

Tuesday | August 8, 2023 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.  
Turkey Thicket Recreation Center  
1100 Michigan Ave NE

*Below is a list of questions submitted during the meeting on Tuesday, August 8. We will continue to add answers for 2-3 weeks (there are more than 150 to make our way through!)*

- 1. Why do you think criminals feel emboldened to walk into neighborhood stores and take what they want?** It is hard to say as there are many factors that lead someone to break the law. Our office is in touch with local retailers and public safety partners to hold people accountable who loot and steal from area businesses. On August 21, Councilmember Parker is hosting a Ward 5 business roundtable to coordinate with area businesses about ways to strengthen safety and to hear their concerns. We also must make sure that perpetrators know that they will be apprehended and prosecuted when they break the law. The US Attorney's Office's low paper rates prove that there is more work to do here.
- 2. Why are violent offenders not being prosecuted?** According to the best available statistics, the Office of the Attorney General prosecutes about 67% of the cases it receives; the United States Attorney's office currently prosecutes about 33% of the cases it receives. It is not completely clear why more cases are not being prosecuted; however, the USAO suggested in this Washington Post article that a lack of reliable evidence (i.e., forensics) and MPD camera footage are contributing factors to low paper rates. Councilmember Parker continues to be concerned about low paper rates for violent crimes and believes more needs to be done. (See this [article](#)).
- 3. Has a city wide curfew in DC for juveniles been considered?** There is already a curfew law on the books in DC for individuals under the age of 17 ([See D.C. Code § 2-1542. \(1\)](#)) "'Curfew hours' means from 11:00 p.m. on any Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, until 6:00 a.m. on the following day, and from 12:01 a.m. until 6:00 a.m. on any Saturday or Sunday. During the months of July and August, the term 'curfew hours' means from 12:01 a.m. until 6:00 a.m."). That said, [multiple studies](#) have shown that "juvenile curfews do not reduce crime or

victimization." While we all feel the urgency to address rising crime, we want to use effective tools and not failed ones that unnecessarily penalize a lot of individuals for the dangerous actions of a few.

- 4. Can you commit to diligent policing and avoid the punitive aggressive practices of the past? Foot patrols, community engagement etc.** Many neighbors have said that they want more officers out of cars and engaging with the community. We continue to advocate for more community-based policing efforts and will continue to provide opportunities for neighbors to get to know 5D officers as well as other agencies and team working hard to keep neighbors safe (i.e., the Ward 5 Violence Prevention Network).
- 5. How will you protect Metro and 12 St NE corridor, and bus stops where kids will soon be commuting to school? These seem to be target areas where robberies occur.** Councilmember Parker has requested increased police presence during peak hours and continues to advocate for main corridors (like 12th street NE) to be included in the District's Safe Passage program for additional resources to the area. Our office has not heard back from the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety on our numerous requests.
- 6. Do you think crime will be reduced when school starts?** It's hard to know. In most years, incidences of crime are higher in the summer, but the causal relationship is not fully understood; [warmer weather is associated with higher crime at any time of the year](#). Councilmember Parker has focused on strengthening school safety and introduced legislation earlier this year to enhance school safety guidelines and dedicate a school safety director at every school. Parts of that legislation passed during the last budget cycle, and the Deputy Mayor for Education is currently convening stakeholders to produce recommendations for enhancements to school safety guidelines and on the school safety directors by early 2024.
- 7. Looking at the crime data (thanks for this!!) why aren't armed car jacking included in assaults?** Carjacking is classified as a violent crime, and is captured in the Robbery numbers you see on the [MPD Crime Cards](#) chart. Robbery is when something is taken/stolen "through force or fear," and this includes carjacking.
- 8. What do you expect constituents to do to maintain their own personal safety, until we see the results of your efforts?** We encourage neighbors to not leave valuables in the vehicles, and always secure their vehicles, bikes, and other belongings. Wheel locks are also a helpful deterrent. If driving, remain alert and keep doors locked. As another neighbor offered during the meeting, walking with someone else and not having headphones in while walking are helpful tips.

Choose well-lit and more populated paths. Greeting people as you walk by them is not only neighborly, it also demonstrates that you are alert and aware. The city has a security camera rebate program for residents to take advantage of ([here](#)). We also encourage neighbors to keep the MPD Tip Line handy - 202-727-9099 - as well as the anonymous text tip line 50411.

- 9. Stopping the violence is nice, but how do we prevent it from getting worse? These are kids, they need to be taken care of at school and home. Schools need more resources to ensure these kids attend.** Councilmember Parker continues to believe that the District must focus more on violence prevention and ensuring more young people receive the mental and socio-emotional support they need to thrive. Councilmember Parker's first four bills and his budgetary amendments were all aimed at investing in communities and people, and he will continue to champion these causes. Our office will inform neighbors of opportunities to lend your voice to different legislative matters to ensure our success. Moreover, Councilmember Parker is conducting school and recreational facility tours to ensure these community hubs are set up to serve and support our young people.
- 10. New street lamps are dim. Makes it harder to see the sidewalks. Can we get brighter street lights?** If you are concerned about the brightness of street lights on your block or in your area, please share that information with us (including address and contact information) at [ward5.us/followup](http://ward5.us/followup). We will look into it and follow up with you.
- 11. In July 2023 PSA 504 had the greatest increase in violent crime relative to July 2022 in all of DC. What is the MPD doing in Brookland specifically to apprehend/interrupt ppl operating in this neighborhood?** As Chief Smith shared at the meeting on Tuesday evening, there are several steps MPD is taking at Councilmember Parker's request. First, MPD's new Robbery Suppression Unit will now be in Brookland from Thursday through Monday each week. Secondly, the Fifth District will be increasing presence in the Brookland area every day, using intelligence-based policing, to target the areas most impacted by this uptick in crimes. Lastly, MPD will also now be conducting weekly community walks in each District (the Fifth District did Edgewood last week and Brookland this week).
- 12. Where are carjacking crimes accounted for in the MPD Crime Cards chart? As violent crimes or property crimes or are they mixed in?** Carjacking is classified as a violent crime, and is included in the Robbery numbers you see on

the [MPD Crime Cards](#) chart. Robbery is when something is taken/stolen through force or fear, and this includes carjacking.

- 13. What are some common sense “don’t make yourself an easy target” tips that will address the most common crimes of opportunity? Don’t walk alone. Don’t walk with earphones in. What else?** We encourage neighbors to not leave valuables in the vehicles, and always secure their vehicles, bikes, and other belongings. Wheel locks are also a helpful deterrent. If driving, remain alert and keep doors locked. As you mentioned, walking with someone else and not having headphones in while walking are helpful tips. Choose well-lit and more populated paths. Greeting people as you walk by them is not only neighborly, it also demonstrates that you are alert and aware. The city has a security camera rebate program for residents to take advantage of ([here](#)). We also encourage neighbors to keep the MPD Tip Line handy - 202-727-9099 - as well as the anonymous text tip line 50411.
- 14. Please don’t forget about Woodridge. In less than a week, we have had several car break-ins, a car stolen, and a carjacking! And that’s just on my street! How can we up police presence? (Vista St)** While Tuesday's meeting was primarily focused on Brookland, we know other areas of Ward 5 are facing increased crime as well. We have requested increased presence from MPD in each of the areas seeing an uptick, including Woodridge, and are scheduling a community public safety walk for that neighborhood in the next few weeks. Please stay tuned for more information which will be shared in the newsletter: [ward5.us/newsletter](http://ward5.us/newsletter).
- 15. What are you doing to get temp tags and ghost vehicles off the road? DPW is slow and not helpful.** The Council is reviewing legislation that was introduced just before Recess to address this very problem. [The Fraudulent Vehicle Tag Enforcement Amendment Act](#) aims to address the significant proliferation of long-expired tags as well as outright counterfeit vehicle identification tags and the intentional obscuring of plates to avoid accountability. The bill would make it easier to boot and tow these vehicles.
- 16. Was the U.S. Attorney office invited to be here? Sad they're not here.** Yes, the U.S. Attorney's Office was invited to Tuesday's meeting. They did not respond to our invitation.
- 17. What is the best site to track robbery and crime. I am on bus and on foot. What do I do if confronted...if I am robbed.? 12th is not only hot spot. I am at 17th and Monroe...crime is there too.** The best place to track stats in [MPD's](#)

[Crime Cards](#) website. You can adjust variables for area of the city, time frame, type of crime, and more. If you are robbed, you should call 911.

- 18. Where is the commander for Police District 4? Commander Alteri doesn't cover all of Ward 5 (Michigan Park, Ft Totten, etc).** Tuesday's meeting was focused on the Brookland community and MPD's Fifth District. We have worked with the Fourth District's former Commander (now Assistant Chief), Carlos Heraud, and the new Fourth District Commander, Nikki Lavenhouse, to address issues in the Fourth District including a public safety walk near Catholic University's campus/University Heights, community meetings, and MPD's Sector 2 monthly meetings. Information about these meetings are shared in the Councilmember's newsletter and social media ([ward5.us/newsletter](http://ward5.us/newsletter)).
- 19. Acting Chief Smith mentioned that the number of officers was down and that overtime was being approved to patrol neighborhoods. What is MPD doing to recruit more officers?** MPD is facing recruitment and attrition challenges, which is a nationwide challenge right now ([see data](#)). This trend began in 2018. 78% of agencies have reported having difficulty in recruiting qualified candidates, 65% of agencies reported having too few candidates applying, and 75% of agencies reported that recruitment is becoming increasingly difficult over time. Through our work on the budget, the Council approved 100% of MPD's requested funding for hiring, bonuses, and retention efforts. MPD has taken a number of steps to address recruitment challenges, including increasing the hiring bonus for new officers to \$25,000, exploring lateral hiring from MD, VA, and federal agencies, increased advertising throughout the region, opening hiring for officers to non-citizens who are legal permanent residents. Councilmember Parker also co-introduced legislation recently that would widen the recruitment age and increase the starting salary for the MPD Cadet Program to help increase recruitment opportunities and the number of eligible candidates for MPD ([see here](#)).
- 20. What exactly does Attorney General office do in city without home rule?** To clarify, the District of Columbia *does* have Home Rule (established through the District of Columbia Home Rule Act of 1973). However, you are correct that the extent to which the District has authority over its own affairs is limited (i.e. Congress can disapprove our laws, we do not have authority over the U.S. Attorney's Office, etc.). In D.C., the Office of the Attorney General is the chief legal office of the District of Columbia. The Office enforces the laws of the District, defends and provides legal advice to the District's government agencies, and protects the interests of the District's residents. The USAO (federal) prosecutes

adult criminal cases in D.C., but the OAG (local) prosecutes juvenile cases. The OAG also provides consumer protection, tenant resources, and advocates for worker rights. CURE the Streets is the Violence Interruption program of the Office of the Attorney General, and we have seen measurable success of their work in Ward 5. You can learn more about the OAG's office, included cases won on behalf of District residents, at [oag.dc.gov](http://oag.dc.gov).

**21. Can we please have citations for the sources of information presented in the packet developed and provided by Councilmember Parker's staff?**

We believe this question is in reference to the crime statistics provided in the packet. These were sent to us from MPD, and reflect the statistics publicly available on MPD's [Crime Cards](#) website. This website is a valuable resource, and we share it with neighbors often in our newsletter and other venues so that you have access to data and trends. Through the tool, you can track crime looking at different variables (time frame, citywide/Ward/ANC, type of crime, and more).

**22. How do you measure success for violence interrupters? It's not working...**

Data on violence interruption programs is available on [Building Blocks DC's website](#). We know that several of the Ward 5 programs are working. For example, the Ward 5 Violence Prevention Network works in Edgewood Commons, and the area they work in has seen a 90% reduction in gun violence year-to-date and no homicides this year. In Trinidad, where CURE the Streets' NAARC program is located, there's been a nearly 60% reduction in gun violence year-to-date, and multiple successful ceasefires have been negotiated. The community saw 50+ days of no gun violence earlier this year when we toured the neighborhood with NAARC leaders.

**23. Where are the 10 cure the streets sites?**

There are two primary violence interruption arms in DC. One is the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE), through the Mayor's office, which contracts out to programs throughout the city including the Ward 5 Violence Prevention Network, which has presence in Edgewood, Brentwood, and Langdon Park. Per Councilmember Parker's request, they will now be expanding to Brookland as well, and we have requested additional resources for their work from the ONSE office. CURE the Streets is the Violence Interruption work of the Office of the Attorney General. CURE the Streets contracts to programs throughout the city as well. In Ward 5, those are NAARC (National Association for the Advancement of Returning Citizens) in Trinidad/Arboretum and Eckington/Truxton Circle, and Father Factor in Ivy City. The seven other CURE the Streets sites are: Congress Park/MLK, Brightwood Park/Petworth, Historic Anacostia/Fairlawn, Washington

Highlands, Marshall Heights/Benning Terrace, Trenton Park/Wahler Place, and Bellevue.

**24. I thought there were Violence Interrupters at Edgewood Commons. Is that program not happening anymore?** Yes, there is still a violence interruption program at Edgewood Commons, run by the Ward 5 Violence Prevention Network. Mr. William Shelton, who spoke at the Brookland Public Safety Meeting, contracts with the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) as the Ward 5 Violence Prevention Network. You can track data on violence interruption programs (including the one at Edgewood Commons) on the Building Blocks website [here](#).

**25. How will the council prioritize investment in cameras and other tools throughout Ward 5 and the city to help MPD and the AG's office have the evidence needed to prosecute crimes and deter criminals?** The city has a security camera rebate program we encourage neighbors to take advantage of. Through emergency legislation that the Council passed in July, this program is now more generous, and we hope it increases participation so that, as you said, more evidence is available to help prosecute cases. Learn more [here](#).

**26. Is Zachary Parker going to vote to maintain emergency legislation?**

Councilmember Parker is committed to working collaboratively with colleagues to advance legislation that is backed by data and facts to address the District's spike in violence. While the Councilmember supported the emergency crime bill, there are provisions he wants to see added and tweaked in the permanent, such as adopting more targeted changes to the standards for adult pre-trial detention (as were already incorporated for juvenile pre-trial detention).

**27. For the next event, would you allow us to ask questions directly? I'd appreciate being seen as a constituent and being able to project my tone and inflection.** For each event, we have to consider how to get through as many questions and as much feedback in a short time as possible. For lower turnout events, such as the Brookland Public Safety Meeting this past May, neighbors are able to raise their hands and speak out their questions or comments. Because we knew there would be high turnout at this particular event (between in-person and online attendance, more than 300 neighbors participated in the August 8 Brookland Public Safety Meeting), we endeavored to create as equitable a system as possible. Not everyone is comfortable coming to a microphone, but their questions and thoughts still deserve to be heard. Similarly, there were more than 130 participants via the livestream who would not have the opportunity to step to a mic. By having all participants use Menti, the online chat on the livestream,

or an index card in-person, as well as having sign language interpreters available, everyone had equal opportunity to contribute their thoughts.

**28. With the upsurge of crime, we see understandable fear in Brookland. But, months ago, we tragically lost a young boy to vigilantism. How can we balance these concerns and protect black and brown kids?**

Councilmember Parker continues to believe that the District must focus more on violence prevention and ensuring more young people receive the mental and socio-emotional support they need to thrive. Councilmember Parker's first four bills and his budgetary amendments were all aimed at investing in communities and people, and he will continue to champion these causes. Our office will inform neighbors of opportunities to lend your voice to different legislative matters to ensure our success. Moreover, Councilmember Parker is conducting school and recreational facility tours to ensure these community hubs are set up to serve and support our young people.