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# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

IN COLLABORATION WITH PUBLIC SAFETY  
PRACTITIONERS AND CITIZENS OF BALTIMORE CITY

*Sheila*  
**DIXON**

FOR MAYOR ★ BALTIMORE CITY

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# INTRODUCTION

“Baltimore City has reached an inflection point that will determine its social and economic health for decades to come. There is nothing more critical at this juncture than improving public safety so that all residents can feel safe in their communities.

Crime fighting strategies have been discussed and rehashed in academia and at every level of our government since long before I was Mayor. The biggest factor impacting the success of their implementation is leadership – bringing together stakeholders in criminal justice, law enforcement, and within our communities around a unified strategy.

As Mayor, I identified the right people, placed them in the right positions, and gave them the proper tools to produce the results that saved lives and restored order in our communities.”

– **Former Mayor Dixon**

# LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION, & EXECUTION

After over 10 years, the crime we face in our communities today doesn't look the same as what we faced when I was Mayor. What hasn't changed, however, is the role that a strong Mayor plays in holding all stakeholders accountable for results.

In order for us to return to the historic low crime numbers we saw during my administration, everybody from myself, to city agencies, to the officers on the front lines must assume responsibility for prioritizing crime reduction at every level. I pledge to our city's residents that the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) will be led by strong and effective leaders who adhere to sound organizational management principles. These leaders will ensure clear and direct communication of our crime-fighting priorities to the police officers they supervise, enabling them to understand their vital role in our strategy to reduce violence.

State, local, and federal agencies and departments must work together in a coordinated effort to maintain public safety, investigate and prosecute crimes, and provide services related to the criminal justice system in Baltimore. When the BPD, State Police, and Federal law enforcement agencies share information and coordinate tactics we can make the most of our resources and ensure that the worst criminals get the most attention. By utilizing every resource possible, we can learn from crime fighting efforts of the FBI and local police departments around the country, bringing the most innovative tactics to Baltimore.

# LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION, & EXECUTION

- **Reinstitute CompStat** – A main driver of success in fighting crime during my administration was our Comparative Statistics (CompStat) program. This served as an organizational management tool to identify and measure crime, and appropriately deploy resources to those areas affected by any crime. The core principles of Compstat are 1) accurate and timely intelligence, 2) effective tactics, 3) rapid deployment, and 4) relentless follow-up and assessment. The Police Commissioner and his executive leadership team hosted weekly CompStat crime strategy meetings to engage, glean, and assist their commanders to lower-level leaders as well as daily patrol officers to better fight crime and serve communities. In these meetings, BPD District Commanders and their management teams presented problems that they were facing and gave updates on recent incidents within their geographical area. District Commanders were also responsible for providing information on the progress and deficiencies to be addressed in their District Action Plans. One of my first actions as Mayor will be to reimplement the CompStat program to ensure that we maximize our policing resources and drive results.
- **Reinstitute CitiStat** – When used properly, this performance management tool is effective in aiding in crime fighting by linking citizen service requests to agency metrics. This will ensure that neighborhood concerns are addressed in a timely fashion. With me as Mayor, we will return to regular CitiStat meetings where we will identify sanitation, housing, transportation, and other social needs that may be contributing to crime. We will utilize the data collected by CitiStat to develop a coordinated approach to resolving these problems.

# LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION, & EXECUTION

- **Reinstitute Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee (CJCC)** – There is no such thing as a unified criminal justice system. Instead, there are siloed components of a system that often struggle to coordinate effectively. As Mayor, I helped coordinate the monthly meetings of the CJCC, which is the nuts and bolts of Baltimore’s criminal justice system. This consortium of political leaders, judges, law enforcement officials, as well as city and state agencies were tasked with reducing crime and managing the day-to-day operations to include elements of our court system, surrounding detention facilities, and diversion and treatment programs. It included representatives from the State Department of Parole and Probation, the State's Attorney’s Office, the Mayor’s Office, the State Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), the State Department of Corrections, the Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Public Defender’s Office, the Circuit Court Clerk, and other local leaders. This committee functioned best when meetings were held in the courthouse and leadership was in the hands of the judges. As Mayor, I will work with stakeholders to reinstitute the CJCC and get it functioning as well as it had previously.

# OFFICER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

None of the strategies and models outlined in this plan can be implemented without the brave men and women who risk their lives every day to keep us safe. In the last decade, heightened scrutiny and skepticism surrounding law enforcement, along with distrust in the community, have deterred many potential candidates from taking the oath to become police officers.

The Baltimore City Police Department is currently operating with approximately 2500 sworn police officers and supervisors working in the police department. Under my administration as Mayor, the BPD was staffed with approximately 3000 uniformed police officers and supervisors available in Patrol to respond to 911 calls at any given time. Recent estimates are that the BPD has been operating with a staffing deficit of approximately 500 to 700 officers, resulting in a considerable gap between the authorized and actual strength of the force. This staffing shortage has hindered the Department's capacity to respond effectively to emergencies, investigate crimes, and get out of their vehicles to engage in proactive community policing.

Fewer officers means more time in their cars responding to 911 calls and less time to build relationships and trust within our communities. The shortage of police has impacted the capacity of the Department to engage in problem-solving and crime reduction strategies, leaving communities feeling more vulnerable and less connected to our officers. There is an urgent need to address the officer shortage to enhance both the safety and the overall well-being of Baltimore's residents. That is why, during my transition process, we will establish a task force to evaluate national best practices around recruitment that we will begin to implement the day I take office. In addition, while evaluating national best practices, I will ensure that BPD's own Recruitment Unit is evaluated and operating as effectively as possible. We will prioritize working with our local high schools, colleges, faith-based institutions, and community organizations to recruit from our own local residents who are often overlooked.

# OFFICER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- **Evaluate Eligibility Requirements** – Given their responsibilities in the community, we hold high standards for police candidates who join the ranks of BPD. As time passes, it is important that we evaluate our eligibility requirements to be sure that they aren't having the unintended consequence of excluding strong candidates. Examples of adjustments that my administration will evaluate include requirements around spelling tests or other written examinations, evaluating candidates' past and present affiliations, adjusting how crimes committed as juveniles are viewed, evaluating the importance of financial history and credit scores, and adapting physical fitness standards to allow for improvement in the academy.
- **Promote Law Enforcement Career Opportunities** – We must restore the perception that pursuing careers in law enforcement is an honorable profession and means of serving the community. It's critical that we create opportunities for young people to be educated, as early as possible, on the benefits of a career in public service.
- **Youthworks** – YouthWorks, operated by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, offers paid summer employment opportunities, allowing young participants valuable work experience and exposure to future career paths. Under my Administration, every Youthworks student will participate in a program component that educates them on career opportunities in law enforcement.
- **City Schools** – We must recognize that college after graduation may not be the best choice for all of our students. Jobs in law enforcement offer some of the highest starting wages available without a college degree. As Mayor, I will work with the Baltimore City Public Schools to immediately incorporate information into the curriculum to educate students about those opportunities. We will work at restoring a K-12 in-school law enforcement curriculum. This has been both discussed and unaddressed for far too long.



# OFFICER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- **Promote the Police Cadet Program** – Police Cadets are aspiring Baltimore Police Officers who do not yet meet the minimum age requirement of Police Officer Trainee. Recruitment to this program is critical to create a pipeline of city youth to the Training Academy. As Mayor, my administration will immediately establish a recruitment campaign, targeted to graduating high school seniors, to encourage them to join the Police Cadets.
- **Prevent Vacancies & Maintain Institutional Knowledge** – We will implement a four-pronged approach to reduce vacancies in the BPD.
- **Retain** – Exit surveys from police officers leaving the department highlight poor working conditions, extended work hours with little or no notice, and lack of support from the Police Commissioner’s administration and elected officials. To begin managing crime, we must retain the good officers that we currently have by ensuring that Patrol is appropriately staffed, creating an environment that is respectful to all our officers and offers a work-life balance.
- **Re-engage** – The Baltimore Police Department has trained and lost hundreds of officers that have made lateral moves to other law enforcement agencies or just left the profession completely. We will aggressively develop an engagement strategy that will make BPD a desirable law enforcement agency for extensive careers. This will start with assuring that the men and women of BPD are equipped with the best experienced, knowledgeable, and supportive leadership possible.
- **Re-invest** – When good-standing senior police officers retire more is lost than just a body. 25 years of policing experience walks away with them. We want to provide incentives for those veteran officers to stay with the department. We will create part-time contractual positions for retired police officers that are still eligible for certification. These officers will work a minimum of 10 days a month to supplement our full-time workforce and be able to reinvest and transfer knowledge to the next generation of officers.

# OFFICER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- **Create & Implement a Civilianization Plan** – There is currently no sense of urgency within the Mayor or Police Commissioner’s administrations to implement a civilianization plan. This adds to the lack of police presence within our communities while having sworn police officers performing tasks that can be done by civilian staff. There are a finite number of sworn officers, those officers should be engaging with our neighbors to keep our community safe, not sitting behind a desk. Transitioning these police officers back to the street could help our local economy by creating possible employment opportunities for Baltimore City residents who could serve in these positions. Under my leadership we will expedite this plan by hiring retired officers in contractual positions, graduates of local colleges and universities, and city residents to fill these positions. We must recruit for these civilian positions with the same level of urgency that we are looking to fill police officer positions.
- **Evaluate Incentive Opportunities** – Bonuses and other incentives are used to motivate employees and award longevity. Other than base salary and overtime, many of the other benefits of a career in law enforcement are no longer offered. My administration will evaluate the use of retention bonuses instead of sign-on bonuses as well as other benefits such as student loan repayment and tuition reimbursement for those seeking additional higher education. We will also consider additional incentives that are attractive to the modern workforce, including increased paid time off, expanded health care options for active and retired police, access to state-of-the-art technology and equipment, and the potential to use take-home vehicles.

# OUR YOUTH

As a former educator, it pains me more than anything to see that our young people are more involved than ever with violence both as the victims of violent crime and the cause of pain and suffering in our communities. The spike in juvenile involvement in assaults, carjackings, and robberies is unacceptable and must be stopped. With that said, experience shows us that taking our young people into police custody can be extremely complicated and only lends itself to exposure to further unproductive criminal elements. How do we hold young people accountable for their actions while also putting them on the path toward a better law-abiding future?

The city and the BPD will not be able to do it alone. Juvenile crime, more than any other issue, requires the coordination of stakeholders such as BPD, the State's Attorney's Office, DJS, and community partners. We must create a system that, first and foremost, protects our residents but also rehabilitates our young people. We need to recognize that the historical 'catch and release' model is failing and that an ongoing commitment to our young people is needed in order to have an impact.

**Adequately Fund DJS & Address Vacancies** – The DJS is grossly under-resourced and can not adequately provide the supervision and supportive services needed for our young people. Additionally, the Department is plagued with turnover and staff vacancies. Of the 10,000 juveniles arrested, only 18% result in court cases while over 50% are resolved by DJS at intake. These resolutions are often necessitated out of a lack of resources at intake rather than a proper risk assessment. Those young people who do make it into the system are faced with a lack of supervision due to an unmanageable caseload for DJS case managers. Youth detention facilities are at capacity with much of the space being taken by kids awaiting trial. For those young people who make it into detention facilities, we must ensure that during their time there are opportunities for real education and reform. As Mayor, I will be a strong advocate to Federal and State partners to ensure that DJS is properly resourced and I will work with DJS to identify repeat offenders and target resources to serve them.

# OUR YOUTH

**Evaluate & Invest in Youth Diversion Programs** – Placing young people in detention centers risks exposing them to the criminal element. It is sometimes necessary to protect the public, however, it should be avoided for lower-level offenses where a quality diversion program is sufficient. DJS contracts with a network of community providers for these services. A major gap currently exists for programs serving kids under 16 years of age. As Mayor, I will work with DJS and community partners to create standards for youth diversion programs and ensure that the continuum serves the range of young people entering the system. We will also work with DJS to ensure that youth receive the level of supervision necessary to hold people accountable for their active participation in the programming.

**Extend the Length of Probation** – Rehabilitation takes time and the public must be protected. Extending the length of probation ensures the time necessary for a young person to engage in programming and for a proper risk evaluation. As Mayor, I will advocate that judges extend the length of probation.

**Invest in Outreach & Behavioral Intervention Models** – Baltimore is fortunate to have several programs, including ROCA and THREAD, with proven track records of engaging the at-risk. These models recognize the need to engage youth over extended periods and work to modify their thinking. As Mayor, I will continue to invest in these community programs that provide positive alternatives to the most at-risk youth, including after-school activities, sports, arts, and mentoring opportunities. Unfortunately, many of these programs also focus on services for kids over 16 years of age. We will work with these organizations to determine the best way to serve a younger population with an emphasis on kids under 16 who are repeat offenders.

# INTELLIGENCE & RESOURCE TARGETING

Police intelligence is pivotal to effective law enforcement strategies. It offers invaluable insights into criminal activities, enabling law enforcement agencies to allocate resources more strategically, focusing their efforts on crime hotspots and emerging trends. Likewise, advances in technology play a critical role in aiding our Police Department to address crime and violence.

It is a fact that a small percentage of the Baltimore City population is responsible for the majority of our violent crime. As Mayor, we will target policing resources, with a laser approach, to prevent these individuals from offending or holding them fully accountable. Nationally recognized models that I support include:

- **Focused Deterrence Model** - This crime reduction strategy, used to achieve record-low crime numbers, aims to deter crime by increasing the swiftness and severity of punishment for crimes by implementing a mix of law enforcement, social services, and community mobilization to reduce violence. My administration will focus primarily on the identification of the most violent offenders in our communities and create pathways for them to leave their life of crime, or deal with the consequences of their actions.

While this model has proven to be extremely effective, it is also very resource-intensive. As Mayor, we will collect and analyze intelligence to determine where to utilize this strategy to maximize results.

Gun Offender Registry - The number one threat to the citizens of Baltimore City is individuals who walk our streets possessing illegal firearms. As Mayor, I led the charge to reduce violence in our city by introducing and implementing the Gun Offender Registry. This program not only monitored individuals who have been convicted of possessing an illegal firearm, it also allowed us to connect them with the appropriate resources to help change their lives. Under my leadership, we will rigorously identify, investigate, and arrest those individuals who attempt to terrorize and harm our communities through the use of illegal firearms.

# INTELLIGENCE & RESOURCE TARGETING

- **Violent Crime Analysis & Apprehension Program** - Approximately one-third or less of homicides and other violent crimes go unsolved each year in the City of Baltimore. This sends a clear message to criminals that they will not be held accountable for their actions. For that reason, I will establish an analysis and apprehension program within the homicide unit that will be responsible for supporting investigators by tracking and correlating information on murder cases. This effort will be supported through a partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to make sure that we have database connectivity to utilize their ViCAP program which provides real-time information cases.
- **Baltimore Metropolitan Intelligence Center** – This innovative idea was implemented in Philadelphia with the creation of the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center. In Philadelphia, this regional ‘fusion center’ is staffed with personnel from local, state, and federal agencies along with representatives from the private sector to monitor and coordinate everything from street-level intelligence to homeland security threats. The City of Baltimore is the hub of our region. With the surplus of unoccupied buildings that we have it would be ideal for us to partner with our neighbors throughout the region to advocate for a facility where all of our stakeholders can constantly work together to fight crime and ensure the safety of our citizens.
- **Social Media Intelligence** – Given the rise in juvenile crime, the ways in which we gather intelligence through social media are constantly evolving. Under my leadership, we will evaluate the role that social media plays in crime and ways that we can use it to our advantage. BPD will invest in training and technology that assist police in utilizing social media to prevent crimes before they happen and solve crimes already committed. We will recruit additional civilian employees to assist with social media intelligence collection.

# INTELLIGENCE & RESOURCE TARGETING

- **Community Shared Intel** – We know that communities possess a wealth of information that would benefit officer’s investigations and remain a huge asset to drastically reduce crime in our city. The challenge remains the bankrupt relationship and lack of trust between our community members and our officers. We will ensure that BPD leadership supports and encourages its rank and file to embrace community-oriented policing by embracing and daily nurturing community trust and building equitable relationships with our citizens. This will allow our community members to feel safe in opening up and discreetly sharing vital information with our officers without our community members being exposed.

**Expand Diversion Programs** – Even lower-level crimes should be met with consequences, however, not all offenses are worthy of draining resources within our criminal justice system. As our new State’s Attorney prosecutes these cases there should be options available that rehabilitate these offenders. As Mayor, we will reinstitute diversion programs such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) that redirect people involved in low-level offenses towards rehabilitative services rather than incarceration. Violent Crime Analysis & Apprehension Program - Approximately one-third or less of homicides and other violent crimes go unsolved each year in the City of Baltimore. This sends a clear message to criminals that they will not be held accountable for their actions. For that reason, I will establish an analysis and apprehension program within the homicide unit that will be responsible for supporting investigators by tracking and correlating information on murder cases. This effort will be supported through a partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to make sure that we have database connectivity to utilize their ViCAP program which provides real-time information cases.

# COMMUNITY TRUST

Community trust is a cornerstone of effective law enforcement and it plays a pivotal role in the success of law enforcement strategies. Building and maintaining trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities serve as an essential tool for effective policing. Residents who have more trust in their district's officers are more likely to cooperate, share information, and actively engage in problem-solving efforts. They need to trust their district's officers more than they fear the criminals.

The history of police-community relations in Baltimore is complex and has recently reached a breaking point. High-profile cases and long-standing concerns about police misconduct and a lack of accountability have eroded trust. Healing this relationship will take time but it is the only way that we will overcome the current crisis that we face. Officers cannot effectively work with their communities if they don't know and trust them.

- **Ensure Proactive Internal Affairs** – As in any other profession, there are always examples of bad actors who contribute to the distrust of police in our city. As Mayor, I will support a strong Internal Affairs unit within BPD to ensure that we can identify officers who are not fit to serve and remove them from our ranks.
- **Get Officers Out of Cars** – One of the most detrimental impacts of BPD's staffing challenges is that officers on duty are often stretched thin. Their ability to get out of their vehicles and interact with the public is limited. As the number of officers grows, a major culture shift will also be needed. An engaged presence by police in the community has been proven to bring a reduction in crime and grime. As Mayor, it will be my priority to get officers out of their cars and engage with residents. We will explore the feasibility of increasing the number of officers who patrol on bicycles and rebuilding the city's Mounted Police Unit as well as assuring that BPD's frontline leaders are leading by example by getting out of their cars and engaging citizens. Through Compstat Analysis, BPD will be able to track each officer's foot patrol on a weekly basis to include where they are walking to ensure high visibility in the city's hotspots. If they don't meet targets, Commanders and frontline supervisors will have to explain why any officer comes up short in their foot patrol hours.



# COMMUNITY TRUST

- **Reinstitute the Community Partnership Division** – The Community Partnership Division led the charge in repairing the breach between officers and the communities they served. It operated under four pillars (Community, Youth Matters, Faith-Based, and ReEntry) and was popular and successful through all communities it operated and with the police districts and officers it supported. Unfortunately, the Community Partnership Division was eliminated sometime after my administration. I will reinstate the division and its important work.

**Create Faith-Based Community Partnerships** – Our faith-based institutions are critical to stabilizing our communities. Their parishioners often live in the areas where we experience the highest levels of crime and violence. Not prioritizing a collaborative relationship with these community anchors has been a failure of leadership within our city over the last decade. These organizations can provide ground-level support and connect with citizens who may be out of reach of government agencies. We must provide these organizations with the support they need to bridge the gap between people and social services. My administration will make this a priority by working to secure local, state, and federal grants that will support this effort so that we can reclaim our communities. We will also ensure that BPD’s Community Division “Chaplains for the City” program is better supported as it recruits and trains more of the seasoned faith-based community to be chaplains. These Chaplains have historically helped our officers be more compassionate in serving our communities and performing their duties, as well as creating more support and trust from our community towards our officers.

**Assign Community Relations Officers** – Community Relations or Community Engagement officers are members of the BPD responsible for building and maintaining positive relationships between the police and the communities they serve. They act as a point person for the community with the goal of fostering trust, communication, and collaboration. Community Relations Officers engage in various activities, such as attending community meetings, organizing neighborhood watch programs, conducting educational workshops on crime prevention, and participating in outreach initiatives.

# DIXON HAS BEEN...

*...widely acknowledged as a strong leader in public safety. When Dixon was mayor, alongside her appointed Police Commissioner Frederick H. Bealefeld III, Baltimore saw the lowest number of homicides in 30 years, with many of the city's most troubled neighborhoods seeing major drops in crime. Fatal and non-fatal shootings dropped 14 percent, and quality-of-life crimes also declined. Dixon is widely credited with ending the zero-tolerance crime-fighting strategy, shifting to a successful community policing strategy that targeted known offenders.*

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