

BRENDAN REILLY
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CITY OF CHICAGO
CITY COUNCIL

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER
ALL COMMITTEES

July 30, 2020

Deborah Gershbein
President
Streeterville Organization of Active Residents
244 E. Pearson Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Dear President Gershbein:

Thank you for contacting my office to report your concerns regarding safety in your neighborhood. I have been advocating with the Chicago Police Department for increased patrols in your neighborhood, and I would like to provide you with an update regarding my efforts.

Over the past few weeks, we have seen an uptick in overnight "curbside parties," which have become far too common downtown. Hundreds of people are congregating downtown long after the bars, restaurants and other businesses have closed for the night. Most of these criminal incidents are occurring between midnight and 4:00 a.m., when literally nothing is open downtown.

This is totally unacceptable. I can assure you that I have shared that sentiment with the Chicago Police Superintendent and his commanders in the strongest possible terms. I explained that this type of behavior should not be tolerated downtown or in any Chicago neighborhood, that it deserves the Police Department's immediate attention, and the dedication of more overnight police resources to the downtown area immediately.

To that end, Alderman Hopkins and I met with Deputy Chief O'Shea and 18th District Commander Stevens to review these issues in detail and discuss the Department's plan to put an end to the lawlessness that occurs downtown overnight.

The Chicago Police Department has announced that Deputy Chief Michael Pigott will be heading the Critical Incident Response Team, which will provide rapid response to large-scale events requiring Police attention. This year, protests have been a significant drain on local district resources, and this team will provide real-time response, allowing the districts to free up their resources to maintain public safety downtown.

As you know, since mid-June, there has been a very troubling spike in vehicle-on-vehicle shootings in the downtown area as well. Most of these incidents have played-out the same way: two or more vehicles are stopped at a traffic light; the people know each other

or are rivals; arguing and threats ensue; ultimately followed by gunfire. These aren't random acts – these are often rivals or enemies looking to settle a score.

Police officers have no clear way of knowing which vehicles traversing downtown contain firearms or gang-affiliates. However, I have been working hard to give them the tools they need to help better identify vehicles associated with crime or warrants.

To that end, I have spent a large portion of the Aldermanic Menu to install License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras at key intersections identified by the Police – like feeder-ramps and drug / crime “hot spots” throughout downtown. LPRs are monitored by Police in real-time and run every license plate that passes it through a database to determine if the vehicle is stolen, if the owner has outstanding warrants, or if the vehicle has been involved in a crime. It is very effective technology and we are deploying more of these LPR cameras downtown.

Working with our local police commanders, we have also stripped overnight parking in large portions of the Loop, River North and Streeterville neighborhoods where these “curbside parties” are being reported. These parking restrictions will make it easier for officers to break-up these parties and issue citations. We do not want people paying parking meters at 2:00 a.m. so they can “just hang out” (which is code for drinking and drugs).

I would also like to provide you with information regarding the upcoming Federal law enforcement initiative in Chicago, which will be a partnership with the Chicago Police Department; this initiative will add personnel and much-needed resources to fight violent crime in Chicago.

Under the leadership of John R. Lausch Jr., U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, the federal government will send hundreds of personnel from the FBI, DEA, ATF, U.S. Marshals Service Great Lakes Task Force, and Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) to supplement state and local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to fight violent crime, particularly gun violence.

These personnel will work to supplement the Chicago Police Department's efforts to conduct investigations into gangs, narcotics traffickers, violent offenders, and firearms traffickers.

To further support the Chicago Police Department in reducing violent crime, ATF has deployed its national Crime Gun Intelligence Mobile Command Vehicle to assist local law enforcement with analysis of crime scenes and spent shell casings, providing timely, efficient analysis of ballistic evidence from shootings in order to quickly disrupt violent criminals and prosecute those prohibited from possessing firearms under federal law.

Additionally, the Federal government has made \$9.375 million available to the Chicago Police Department to fund hiring of 75 police officers.

In addition to the resources I listed above, one major benefit of the federal assistance is that their arrests will be federally prosecuted – which will likely result in stiffer penalties

and real consequences for offenders – unlike the woeful prosecution efforts we have seen through the Cook County State’s Attorney’s office.

As much as I disagree with President Trump and his policies, I am sincerely grateful for this federal assistance which I believe will be a real benefit to the Chicago Police Department and our city as a whole. These targeted teams working on serious gang and drug issues will free up Chicago Police Department districts to reclaim their resources to address local concerns more directly.

As your Alderman, I am often frustrated by the fact that I do not have jurisdiction over Chicago Police Department staffing or deployment downtown. Unfortunately, I cannot dispatch officers to respond to calls; I can only alert the Chicago Police Department to issues in the 42nd Ward and request their attention and enforcement of Municipal Code.

That said, I have asked our commanders of the 1st and 18th Districts to assign more officers to downtown overnight. As your advocate, I will continue to request increased Police attention to this issue.

Please keep reporting your concerns, in real-time, by calling 9-1-1. CPD is a statistics-based department: the frequency of 9-1-1 calls goes a long way toward determining the amount of resources dedicated to address issues at specific locations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brendan Reilly". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brendan Reilly
President Pro Tempore
Alderman, 42nd Ward