developing a public campaign to promote Tom Lee Park as a family safe and children friendly place, with stories on its lighting, walkability, active recreation for children, learning experiences, environment, heritage, and beauty.

See appendix for additional possible action steps.

The official opening of the renovated, completely reimagined Tom Lee Park in the fall of 2023 represents a massive \$61 million project that is designed to completely transform Memphis' riverfront. Tom Lee Park should significantly increase the number of residents and visitors who will spend more time exploring Downtown while simultaneously creating a venue where visitors, residents and especially families are engaged in learning, discovery, dining, and recreational activities.

However, at present there is a lack of connectivity from the Downtown core to Tom Lee Park. The strategies and action steps address Downtown access to the Memphis River Parks and Tom Lee Park in particular, as well as offer opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in multiple activities. Tom Lee Park's opening was a major reason travel magazine Code Nast Traveler named Memphis as one of the top places to visit in 2023, one of only two places in the U.S.

In addition, Tom Lee park will positively affect the adjacent neighborhoods, notably South Main, French Fort, South City and Soulsville as these neighborhoods have access to and engage in activities at Tom Lee Park. Future planning efforts should link to both old and new Downtown projects, such as the Brooks Museum of Arts.

Lighting is a critical element in the creation of a safe, walkable environment. Memphis River Park Partnership hired a national lighting designer for such locations as Central Park and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. (See Memphis River Parks Partnership website for physical layout). Some public safety concerns such as existing environmental design issues, cameras, and in-person security need to be evaluated on a regular basis with a certified Crime Prevention through Environmental Design professional.

And a word of caution: If adequate funding is not provided for regular maintenance as well as long-term infrastructure maintenance, we will face the demise of a significant investment-similar to what happened to Mud Island Park. If that happens, Tom Lee Park can become a serious public safety liability.

Traffic Control/Mobility

Recommendation:

Implement coordinated transportation safety countermeasures for all aspects of the transportation system, thus improving actual and perceived public safety.

Strategies:

1. Develop an enhanced plan for temporary traffic control around the Beale Street Entertainment District and for special events with additional signage and information distribution through social media.
2. Improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists with additional lighting, infrastructure enhancements, signage, and well-maintained public spaces.
3. Increase enforcement of traffic regulations with a focus on speeding and red light running.

The discussion of countermeasures to improve public safety in the areas of traffic control, circulation, mobility, and accessibility are closely related to countermeasures that are employed to improve traffic safety and the reduction in deaths, personal injury, and property damage from accidents. Any plan must include a coordinated focus on all users – pedestrians, transit riders, cyclists, scooter users, and vehicle drivers – and their interactions.

A major consideration for people traveling to and within Downtown is their perception of the safety of the transportation system. Whether in their car, on a bike, in a bus, or on foot, they expect to be able to move from point A to point B in a safe manner – free from accidents and free from crime. While the results of the Qualtrics survey did not indicate transportation issues as being primary factors in feeling safe in the Downtown area, focus group respondents indicated concerns with drivers behaving in reckless and unsafe ways and also feeling uneasy as pedestrians because of poor infrastructure conditions and inadequate lighting. Some of the focus group comments included the following:

- "There needs to be more notice of street closures Downtown. It's a real issue for transit riders."
- "The trolley frequency and cost preclude people from riding it."
- "There is a need for better traffic enforcement, both in terms of speed and noise level."
- "Millennials are flocking Downtown. They are not as car oriented and more geared toward walking, biking, and trolleys."
- "If you are not from Memphis, the futility of navigating Downtown and trying to find a parking place is horrible."
- "There is a timing sequence problem with signal lights, which allows traffic to stack up at Second and Third Streets."
- "Access and regress from Downtown is a problem. We need to consider directional changes such as once existed on Union Avenue."
- "We need geofencing for scooters."
- "Restart the east/west trolley line and provide parking lots in Crosstown."

There is a large body of literature devoted to identifying countermeasures to improve safety for all roadway users. A comprehensive listing is found on the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration website, Proven Safety Countermeasures (<https://highways.dot.gov/proven-safety-countermeasures>). Several of the action steps set forth in the appendix such as lighting, walkway improvements, crossway visibility enhancements, and improved signal timing are identified on this site.

Another website describes how the built environment can be improved to deter crime (<https://www.transportation.gov/misson/health/built-environment-strategies-to-deter-crime>). As stated on this website:

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a specific approach to designing safety and security into the environment of a specific area focusing on five areas: 1) natural surveillance, 2) access control, 3) territorial reinforcement, 4) activity support, and 5) maintenance. CPTED approaches have been developed for public transportation planning to improve system safety and security. Many of the CPTED principles or similar concepts can be incorporated into the design elements for other modes as well. Elements to consider include lighting, visibility, treatment of visual obstructions and concealed areas (e.g., bridge structures, underpasses), fencing, walls, landscaping, police/security presence, maintenance for issues (e.g., graffiti, litter), parking, intersecting roadways, and density and land use mix.

The application of Complete Streets principles will also lead to increased safety (<https://www.transportation.gov/misson/health/complete streets>). As defined:

Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Those include people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders. The concept of Complete Streets encompasses many approaches to planning, designing, and operating roadways and rights of way with all users in mind to make the transportation network safer and more efficient.

Guidelines are available for addressing pedestrian safety at and around construction sites. (https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/indiv/docs/atts_a_pedestrain_checklist.pdf).

Street Performances and Perceptions of Safety Downtown

Recommendation:

Activate streetscapes and green spaces with live music and other entertainment for special events and pop-up performances throughout the year to create more pedestrian traffic and a feeling of safety.

Strategy:

1. Develop a coordinated effort to expand the experiences of Downtown residents and visitors with live high-quality music of local musicians and other entertainment, especially in areas outside of the Beale Street Entertainment District. This should involve both special events and daily pop-up entertainment.

Memphis is known for its music. Beale Street is the major anchor for music entertainment. The path to Beale Street from different Downtown places presents opportunities for expanding the influence of music throughout the pedestrian Main Street, including Court Square, and from the Downtown core to Tom Lee Park. Linking the street musicians – through organization and schedule, placement of musician 'stations' on a set route through Downtown, and thematic focus on Memphis' music past, present and future – allows a narrative to develop that both advances Memphis' brand and identity as a music city and builds interest in exploring all the live music 'stops.'

Live street music entertainment can enhance the experience of visitors and residents. Live music is an opportunity to take a structured approach to street performances as part of a campaign to enhance perceptions of safety in the Downtown core. Booking street performers on a predictable and consistent schedule allows locals and visitors to make plans to engage with the performers as part of their Downtown experience.

The planning team conducted two focus groups of teenagers. In both focus groups, participants expressed their feelings that organized pop-up entertainment was a way of increasing constructive Downtown activities for young people.

A key and critical point of differentiation to achieve an effect on perceptions of public space using live music is engagement. By prioritizing high quality music and emphasizing an authentic narrative thread that connects the performers throughout Downtown, there is an opportunity to truly engage: to get people to stop, pay attention, and meaningfully connect, even if only briefly.

Downtown Homelessness

Recommendation:

Improve the conditions of the homeless and the safety of the core Downtown area through increased coordination of the mental health, social services, housing, and employment services.

Strategies:

1. Establish comprehensive service coordination by convening regular meetings among homeless service providers, community organizations, law enforcement, and other stakeholders.
2. Enhance accessibility and outreach efforts by creating a comprehensive plan for 24-hour free transportation to Downtown safe spaces.
3. Strengthen community involvement through quarterly meetings with service providers (a) facilitating information exchange on referral networks, training programs, and specialized services for mental health disorders/crises and addiction issues and (b) promoting volunteer opportunities and community service initiatives to empower residents to contribute and establish solutions and provide support to the homeless population.
4. Promote a multi-sector approach for sustainable housing solutions by increasing affordable housing opportunities, including temporary housing, overnight housing, and subsidized units in apartment buildings.

As reflected by the Qualtrics Survey results and focus group comments, homelessness is perceived as a factor in Downtown safety. Focus group comments include the following:

- "Most of the homeless problem is a mental health problem."
- "All the places to help the homeless are Downtown."
- Many of the homeless are very aggressive, asking for money, yelling, cursing and stalking."
- "I'm concerned about unpredictable behavior."

Homelessness is a major issue in almost every large U.S. city and affects perceptions of safety by downtown businesses, tourists, other visitors, and residents. Downtown cleanliness and trash are also linked to the homeless population. For example, San Francisco's homeless issue has led to major closings of hotels and other businesses and loss of tourism. Memphis also has a sizable homeless population in the Downtown core. Allocating government funding and resources to preventive measures (rental assistance programs, eviction prevention services, and financial counseling) can help individuals who may be at risk of becoming homeless.

Aggressive Panhandling

Recommendation:

Improve public safety and overall quality of life for residents and visitors of the Downtown area by getting aggressive panhandling under control. By addressing this issue, the city can create a more welcoming and safer environment that not only promotes tourism and economic development, but promotes a sense of community well-being.

Strategies:

1. Create an ad hoc committee of major Downtown stakeholders to discuss and act on aggressive panhandling based on best practices from other cities.
2. Enforce city ordinances prohibiting panhandling during rush hours and at high traffic intersections; review existing ordinances related to panhandling and aggressive solicitation to ensure that they are clear in the wording, fair, and enforceable.
3. Increase the availability of social services (food banks, shelters, healthcare facilities) that can address the underlying needs of some individuals engaged in aggressive panhandling.

Aggressive panhandling can negatively impact public safety in several ways. First, it can often create an environment that is not only intimidating but uncomfortable for pedestrians. This negative atmosphere will often then discourage visitors from frequenting certain areas or businesses, which will result in a decrease in both foot traffic and economic activity in the Downtown area. Second, aggressive panhandling has the potential to escalate into confrontations, harassment, or acts of violence. These escalation outcomes are a direct threat to the safety and well-being of both the panhandlers and the public. Finally, calls for service that regard aggressive panhandlers may divert local law enforcement away from other critical issues, resulting in fewer officers being able to respond to more pressing concerns.

The strategies and possible action steps reflect best practices in addressing aggressive panhandling. See the following:

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/31251/1001191-Preventing-Panhandling.PDF>
https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/sdlr63&div=30&g_sent=1&casa_token=&collection=journals
https://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/12-1_b1_thinkpiece_dordick_v028543394139574871091.pdf
<https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/problems/pdfs/Panhandling.pdf>
https://www.peterleeson.com/American_Panhandlers.pdf

The Qualtrics survey conducted in developing the plan reflects the public's distaste for aggressive panhandling in Downtown. When given a list of variables that often lead to the feeling of being unsafe in a given area, panhandling was the second highest rated factor just behind crime. Then, when asked about reasons that contribute the most to a sense of danger in Downtown, homelessness/panhandling was the fourth highest rated answer. (See the Qualtrics survey results in the appendix.)

Coordination, Cooperation, and Information Sharing

Recommendation:

To improve Downtown safety, formalize interagency coordination and cooperation among various public agencies, public-private partnerships, and information sharing.

Strategies:

1. **Interagency Cooperation:** Better coordinate efforts of various governmental agencies and departments. This involves collaboration among law enforcement, City of Memphis Engineering, MLGW, social service agencies, and housing agencies. For example, law enforcement and City Engineering should meet regularly to discuss Downtown transportation issues.
2. **Community Engagement:** Build stronger partnerships with community organizations and neighborhood associations to help identify problem areas, report suspicious behaviors, and assist in implementing crime prevention programs.
3. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Engage private sector partners such as organizations serving the homeless, Downtown businesses, parking garage operators, and others along with public and quasi-public agencies such as the Downtown Memphis Commission to create joint programs to promote safety and security.
4. **Information Sharing:** Improve sharing of information about activities and programs. For example, there may be many programs from the city, county, churches, or other organizations that focus on providing recreation or other activities for young people. The use of social media to share information with the public regarding such things as street closures is vital. Mechanisms should be in place to communicate with stakeholders regarding upcoming events. For example, operators of parking facilities should be made aware of upcoming special events such as the St. Jude Marathon so that they can provide enhanced security at their facilities to prevent car break-ins.

A common theme throughout the plan is that reducing crime and the perception of crime requires a multi-faceted approach that involves various types of coordination, cooperation, and information sharing. This point was emphasized many times in focus group discussions and other meetings during the course of the planning process. Many of the specific action steps set forth in the appendix are the result of comments heard by the planning team.

APPENDIX

Pedestrian Main Street:

Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Ensure that the pedestrian Main Street is well lit with appropriate lighting, including lighting of signs prohibiting parking on Main Street.
2. As a follow-up to a new MOU, establish a monthly meeting of an oversight committee composed of key parties to review outstanding maintenance issues and develop specific plans and timetables to address them.
3. Institute positive activity generators such as “pop up” street performances on pedestrian Main Street during the lunch period and early evening hours. (See the Street Performances section for more details.)
4. Scale up grant opportunities for (a) new retail businesses and (b) façade improvements.
5. Address blighted property on the pedestrian part of Main Street by aggressively enforcing code violations, ranging from graffiti on abandoned store fronts to trash to dangerous conditions.
6. Aggressively address overflowing dumpsters on streets and alleys adjacent to pedestrian Main Street through (a) initial warnings by the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) followed by (b) prompt Health Department citations.
7. Organize and promote an “Adopt a Block” approach as a way of recruiting businesses on the pedestrian Main Street to be part of the solution by helping with day-to-day cleanup.
8. While it might result in an initial budgetary loss, MATA should consider reducing the cost of taking the trolley to, for example, a quarter. (A cost reduction might increase ridership and actually result in a net budgetary increase over time.)
9. Place removable ballads to prevent vehicular traffic on the Mall.

Additional comments by focus group participants reflect the concern and the need to address the challenges to the pedestrian part of Main Street. Some the comments include:

- “Holes or pockets created by vacant, blighted properties encourage crime.”
- “There is garbage everywhere on Main Street. Nobody seems to care.”

- "It's not just about crime stats but also perception."
- "Address the homeless problem, especially on Main Street."
- "The trolley frequency and cost preclude people from riding it."
- "We need more eyes on the street. There is safety in numbers."

The Qualtrics survey conducted in developing the plan reflects interesting – and somewhat conflicting – results on Main Street (which was not just limited to pedestrian Main Street). Almost 31 percent rated Main Street as the safest general area of Downtown, while almost 15 percent rated it as the least safe. (See the last part of this appendix for the Qualtrics survey results.)

The City of Memphis, the DMC, MATA, and businesses along pedestrian Main Street should be responsible for the various action steps. Numerous City of Memphis divisions should be involved. We understand that the City's Division of General Services is responsible for maintaining the bricks on the Mall and for sweeping it, Code Enforcement handles issues of blighted property, City Engineering is responsible for signage, and the Parks Division is responsible for Court Square. MATA is apparently responsible for maintaining trees, and the DMC handles planting and maintaining flowers and provides litter crews.

This splintering of responsibilities along with some vagueness as to what entity is responsible for what are exactly why a new, revised MOU is needed. The existing MOU was executed in 2013. It appears that many of today's key stakeholders are unaware of its existence. There is a need to revitalize the shared responsibilities through a new MOU and regular monthly meetings of the key stakeholders.

Clear authority for DMC employees to issue parking citations depends on action by the City Council. The existing City of Memphis ordinance (Section 2-84-13) provides that the DMC has the authority to enforce parking violations (and other violations) on Main Street and that the DMC can delegate that authority "... to any employee of the commission staff, who may obtain a summons through the city municipal court. . . ."

In 2019, a Circuit Court ruling provided that the wording of the current ordinance does not authorize DMC employees to write parking tickets. Rather, the court interpreted the ordinance provision as authorizing Commission employees to go to city court and seek issuance of a summons. The Circuit Court's decision was upheld by the Court of Appeals.

This makes the ordinance provision meaningless. A DMC employee would have to literally go to city court during operating hours, appear before a judge in order to obtain a summons, then go back to the illegally parked vehicle to leave the summons, by which time the vehicle would probably be gone. (In an obvious distinction, the same ordinance gives city police officers the authority to issue citations.) Simply put, the ordinance needs to be revised by the City Council to give DMC employees the authority to issue citations.

MLGW is in the process of improving lighting throughout the city. We assume this includes Main Street.

The DMC should assume lead responsibility for creating more street performances on the Mall, providing incentives for new businesses and façade improvements, issuing initial warnings to owners of

overflowing dumpsters with follow-up by the Health Department when there is a lack of prompt action, and implementing the “Adopt a Block” program.

Code Enforcement must take the lead on blighted property issues, and the Memphis Police Department must make more of a police presence a priority.

Every action step mentioned is achievable within a year or less, some immediately upon a decision to move forward on them.

Most of the action steps involve minimal costs. Lighting for the pedestrian part of Main Street would be the largest expenditure, and it is murky as to what entity would be responsible – possibly a combination of MLGW and the DMC. An increased police presence would involve more officers, but we recommend re-allocating existing resources if necessary. A decision by MATA to reduce trolley ride costs could result in an increased deficit, at least in the short run, but result in more ridership and increased revenue in the long run.

Most of the action steps involve existing assets but require giving priority to implementation and sustainability. For example, Code Enforcement should give priority to aggressive and consistent enforcement of violations on Main Street.

There are a few drawbacks to implementing some of the proposed action steps. The DMC may not have the funding stream for building improvements or payments to street performers. And MATA may decide not to take a chance on reducing trolley fees.

The Beale Street Entertainment District:

Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Develop a best practices plan to enforce the curfew ordinance.
2. Conduct public safety campaigns to educate visitors, employers and employees, and residents about personal safety measures, responsible behavior, and the importance of reporting crimes or suspicious activities promptly. Empowering the community can lead to increased vigilance and prompt reporting of criminal incidents.
3. Partner with other relevant agencies such as the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Tennessee Highway Patrol, Blue Suede Brigade, MATA, and the City Public Works Division to address safety concerns related to crime, traffic management, parking, and public transportation.
4. Maintain regular meetings between law enforcement and Entertainment District businesses to address specific safety concerns.

5. Businesses within and surrounding the Entertainment District should join Connect 2 Memphis. Connect 2 Memphis is a new safety program enabling businesses and residences to connect cameras to MPD.

With a rise in juvenile crime across the nation, several large cities have also vowed stricter curfew enforcement. However, some criminal justice reform advocates have pointed to findings of ineffective curfews in other cities and argued that the policy could needlessly criminalize teens (Grossman, et al., 2015; Kline, 2012). Despite the challenges of curfew enforcement, local authorities should carefully research and implement a best practices approach to curfew enforcement and other programs to address juvenile crime.

The first level of Connect 2 Memphis is to register cameras with MPD. Registering cameras does not allow MPD access to live video. It only enables investigators to know a camera is present at a particular location and quickly request video evidence should an incident occur. The second level is integrating cameras with MPD and giving investigators direct access to camera feeds in cases of a nearby emergency. There are over 3,000 registered cameras and over 300 integrated cameras with Connect 2 Memphis.

Some of the strategies and action steps can be implemented immediately and some can be implemented over the next 12 months. The City of Memphis, the Memphis Police Department (MPD), the Downtown Memphis Commission, and the Beale Street Merchants Association are the key stakeholders in implementing the strategies and action steps.

The specific cost estimates for the proposed strategies would depend on the local context. Some will be a one-time expenditure and some recurring. Determining the exact amount of funding required for the implementation of strategies to enhance public safety in the Beale Street Entertainment District would depend on several factors, including the scale and scope of the initiatives, the existing infrastructure, and the specific needs of the district.

Enhancing surveillance systems and effective participation in Connect 2 Memphis may require the installation of high-quality cameras, monitoring equipment, data storage systems, and software for analysis. Additionally, investments may be needed for improved lighting, maintenance of infrastructure, and the implementation of traffic management systems.

Police Presence in the Beale Street Entertainment District:

Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Initiate a Safe Walk Program where trained volunteers or off-duty police officers escort individuals, especially at night, to their vehicles or public transportation. This service can enhance personal safety and address concerns about walking alone in certain areas.
2. Ensure that officers assigned to the Entertainment District have specialized training in crowd control, de-escalation techniques, and handling situations specific to the nightlife environment. Provide them with the necessary equipment to effectively respond to incidents.

3. Utilize data analysis to identify crime trends, hotspots, and patterns within the Entertainment District. This information can help allocate resources effectively and implement targeted strategies to address specific issues.
4. The Memphis Police Department (MPD) should work closely with other law enforcement agencies, such as the Tennessee Highway Patrol and the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, to coordinate efforts, share information, and ensure a comprehensive approach to safety in the area.
5. Regularly assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies through data collection and analysis and gather feedback from the community. Adjust as needed to address emerging challenges and concerns.
6. CCTV and other electronic surveillance systems can have an overall impact on reducing criminal activity but must be implemented using best practices and constantly monitored to have the greatest impact. Research of effectiveness should involve interviews with CCTV operators and police officers, and examination of police/crime incident data and CCTV incident data.

Some of the action steps have already been implemented and others could be implemented immediately, or over the next 12 months. Key stakeholders include the MPD, Shelby County Sheriff's Office, and the Beale Street Merchants Association.

Some of the proposed steps will be a one-time expenditure, and some will be recurring. Determining the exact amount of funding required to implement strategies and action steps to enhance police presence and effectiveness in the Beale Street Entertainment District will depend on several factors, including the scale and scope of the initiatives, the existing infrastructure, and the district's specific needs.

Deploying more police officers and increasing patrols in the area can deter criminal activities and provide a sense of security to visitors and residents. This can include both uniformed and plainclothes officers. Increasing police presence may involve hiring additional officers or allocating existing resources to the district. The costs would include recruitment, training, salaries, benefits, and equipment for law enforcement personnel.

According to MPD, the Entertainment District Unit (EDU) was increased to 40 assigned officers. This staffing level should be supplemented with MPD Special Events Details, Shelby County deputy sheriffs, Police Service Technicians (PSTs), the Blue Suede Brigade, and contract security. (Haberman, et al. 2019; Green et al., 1995).

Allocating resources for crime analysis, data collection, and predictive analytics tools is important and can be beneficial for identifying crime patterns (Perry, 2019). However, allocating resources effectively and evaluating the impact of implemented strategies is equally important. Building partnerships with businesses, local law enforcement, transportation authorities, and other stakeholders may require funding to support joint security measures, training programs, and coordination efforts.

According to the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission and the University of Memphis Public Safety Institute (PSI), MPD has made a renewed commitment to data-driven policing. The PSI conducted three assessments that indicate the MPD command staff appears to be data-driven in its hot spot area

selections, with a consistent decrease in reported crimes the immediate week after labeling an area a hotspot. However, more officers are needed to maximize the impact of data-driven deployment.

Setting aside funds for ongoing research, evaluation, and assessment of the implemented strategies within the Entertainment District can help ensure their effectiveness and make informed decisions for future improvements. Partnerships with the University of Memphis Public Safety Institute (PSI) should be maintained and expanded.

Parking Facilities: Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Improve garage lighting to comply with the recommendations set forth in the Illumination Engineering Society's Standard RP-20-14 (Lighting for Parking Facilities).
2. Ensure that lighting does not create unnecessary glare that diminishes visual acuity.
3. Implement usage monitoring systems to ensure that only authorized vehicles are entering/remaining in the facility.
4. Ensure that appropriate wayfinding signage is in place at parking facilities, identifying and directing users to stairs, elevators, and ticketing/payment locations.
5. Ensure that appropriate wayfinding signage is in place at parking facilities directing users to local attractions/destinations/amenities.
6. Utilize tire tops that are a color other than gray. (A Virginia Tech study showed that blue, black, and yellow have the best recognition potential.)
7. Establish and follow a regular and adequate cleaning schedule, including pavement and lighting fixtures. "Grit and grind" is what Downtown visitors wish to experience at the FedEx Forum. It's not the experience they are looking for when parking their vehicles or walking to their ultimate destinations. A dirty, gritty parking facility sends a subliminal message to users that "anything goes here." Criminals and those engaging in antisocial activity are emboldened. Others are made to feel uncomfortable and unsafe.
8. Surveillance cameras should cover (1) all payment stations and (b) elevator/stairwell entrances/exits.
9. Surveillance camera systems should have the ability to be remotely monitored/reviewed.
10. Surveillance camera systems should have the ability to utilize Avigilon or similar analytics for expedited camera review and activity alerts.
11. All cameras should be checked at least weekly to ensure proper operation and that camera views remain unobstructed.
12. Go cashless/cardless. Where possible, facilities should provide a customer the option of an app that can be used to make payments without having to use a payment station outside of the

customer's vehicle. This will eliminate users fumbling with phones and wallets and reduce related crimes of opportunity.

13. Monitoring of calls for police, fire, and ambulance services, offenses committed and arrests made in and around the parking facilities will help identify any facilities which might need additional intervention or attention.
14. Paint the interior surfaces of multi-story garages a light color and keep the pavement reasonably clean in order to maximize reflectivity (and lighting).
15. Maximize sight lines at all parking garage entrances/exits/stairs/elevator foyers. Install bubble mirrors where necessary.
16. Ensure that access to nonpublic areas of parking garages is prevented.
17. Design and implement a signage "theme" for each garage to establish a sense of place.
18. Place wayfinding signage in elevators, on every parking deck, and in every stairwell so that users will be able to accurately describe their location to 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency.
19. Establish regular maintenance inspections and site usage monitoring. The common practice in our Downtown garages of having roving enforcement monitors who serve as "observe and report" security while checking vehicle tags to identify any who have not paid for parking is insufficient to identify issues which impact user safety (and may diminish use of the facility) without the owner or manager's knowledge. Someone must regularly walk each parking deck and the entirety of every stairwell and any area open to users. Someone must regularly physically inspect each elevator and ensure that all fire doors are operational and that access to nonpublic areas is prevented. Any issues identified should be addressed promptly.
20. Use of License Plate Reader (LPR) technology on incoming vehicles can help police actually apprehend individuals who are using vehicles that are bearing "hotlisted" tags. It is not as helpful for police to receive a notification when such a vehicle is leaving a garage, but it would be tremendously helpful to them if they were notified when such a vehicle enters.
21. Ideally there would be a visible human security presence at all times when the facility is in operation. A human security presence is strongly recommended during high-usage or high-crime days/times. This should be an individual determination for each facility.
22. Each floor and any payment station should have at least one push button emergency communication station that can be activated to reach 9-1-1. This would be similar to systems set up at public swimming pools or in stairwells at senior high-rise facilities.
23. Convene a meeting of parking garage owners/managers and the District Attorney's Office to arrange implementation of the D.A.'s Anti-Trespass Program.
24. Post clear signage of the Anti-Trespass Program in garages.
25. ENFORCE the Anti-Trespass Program.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) has long been internationally recognized as an effective means of preventing and reducing crime while also increasing perceived public safety. The

seeds of CPTED were sown in 1961 when journalist Jane Jacobs declared in her book [The Life and Death of Great American Cities](#) that “eyes on the street” deter crime. Expanding upon that theme, architect/city planner Oscar Newman’s 1972 book [Defensible Space](#) examined how design impacts crime, social disorder, and public health. Criminologist Timothy Crowe’s 1991 textbook [Crime Prevention through Environmental Design](#) finally provided a theoretical framework melding the Broken Windows Theory, the Opportunity Theory of Crime, and principles advocated by Jane Jacobs into what we now know as CPTED.

CPTED is recognized by the National Institute of Justice, numerous law enforcement agencies, the American Planning Association, ASIS International, multiple academic disciplines, and countless governments worldwide which have codified CPTED principles into their planning and zoning codes and regulations. In 2021, the International Standards Organization (ISO) promulgated Standard ISO 22341:2121, entitled “*Security and resilience – Protective security – Guidelines for crime prevention through environmental design,*” ensuring that the insurance industry would ultimately lead CPTED to become a more ubiquitous principle of urban design. Many cities and counties in the U.S. already incorporate CPTED into their codes and planning processes. Memphis is far behind the curve on this.

The basic principles of CPTED (natural surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance) are aimed at eliminating, preventing, and/or mitigating physical conditions that foster and facilitate criminal and antisocial activity (Crowe, et al., 1994; Fleissner, et al., 1996; Keizer, et al., 2008; Zalm, 2007; Book, 2010).

There are locally trained and credentialed CPTED consultants who can accomplish regular site monitoring of parking facilities.

Implementation of various action steps would vary, but some can be implemented immediately. Constant maintenance will be necessary to sustain the crime-reducing impact of the CPTED interventions recommended above.

Some possible action steps would be one time – painting, lighting, etc. Others would be recurring – security personnel, people monitoring cameras, etc.

The Blue Suede Brigade: Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

Clarify and strengthen the Blue Suede Brigade power/authority, including issuance of parking citations:

1. Create and/or purchase an app so that the Blue Suede Brigade members can send in photos to a central source for tracking and remediation.
2. Enact an ordinance authorizing the Blue Suede Brigade to issue parking/citation tickets and warning tickets in the Downtown core such as illegal parking in alleys, the Main Street, and the Fourth Bluff. (See the Pedestrian Main Street recommendation and strategies.)

3. Pursue the possibility of authorizing the Blue Suede Brigade to issue boots and/or towing as follow up measures after issuing parking citations and warning citations in the Downtown core.
4. Consider body cameras for members of the Blue Suede Brigade for their security as well as linkage to Memphis Police Department (MPD) and health care providers.

Enhance Blue Suede networking with Downtown stakeholders:

5. Request the MPD to exchange information about crime hot spots and local daily issues. The MPD officers need to recognize and support the members of the Blue Suede Brigade in appropriate action, particularly with aggressive panhandlers.
6. Work with the Alliance Health Care System, the Downtown Council of Churches, the Memphis Hub, MIFA, Union Mission, and other local social science providers to develop a referral system to assist the homeless.
7. Work with the Downtown and South Memphis Neighborhood Associations and the South City CDC to exchange information on hot spots and areas of walking concerns.
8. Work with Memphis River Parks Partnership personnel to assist visitors on the best ways to get to Tom Lee Park that might include a digital scan code or brochure.
9. Set up a volunteer program where Downtown residents can join members of the Blue Suede Brigade in their outreach efforts.
10. Work with representatives of Downtown transportation providers, particularly Groove On-Demand, to increase usage to get to difficult locations because of distance or walking barriers.
11. Work with Memphis Beautiful and City of Memphis agencies to target piles of trash through I phone apps for immediate cleanup.
12. Develop a reporting system of unlit areas to MLGW.
13. Create a marketing packet of key Downtown locations with walking directions for Downtown visitors.

Scale up Blue Suede Brigade training:

14. Expand the training of Blue Suede Brigade staff to handle medical referrals, verbal de-escalation and low-level mediation techniques for troubled persons and disturbances. The staff of the Blue Suede Brigade is already trained in security procedures, radio, and patrol procedures. They are typically the first responders to Downtown incidents.
15. Conduct joint training sessions with MPD and health organizations on best practices to deal with disturbances.
16. Conduct joint training sessions with SafeWays on the importance of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.

Enhance branding of the Blue Suede Brigade to increase its visibility:

17. Develop testimonials of and about the Blue Suede Brigade that are posted on the DMC and the City of Memphis web pages, as well as U-tube.
18. Feature members of the Blue Suede Brigade in Downtown restaurants, hotels, and tourist places, with pictures and stories of assistance.
19. Sponsor joint events with key stakeholders in the Downtown area and members of the Blue Suede Brigade.

In 2022, a University of Memphis class project concluded that Downtown residents and visitors use the Blue Suede Brigade as their first point of contact about safe and unsafe Downtown areas.

A Memphis Tourism (Convention and Visitors Bureau) 2022 report concluded that good stories on social media such as the work of the Blue Suede Brigade are critical in creating a perceived safe Downtown narrative.

Interview data from focus groups and individual Downtown stakeholders strongly indicated that a physical presence of authority figures such as a Blue Suede Brigade member is central to creating a perceived safe Downtown narrative.

Most of the action steps can be implemented immediately with proper coordination. Some actions steps such as the development of an information system that feeds data collected by the Blue Suede Brigade may require the allocation of an information technician.

A few action steps would require major funding. The first would be reinstating body cameras for members of the Blue Suede Brigade for their security as well as linkage to MPD and health care providers. The second would be a full-time information/communications coordinator. Advanced training would require minor funding.

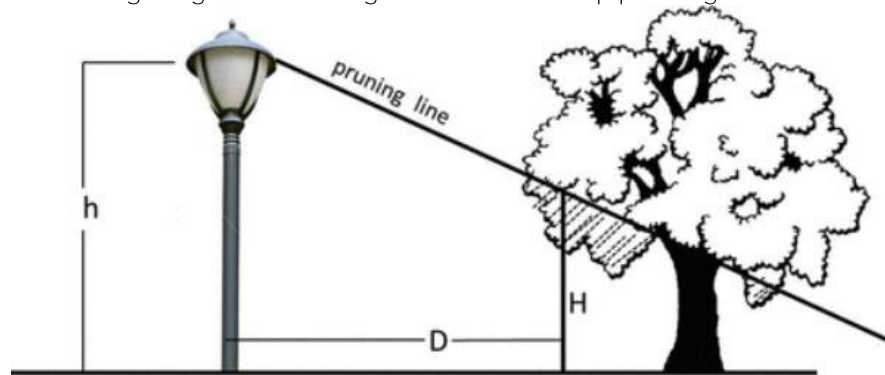
The Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) already funds the Blue Suede Brigade. The DMC Board, DMC executive director, and the director of DMC Safety and Hospitality would be responsible for implementing the four strategies and action steps.

There would need to be political will to strengthen the role of the Blue Suede Brigade, and other stakeholders may feel that this is an overreach of the Brigade's authority, but it is critical to efforts to address Downtown public safety.

Crime Hotspots: Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Provide training in crime prevention practices to Downtown property owners and managers. Separate sessions can be targeted to homeowners, renters, retailers, and entertainment venue owners.
2. Train the Blue Suede Brigade in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) so they can recognize/report/address problems, and also educate business owners in hotspot areas.

3. Encourage property owners/managers whose properties have a history of elevated crime to seek an assessment and recommendations from a credentialed CPTED professional.
4. Encourage the District Attorney and City Attorney to pursue nuisance actions against recalcitrant/uncooperative owners of property where there is a pattern of illegal activity.
5. Require review and approval of all new development plans in the Downtown area by a trained and credentialed CPTED professional as a part of the plan approval process. As part of the review process, ensure appropriate access control measures are in place (with specifics varying, depending on property type, usage, and area crime history). It is much easier and cost effective to “design out crime” on the front end than to implement CPTED measures retroactively.
6. Improve Downtown lighting, including roadways AND public sidewalks, to comply with the current applicable Recommended Practice published by the Illumination Engineering Society (IES). Codify IES lighting standards via modifications to the applicable planning and development codes and ordinances. Ensure that lighting does not create unnecessary glare that diminishes visual acuity.
7. Ensure that trees and other landscape features in proximity to streetlights are appropriately trimmed to allow lighting to reach the ground surface. Stop planting trees next to streetlights.



D: distance from the pole to lowest branch of the tree

h: the position that the lamp is mounted

H: height of the pruning

$H = -0.26 D + h$ (the function that indicates the height of pruning)

8. Ensure that the Blue Suede Brigade is reporting and following up on streetlight outages.
9. Work with MLGW to improve the ease of reporting streetlight outages for citizens and ensure that those who dispatch streetlight repair work at MLGW are able to view additional comments entered by citizens on the MLGW streetlight outage reporting site. Consider publishing a web map with streetlight pole numbers for citizen reference.
10. Mitigate all unnecessary sight line obstructions near pedestrian traffic areas and vehicle parking areas. This would primarily consist of trimming landscaping and trees. Codify via modifications to the applicable planning and development codes and ordinances. Enforce.
11. ENFORCE existing municipal ordinances (a) prohibiting blocking of public sidewalks (including gates that swing over the sidewalk when opened), and (b) requiring 8' vertical clearance above sidewalks (requiring removal of low tree limbs).

12. Improve sidewalk surface conditions to encourage pedestrian traffic, comply with ADA requirements, and, where possible, ensure at least 6' width on public sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians traveling in groups.
13. Implement traffic calming measures in vehicle disturbance hotspots.
14. Ensure strong territorial reinforcement measures demarcating/distinguishing public vs. private space are in place at all properties, as a part of the CPTED review in the planning/permitting process. Specifics will vary from property to property.
15. Create more public art.
16. Strictly ENFORCE existing codes and ordinances regarding property maintenance. The city must set an example by maintaining its own properties/utilities/etc. meticulously.
17. Institute and maintain a graffiti removal process. Ensure the Blue Suede Brigade has resources to address small graffiti tags (Graffiti SafeWipe kits) and provide citizen volunteers with kits.
18. Develop a graffiti reporting/response system (possibly the See/Say app or something similar).
19. Begin a public education campaign re graffiti: how it harms the community and encouraging citizens to report it.
20. Consider designating "graffiti zones" or "graffiti walls" where graffiti is permissible.
21. Encourage the District Attorney to prosecute graffiti taggers.
22. Institute a regular schedule for cleaning of sidewalks/paved walking surfaces.
23. Engage the homeless for litter pickup.
24. Consider instituting a program where youth can work on a drop-in basis to pick up litter/clean graffiti when school is not in session.
25. Institute a regular schedule for cleaning utility poles of handbills, etc.
26. Institute a Broken Vehicle Glass Cleanup Program. Folks coming to Downtown Memphis who see broken vehicle glass in parking areas (evidence of vehicle break-ins) are less likely to stay and less likely to come back. It is critical that the Blue Suede Brigade be on the lookout for broken automotive glass and ensure it is cleaned up immediately. It is also recommended that if broken vehicle glass is discovered, have someone check to see if a police report appears to have been filed.
27. Implement organized surveillance (security personnel/additional police) measures on a case-by-case, site-by-site basis if crime/site/risk analysis so indicates.
28. Property owners/managers should keep abreast of criminal activity on site and in the area and participate in Downtown Memphis Commission safety meetings.

29. Property owners/managers should institute neighborhood watch/community safety meetings for residents. Alternatively, larger neighborhood watch/community safety meetings for multifamily properties in proximity to one another could be instituted.

Downtown Tours/Connectivity: Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Track attendance at events through the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) to document the most frequently visited spots to initiate a cost-effective plan for wayfinding signage.
2. Convene agencies, organizations, nonprofits, private businesses that had, have, and/or anticipate future tours, trails, and other assets to develop funding and implement a strategic plan for relevant wayfinding signage.
3. Assess the above plan for obstacles to walkability/bike travel.
4. Implement a training program for Downtown guides such as the Blue Suede Brigade and staff at the Downtown Visitor's Center.
5. Prepare a schoolteacher's curriculum for student learning about Downtown tours that links to wayfinding signage.
6. Expand educational camps for students that utilize wayfinding signage such as the HIP-HOP architecture camp.
7. Develop a comprehensive Downtown marketing plan and public relations campaign based on the above data.

A beginning list of Downtown tours would include the following:

- Historic Downtown buildings and landmark places
- Historic Memphis Walking Tour
- Civil Rights Loop (Memphis Heritage)
- South Main Historic Arts District
- Downtown museums (National Civil Rights Museum, Car Museum, Belz Asian and Judaic Museum, Blues Hall of Fame, Memphis Fire Museum, Cotton Museum)
- Memphis' historic Downtown churches
- Trail of Tears
- River Walk
- Music and art street performances
- Memphis Ghost Tour
- Memphis Discovery Tour
- Memphis Mojo Tour
- Memphis Business Loop
- Big River Crossing

- Trolley tour and bike tours
- Pub and restaurant tours

The DMC already has data (the Steps program) on frequency of attendance at Downtown places and events. A University of Memphis student study (Fall, 2022) reported that one of the biggest issues in Downtown Memphis is the disconnect between these Downtown places and events.

Walking tours with wayfinding signage exist in other cities such as Nashville. The wayfinding signage has proven to increase the quality of the Downtown experience for visitors, residents, and students and creates a sense of safety.

The DMC, Memphis Tourism (Convention and Visitors Bureau), the City Division of Parks and Recreation, and Memphis River Parks Partnership are major agencies that currently have knowledge of Downtown tours/trails and assets. Many of Memphis' Downtown assets and tours already exist in separate brochures and maps. These brochures and maps provide an important steppingstone to a comprehensive and assessable marketing plan for wayfinding signage.

Future funding would simply focus on wayfinding signage and improved walking pathways. The strategies and action steps are low hanging fruit that could be implemented within a year. In parts of Downtown, wayfinding signage already exists. The City of Memphis, Memphis Tourism, and local foundations would be sources of funding.

The DMC and Memphis Tourism should be the lead agencies in the coordination and implementation of the proposed strategies and action steps.

Tom Lee Park and Other River Parks:

Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Improve connectivity of Tom Lee Park to Big River Crossing.
2. Reduce Riverside Drive to two lanes.
3. Coordinate a safety strategy for Tom Lee Park among the Memphis Police Department, park rangers, and the Blue Suede Brigade with respect to homeless issues on an ongoing basis.
4. Improve connectivity to the south of I-55 and the train tracks (where Big River Crossing is).
5. Improve connectivity to Chickasaw Park and the MLK Park.
6. Improve connectivity to predominately African American neighborhoods south of I-55 such as French Fort and east of South Main such as South City and Soulsville.

7. Provide signage that informs visitors and residents that Cut Bank Bluff is the first ADA compliant ramp access down the bluff. (This will be the main access point between Downtown and the River Parks.)
8. Improve maintenance such as picking up litter, trimming trees, recycling Big Belly bins, and maintaining shade trees that give visitors a sense that people are taking care of pedestrian pathways to Tom Lee Park and the Mississippi River.
9. Place greater emphasis on clean-up campaigns by Memphis City government and environmental organizations after major events such as Memphis in May.
10. Develop a campaign to sponsor more walking tours to Tom Lee Park and adjoining Downtown parks.
11. Rewrite the narrative of the connectivity between the Mississippi River the Downtown core.

The web page for Memphis River Parks Partnership provides data that clearly demonstrates the potential to transform Downtown Memphis and create a 'river district' where Tom Lee Park is a central node. Tom Lee Park is the biggest recent Downtown project with the most potential for increasing both residents' and visitors' attendance and engagement in recreational and educational activities. The massive financial investment and the immense physical changes transform a previously underutilized plot of land to a diverse ecological space that can be utilized by a wide range of people for a variety of events and daily activities such as walking, biking, etc. Park life will include sports, fitness, watching the river, dining, and play. The park's playgrounds are outfitted with large structures children can climb in and on.

The park is designed with sustainability in mind and leverages natural resources and environmental design to create a "greener park". A native pollinator garden will be on the southwest corner of the park with opportunities for classroom engagement. Memphis River Parks Partnership is in the process of designing a K-12 curriculum around the pollinator garden. Schools and individuals will be able to conduct classes around the pollinator garden.

There is a growing literature in architecture, urban planning, and the social sciences on creative and family friendly place making in the revitalization of downtowns. Sustainability and environmental beauty are effective tools for place branding that lead to a more engaged public. By creating a riverfront that displays Memphis' natural beauty, it will aid in rewriting a narrative about Memphis.

A massive core investment in Tom Lee Park has been made. Actions steps need to be taken to increase access to Tom Lee Park that need to be budgeted over the next few years.

The action steps would be achieved by line item targeting of the Downtown Memphis Commission, Memphis River Parks Partnership, Memphis Tourism (Convention and Visitors Bureau) and the appropriate divisions of the City of Memphis and Shelby County Government. An MOU among these entities outlining roles and responsibilities is needed. Local philanthropic foundations have provided and may continue support for special projects in Tom Lee Park.

The basic infrastructure of Tom Lee Park, the lighting, and the sidewalks already exist. The pathways simply need to be enhanced.

The topography of Memphis bluff's high elevation spaces to a low riverfront creates a challenge for walkability. Riverside Drive width and high-speed traffic requires a long-term strategy to move people from the east side of the bluff to the Mississippi River. There will be limited parking on Riverside Drive.

Several flyover bridges and ramps over Riverside Drive have been planned and need to be immediately implemented to create safer access to the river and Tom Lee Park.

Traffic Control/Mobility: Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

Pedestrians:

1. Sufficient lighting levels should be provided for pedestrians to see clear paths and the surrounding environment. Appropriate lighting standard guidelines should be followed with the focus on the pedestrian user and include both walkway and building/area lighting, and not as an afterthought as part of a street lighting plan.
2. Supplemental wayfinding signage should be provided to show pedestrians information as to their present location and paths to various attractions.
3. All traffic signals should have pedestrian indications, and the timing should be checked to provide adequate time for crossing. At locations with high pedestrian volumes in and near the Beale Street Entertainment District, the pedestrian phase should be part of the signal timing phase plan and not pedestrian actuated.
4. Where feasible, bulb outs (extended pedestrian space) should be provided to reduce crossing distance and provide pedestrian protection.
5. All crosswalks should be marked, and high-volume locations be given special attention with high visibility markings. At high volume locations, supplemental pedestrian actuated electronic signage, such as rectangular rapid flashing beacons, should be considered.
6. Sidewalks should be of sufficient width and clear of obstructions. Ramps should be provided at curb transitions. Street furniture such as newspaper boxes, transit benches, or utility poles should not be in the pedestrian right-of-way.
7. The accumulation of trash and the location of dumpsters along sidewalks present hazards to walkers and should be eliminated.
8. When construction sites are cordoned off, plans must include provisions to accommodate pedestrian movements (and also the impact on vehicular traffic). Alternative pathways for pedestrians must be provided and clearly marked.

Bicycles/Scooters:

9. Where feasible, bike lanes should be provided and be well marked and signed.
10. Bike racks and scooter parking areas should be provided and located so as to not interfere with pedestrian traffic.
11. Continue the practice of geo-fencing the areas where scooters can operate. These include the Beale Street Entertainment District and the area around the Bass Pro Shop.

Transit:

12. Implementation of the Memphis Innovation Corridor along Second and Third Streets will include the addition of bus only lanes on these streets. It is important to integrate safety considerations for vehicular traffic and pedestrians in the design of this facility.

Vehicular Traffic:

13. Continue the practice of temporary traffic control around the Beale Street Entertainment District. Consider forming a review team of representatives from the police and City of Memphis Engineering to evaluate plan details. Consider the use of large changeable message signboards to inform drivers as to where they could go and how to access parking locations. Distribute information on the details of the plan on social media to inform the public of street closures and alternative routes.
14. Develop a program to systematically monitor intersections in the Downtown area for red light running.
15. Develop a program of speeding enforcement on approaches to Downtown.
16. Improve marking and signing of on-street parking. Provide clearer information on the location and usage of on-street parking.
17. Evaluate the expanded use of speed control using speed bumps and humps. While this is not a countermeasure normally recommended by traffic professionals, the gravity of the speeding problem in the Downtown area dictates that drastic measures be considered with the understanding that implementation has some negative consequences such as disrupting emergency vehicles.
18. When considering any street improvements in the Downtown area, follow the guidelines in Memphis Complete Streets Guide. This guide details how to consider the concerns of all road users in the design and operations of streets.

Support for the recommendations and possible action steps come from focus groups and conversations with police and other officials. These include reports of vehicles speeding, running red

lights, doing “donuts” in Downtown intersections, and similar behavior. The current traffic control plans put into practice around the Beale Street Entertainment District address issues observed in the past – speeding, cruising, congestion, conflicts with pedestrians, etc. Likewise, the installation of speed bumps along Front Street and other Downtown streets was based on observed and reported behaviors.

Crash data from the Tennessee Department of Transportation shows a concentration of pedestrian fatalities and injuries near the government complex on North Main. This may correlate with the presence of the homeless. There were over 1200 automobile crashes in the Downtown and medical district areas in 2022.

There would be shared responsibility between law enforcement for enforcement and implementation of temporary traffic control plans; City of Memphis Engineering to deal with infrastructure improvements, including signal display and timing issues; the Memphis Area Transit Authority for the design and maintenance of bus stop areas; MLGW with respect to lighting; and other agencies such as the Downtown Memphis Commission and Memphis Tourism (Convention and Visitors Bureau) to focus on signage and cleanliness issues.

Communication and coordination among the various entities is key to success. It is important that a structure be created for the various stakeholders to get together on a regular basis to discuss issues and plan for the implementation of the action steps. The stakeholder groups should include Downtown residents, businesses, the lodging industry, and others. Mechanisms must be developed using social media and other means so the public can see what plans are in place.

The time to implement the recommended action steps will vary depending on the available funding and the magnitude of the action. Removing trash and obstacles from pedestrian walkways can be done immediately. The time frame for other actions like installing flashing pedestrian signals will be longer. As mentioned in the previous section, a stakeholders group needs to be created to review all the action steps to estimate the cost and time to implement each one and to assign responsibility for implementation.

The funding will vary for each of the recommended action steps. Some will be recurring, such as the expense of setting up and policing the temporary traffic controls around the Beale Street Entertainment District, keeping pedestrian pathways clean and free of obstructions, and maintaining social media pages to keep the public informed. Others would be one-time expenses like intersection signalization improvements or installing lighting.

For the infrastructure improvements, grant funding should be pursued. There are opportunities also for public-private partnerships to support programs such as the purchase and installation of changeable message sign boards. Businesses or other groups may sponsor actions like the installation of wayfaring signs. Some items may be funded from city or county budgets.

Some of the action steps, such as temporary traffic control around the Beale Street Entertainment District, are already in place but need to be reviewed and possibly enhanced. On-going safety

programs within city government can be used to address issues such as improved signal timing or pedestrian signal installation.

The main drawback is obviously lack of funding, both in terms of the capital needed for infrastructure improvements and funds for law enforcement personnel to enforce laws and ordinances and others to maintain programs. The planning team believes this is a wise and badly needed investment.

Street Performances and Perceptions of Safety Downtown:

Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Establish at least six sites/stations for street musicians Downtown, ideally beginning and ending at Downtown destinations (i.e., the Orpheum to the Renasant Center along the pedestrian part of Main Street and the mobility center to Tom Lee Park).
2. Link to wayfinding signage and/or an icon to the different Downtown destinations.
3. Establish a set schedule that can be promoted to locals and visitors (such as Monday through Friday from 1:30-4:30 p.m., capturing people leaving lunch and people beginning to go to dinner, and providing a perfect activity to fill an afternoon between those meals for tourists).
4. Link Downtown street musicians' schedule to a Downtown special events calendar.
5. Hire and coordinate training for high quality musicians who work with an established tour operator like Backbeat Tours, which already uses Memphis musicians as tour guides.

E. Cawein dissertation research at the University of Memphis on live street music has shown the positive impact of live music (street performance or busking) on perceptions of safety in urban centers. Quality music is a key factor. Simply the presence of a musician, if not of a high quality, goes entirely unnoticed and has no measurable impact.

The Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) and the non-profit Music Export Memphis could be the lead agencies in the coordination and implementation of the proposed strategy and action steps,

A pilot program could be started immediately. Musicians would be paid a competitive wage with set-up and tear-down.

A network of street musicians Downtown coordinated and hired by the DMC in partnership with local foundations could have a tremendous impact on the perceptions of safety and potentially, as behaviors change and there are more "eyes on the street," an actual decrease in crime.

The major components are already in place. Memphis is and has been the birth of musicians. The Downtown core has many green spaces and storefronts for entertainment.

Downtown Homelessness: Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Convene regular meetings of the providers of homeless services, the Blue Suede Brigade, and the Memphis Police Department to discuss the utilization of the newly created Hub Safe Space public park at 590 Washington that functions 24 hours a day with water/restrooms/food and places to stay.
2. Develop a plan through the Downtown Memphis Commission and MATA that provides 24-hour free transportation to restrooms, water fountains with potable water, phones charging stations, places to sit, shelter from the elements, heat in the winter, and fans in the summer in Downtown safe spaces.
3. Expand operating hours for the Hospitality Hub to 24 hours a day as well as funding to support its outreach efforts.
4. Use quarterly meetings of the providers of homeless services, community organizations, and law enforcement to exchange information, develop referral networks and host training programs on tools such as de-escalating aggressive behaviors and CIT.
5. Develop a database on homeless individuals and available services that can be used by multiple service providers and faith-based organizations.
6. Develop homeless packets for business owners, faith-based organizations, and other stakeholders that provide options for the homeless with areas they can go and be accepted, with bus cards included so that they can go for assistance.
7. Work with the newly opened Cossitt Downtown Library to expand information and services for the homeless.
8. Increase the opportunities for the homeless to engage in cleanup activities and vocational job training utilizing the existing programs such as the Hospitality Hub.
9. Offer CIT training for anyone who interacts with the homeless.
10. Create meditative, clean areas that welcome the homeless such as the Covenant House.
11. Collect and publish stories with homeless individuals who have received support services and have improved their lives.
12. Address unsafe dark areas such as the area between Court and Monroe.
13. Create mobile clinics or partnerships with existing healthcare providers to offer medical care, mental health support, and substance abuse treatment to homeless individuals.

14. Invest in specialized services for individuals experiencing either a mental health disorder/crisis or addiction issues.
15. Foster volunteer opportunities and community service initiatives that allow residents to contribute to established solutions.
16. Encourage apartment building owners to have a percentage of their apartment dwellings as subsidized housing.
17. Identify vacant Downtown buildings that could be rehabilitated to provide temporary housing for the homeless and agencies and nonprofits that could staff these buildings.
18. Expand and enhance emergency shelters and transitional housing programs to provide immediate relief as well as helping individuals transition into stable housing.
19. Push private sector involvement through funding opportunities, donations, and volunteer initiatives.
20. Allocate government funding and resources to preventive measures (rental assistance programs, eviction prevention services, and financial counseling) aimed at helping individuals who may be at risk of becoming homeless.

The 2021 count was able to account for 739 people experiencing homelessness. That's about 300 fewer people than the year prior, reflecting a decreasing trend.

A lot of homelessness is likely the result of a lack of affordable housing, a longstanding problem in Memphis made worse by rising inflation. Rents in Memphis, for example, have risen by nearly 30% since before the pandemic, according to the November 2022 Apartment List National Rent Report.

The importance of providing housing to the homeless is reflected by the Bush and Obama Administrations' federal policy of "housing first." See "[How Houston Moved 25,000 People from the Streets into Homes of Their Own.](#)" *New York Times*, 6/14/2022, updated 2/13/2023; "[Houston's Success Three Years in Shelters. Ten Months to Find a Home: Scenes from one Woman's Journey out of Homelessness in Houston.](#)" *New York Times*, 6/21/2023.

This bipartisan approach that has dominated the federal response to homelessness for more than two decades is being challenged by some who emphasize sobriety, employment, and wrap around social services. See "[A New Study Paints a Different Picture of Homelessness in California.](#)" *New York Times*, 6/22/2023; "[In Los Angeles, Bringing Food, Soap and the Salon to the Homeless.](#)" June 21, 2023.

Homeless agencies/organizations for Downtown safety, housing, social services, and employment include: Hospitality Hub, Hospitalityhub.org; Alliance Healthcare Services, 2220 Union, <http://www.alliance-hs.org>; Catholic Charities; Memphis Union Mission, info@memphisunionmission.org; Downtown Council of Churches; Memphis Interfaith Association; Community Alliance for the Homeless, chere@cfth.org; Downtown Cossitt Library; Blue Suede Brigade; and MATA.

There is general agreement among the local homeless providers that actions steps 1-15 are needed and doable within a short period of time. Action steps 16-20 would require coordination and resources from many federal, state, and local agencies. Following is a summary of implementation timetables and projected level of funding:

Action steps 1-15 could begin immediately and be implemented within a year;

Action steps 16-20 would entail a long-term commitment of planning and implementation;

Actions steps 1-15 would require minimal funding;

Action steps 16-20 would require major funding;

Actions steps 1-15 are low cost that could be handled by local homeless agencies; and

Action steps 1-20 would require joint funding, with steps 16-20 from federal, state and local governments, as well as foundations.

Aggressive Panhandling: Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Maintain collaboration among local law enforcement agencies to insure effective enforcement.
2. Expand the Work Local Program at the Hospitality Hub to address jobs that are less physically demanding for the physically challenged.
3. Allocate resources to mental health programs and services that specifically target those individuals who engage in aggressive panhandling, with counseling, addiction treatment, and rehabilitation programs to address underlying mental health or substance abuse issues.
4. Establish outreach teams (social workers, counselors, and volunteers) to help provide support, connect individuals to resources, and offer assistance with finding stable housing/employment.
5. Work with local businesses to develop guidelines and train employees on appropriate responses to aggressive panhandling.

The City of Memphis, Memphis Police Department, Downtown Memphis Commission, businesses in the Downtown area, homeless agencies, and various organizations who are part of Downtown safety, housing, social services, and employment should serve on the proposed ad hoc committee strategy set forth in the plan to address aggressive panhandling Downtown.

The proposed strategies and possible action steps could be implemented straightaway if chosen to pursue. When examining specific costs, many variables would have to be accounted for. Some of the strategies and action steps would have minimal costs. However, there are some that could require more funding on the front end of implementation.

Implementation will ultimately fall on the ability and desire to work together.

Coordination, Cooperation and Information Sharing:

Possible Action Steps to Help Implement Strategies and Additional Comments

1. Parties to the proposed MOU covering responsibilities for maintenance of the pedestrian part of Main Street should meet monthly with an agenda covering specific items that need to be addressed.
2. The Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) should formalize a Youth Advisory Council made up of high school students in order to receive their input on activities Downtown and their perceptions of safety.
3. Conduct regular meetings of homeless service providers, community organizations, law enforcement, and other Downtown stakeholders.
4. Formalize a partnership between law enforcement and Beale Street Entertainment District businesses to establish a network of communication and information sharing.
5. Develop a coordinated effort to expand the Downtown experience with high-quality music, especially in areas outside the Beale Street Entertainment District, including special events and pop-up entertainment.
6. Implement traffic safety countermeasures in a coordinated fashion that includes all users – pedestrians, transit riders, cyclists, scooter users, and vehicle drivers – and their interactions.
7. Parties to the proposed MOU on roles and responsibilities for Tom Lee Park should meet monthly with an agenda composed of specific items to address.

Five of the seven possible action steps set forth above are reflected in specific strategies in the plan. Creation of a DMC Youth Advisory Council is a recognition that the future of Downtown depends upon the support and perceptions of responsible Memphis youth, which is why the planning team conducted two focus groups of high school students.

We found it interesting that the perceptions about Downtown crime and public safety issues among high school students participating in focus groups were not that different from those among the adult focus groups. That includes feelings that certain youth are a big part of the Downtown public safety problem.

We also found the high school students to be very grateful for the opportunity to have input and to have a desire to be a part of coming up with solutions. There was advocacy for such a group as a Youth Advisory Council, with some volunteering to serve.

Results of Qualtrics Survey

Downtown Safety Plan – Survey Results as of August 8, 2023 (656)

Q1) Which of the following statements are accurate and apply to you? (Select all that apply).

I reside in the Downtown area.	217	33.64%
I work in the Downtown area.	208	32.25%
I go to school in the Downtown area.	13	2.02%
I visit the Downtown area.	420	65.12%

**Survey responses – 645, answer responses 858.*

Q2) On average, how many hours a day do you spend in Downtown Memphis for recreational activities?

0 – 4 hours	469	72.15%
5 – 8 hours	83	12.77%
9 – 12 hours	48	7.38%
13 – 16 hours	15	2.31%
17 – 20 hours	14	2.15%
21 – 24 hours	21	3.23%

**Survey responses - 650*

Q3) What times are you most active Downtown? (Select all that apply).

12AM – 4AM	45	6.99%
4AM – 8AM	56	8.70%
8AM – 12PM	198	30.75%
12PM – 4PM	314	48.76%
4PM – 8PM	442	68.63%
8PM – 12PM	242	37.58%

**Survey responses –644, answer responses – 1297.*

Q4) How would you rate the level of overall safety in the Downtown area? 0 being ‘Least Safe’ and 10 being ‘Most Safe.’

0	35	5.98%
1	136	23.25%
2	88	15.04%
3	89	15.21%
4	56	9.57%
5	59	10.09%
6	55	9.40%
7	47	8.03%
8	10	1.71%
9	5	0.85%
10	5	0.85%

**Survey responses – 585*

Q5) When spending time Downtown, what general areas do you feel safest?

Main Street	186	30.19%
No Where	140	22.73%
FedEx Forum	54	8.77%
Peaybody	47	7.63%
Inside an Establishment	43	6.98%

**Survey responses – 616, answer responses – 801. Respondents had the ability to name several locations of their choosing. Top five showing.*

Q6) What areas of Downtown make you feel the most unsafe?

Beale Street	218	35.33%
Everywhere	191	30.96%
Main Street	90	14.59%
Parking Lots/Garages	51	8.27%
Alleys	23	3.73%

**Survey responses – 617, answer responses – 879. Respondents had the ability to name several locations of their choosing. Top five showing.*

Q7) Using a scale of 0 being “Not A Factor” and 10 being “A Main Factor,” please rate the following aspects of Downtown on how much of a factor it is in you feeling unsafe Downtown.

Crime	9.32
Panhandling	7.52
Police Presence	6.78
Lighting	6.70
News Stories	6.62
Word of Mouth	6.44
Blight/Trash	6.20
Parking Garages	5.92
Speeding	5.87
Vacant Buildings	5.62
Available Parking	5.48
Walkability	5.09
Condition of Sidewalks	4.77
Traffic	4.49
Crosswalks	4.45

**Survey responses ranged from 584 to 644. Number shown is the average score for each item.*

Q8) Were there any reasons not listed in the previous question that influence your perception on the safety of Downtown?

No	120	30.46%
Crime	88	22.34%
Gunshots/Guns	45	11.42%
Lack of Police/Presence	40	10.15%
Traffic Safety Issues	36	9.14%

**Survey responses – 394, answer responses – 493. Respondents had the ability to name several items in their responses. Top five showing.*

Q9) In your experience which of the reasons contributes most to a sense of danger in Downtown?

Crime	220	37.87%
Lack of Police/Presence	123	21.17%
Gunshots/Guns	88	15.15%
Homeless/Panhandling (Agg. & Non)	78	13.43%
Traffic Safety Issues	60	10.33%

**Survey responses – 581, answer responses – 916. Respondents had the ability to name several items in their responses. Top five showing.*

Q10) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below. Select the response which best indicates how you feel about each statement.

I believe there is an adequate supply of parking in the Downtown area.	2.89
I believe there is a mobility issue in the Downtown area (getting around from one location to another).	3.23
I believe there is insufficient lighting in the Downtown area.	3.70
I believe the Memphis Police Department has a good level of presence in the Downtown area.	2.18

**Survey responses ranged from 633 to 640. Respondents could select from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The number represents the average of the selection. The higher the number goes the more they range to the Agree/Strongly Agree category.*

Q11) In your opinion what is the effectiveness of police presence Downtown? 0 being “Not Effective” and 10 being “Very Effective.”

0	14	2.22%
1	134	21.24%
2	64	10.14%
3	78	12.36%
4	52	8.24%
5	92	14.58%
6	33	5.23%
7	36	5.71%
8	42	6.66%
9	18	2.85%
10	68	10.78%

**Survey responses – 631.*

Q12) How do you most often learn about special events that are going on Downtown (such as on television, social media, newspaper)?

Social Media	435	74.61%
Television	67	11.49%
Word of Mouth	52	8.92%
News	26	4.46%
Newspaper	24	4.12%
Online	23	3.95%

**Survey responses – 585, answer responses – 726. Respondents had the ability to name several ways they learn about special events. Top five showing.*

Q13) Are you a member of a Downtown neighborhood watch group or association?

Yes	80	12.29%
No	549	84.33%
Unsure	22	3.38%

**Survey responses – 651.*

Q14) If you are a member of a neighborhood watch group or association, what group do you belong to?

South Main Association	26	30.23%
Downtown Neighborhood Association	20	23.26%
Harborview	4	4.65%
Harbor Town	4	4.65%
Harbor Isle HOA	3	3.49%
Mud Island Neighbors	3	3.49%
Nextdoor App	3	3.49%

**Survey responses – 118, answer responses – 88. Several respondents wrote “None” or a similar response and were excluded from the count. Top five responses showing.*

Q15) What is your age?

Under 18	0	0.00%
18 - 24	15	2.28%
25 – 34	136	20.67%
35 – 44	118	17.93%
45 -54	150	22.80%
55 or Older	225	34.19%
Prefer not to Disclose	14	2.13%

**Survey responses – 658.*

Q16) What is your gender?

Female	410	63.08%
Male	214	32.92%
Non-Binary/Third Gender	0	0.00%
Prefer not to Disclose	26	4.00%

**Survey responses – 650.*

Q17) What is your race/ethnicity?

Asian	6	0.92%
Black or African American	61	9.36%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin	11	1.69%
White	471	72.24%
Other	17	2.61%
Prefer not to Disclose	86	13.19%

**Survey responses – 652.*

REFERENCES

- Anderson, D. A. (2011). The cost of crime. *Foundations and Trends in Microeconomics*, 7(3), 209-265.
- Berkley, B. J., & Thayer, J. R. (2000) Policing entertainment districts. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 23(4), 466-491.
- Book, E. & Schneider, R. (2010). Crime prevention through environmental design: CPTED 40 years later. *The Police Chief*, 8(1).
- Branas, C. C., Kondo, M. C., Murphy, S. M., South, E. C., Polsky, D., & MacDonald, J. M. (2016). Urban blight remediation as a cost-beneficial solution to firearm violence. *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(12), 2158-2164.
- Cohen, M. A. (2020). *The costs of crime and justice* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Crowe, T. D., & Zahm, D. L. (1994). Crime prevention through environmental design. *Land Development*, 22-27.
- Fe, H. & Sanfelice, V. (2022). How bad is crime for business? Evidence from consumer behavior. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 129.
- Fleissner, D., & Heinzelmann, F. (1996). *Crime prevention through environmental design and community policing*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice: Washington, D.C.
- Green, J. R., Seamon, T. M., & Levy, P. R. (1995). Merging public and private security for collective benefit: Philadelphia's center city district. *American Journal of Police*, 14(2), 3-20.
- Grossman, E. R., & Miller, N. A. (2015). A systematic review of the impact of juvenile curfew laws on public health and justice outcomes. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 49(6), 945-951.
- Haberman, C. P., & Stiver, W. H. (2019). The Dayton foot patrol program: An evaluation of hot spots foot patrols in a central business district. *Police Quarterly*, 22(3), 247-277.
- Hill, J., Raber, G., & Gullede, L. (2022). Down with the sickness? Los Angeles burglary and COVID-19 restrictions. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 1-29.
- Johansson, O., Gripshover, M. M., & Bell, T. L. (2016). Landscapes of performance and technological change music venues in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Nashville, Tennessee. In B. J. Hracs, M. Seman, & T. E. Virani (Eds.), *The production and consumption of music in the digital age* (pp. 114-129). Routledge.
- Keizer, K., Lindenberg, S., & Steg, L. (2008) The spreading of disorder. *Science Express*, 322(5908), 1681-1685.
- Koppel, S., Capellan, J. A., & Sharp, J. (2022). Disentangling the impact of COVID-19: An interrupted time series analysis of crime in New York City. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 48, 368-394.
- Kline, P. (2011). The impact of juvenile curfew laws on arrests of youths and adults. *American Law and Economics Review*, 14(1), 44-67.

- Kreager, D. A., Lyons, C. J., & Hays, Z. R. (2011). Urban revitalization and Seattle crime, 1982-2000. *Social Problems, 58*(4), 615-639.
- Mazerolle, L., White, G., Ransley, J., Ferguson, P. (2011). Violence in and around entertainment districts: A longitudinal analysis of the impact of late-night lockout legislation. *Law & Policy, 34*(1), 55-79.
- Miller, T. R., Cohen, M. A., Swedler, D. I., Ali, B., & Hendrie, D. V. (2021). Incidence and costs of personal and property crimes in the USA, 2017. *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis, 12*(1), 24-54.
- Penn, C. A. (2019). *Smart strategies for effectively managing entertainment districts* [Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School]. Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive.
- Perry, W. L., McInnis, B., Prince, C. C., Smith, S. C., & Hollywood, J. S. (2013). *Predictive policing: The role of crime forecasting in law enforcement operations*. Rand Corporation.
- Thomas, S. A., Harris, C. T., & Drawve, G. (2022). Exploring the influence of elements of the social and physical environment on neighborhood gun crime. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 47*, 370-398.
- Zahm, D. (2007). Using crime prevention through environment design in problem-solving. *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Series*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.



PUBLIC SAFETY INSTITUTE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS®

The University of Memphis is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action University.
It is committed to the education of a non-racially identifiable student body.