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NEWS RELEASE

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Mayor Statement Outlining Public Safety Efforts on Southwest Side

Last week, I convened a meeting of community leaders to discuss two overarching questions: how do we address gun violence in our community, and how do we address issues causing concern about crime? The conversation during and since that meeting has been very productive and promising. That meeting was the continuation of the ongoing dialogue aimed at developing, implementing and evaluating our responses.

Today I am outlining specific steps we can take to address public safety concerns on the Southwest side of Madison. These initiatives are not limited to one part of the city, but are tools to address safety concerns throughout our community.

Most importantly, our efforts cannot be limited to things that are initiated in City government. At our meeting last week, Florenzo Cribbs reported on an effort he had already started to provide positive role models for young African American males. Ernie Horinek talked about his idea to create a “think tank” of area landlords. And Reverend David Smith volunteered to get his fellow clergy even more involved. All of these things came from the community and, in the end, it will be the community that solves these problems. City government can sometimes provide resources, but the most effective responses will not be designed or led solely by the city, but by the residents themselves.

So I have grouped ideas into three parts. One part addresses the specific issue of gun violence, a second builds on the initiatives we have already been taking, and a third and most crucial part suggests community-driven initiatives, some of which the City can partner on.

1. We will pull all available enforcement levers and address gun violence. Chief Noble Wray will lead a law enforcement task force targeting gun violence and the individuals involved. This cross-jurisdictional task force will include officials from a variety of law enforcement agencies. Their objectives, as outlined by Chief Wray, include:

- Assess the increase in gun violence in our community;
- Hold individuals accountable by utilizing intelligence and data to develop cases against those responsible for the dangerous behavior;
- Draw attention to facsimile weapons;
- Develop a local program modeled after the Firearms Suppression Project in St. Louis;

- MORE -

- Utilize federal Project Safe Neighborhoods grant funds to address gun violence; Continue to pursue a federal grant applied for in spring of this year to implement a prevention-based model similar to one developed in High Point, NC. This model brings offenders face to face with police, prosecutors, service providers and community leaders. Offenders are given a chance and the resources to change knowing that the alternative is certain prosecution and punishment. The model has achieved significant success in other communities where it has been tried.
- Include weapon-related data in annual departmental report.

2. We will build on existing successful initiatives. Two years ago, I promised to add 30 new police officers, create an accelerated police academy to get about half of them on the street faster, pass a nuisance abatement ordinance, step up building inspections, start a neighborhood center on the Southwest side, increase programming at the Wisconsin Youth Company, build stronger relationships with the school district, create a neighborhoods liaison in my office and create a citywide neighborhood indicators program.

All of those promises were kept, and we have seen some positive results. Calls for police service are down in most of the Southwest side neighborhoods over the past two years, and we have identified specific problem areas on which we can focus our collective resources.

Still, there is clearly a lot more to do:

- Continue operations at the Meadowood Neighborhood Center, a strong example of successful collaboration between the neighbors, Madison Metropolitan School District and the City. Even in what will be our most challenging budget in decades, I will find the resources to keep the center open in 2010.
- Increase the capacity of existing social service programs, including the Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program, to provide effective early intervention services targeting adolescents.
- Focus the efforts of the City's West District Neighborhood Resource Team, bringing to bear the collective resources and authority of governmental agencies on neighborhood issues.
- Gather, analyze and disseminate data – especially through the upcoming citywide Neighborhood Indicators Program – to provide timely and accurate information regarding public safety and neighborhood vitality throughout the city.
- Continue the use of the City's Chronic Nuisance Ordinance and review opportunities to develop a more comprehensive, interdepartmental approach to problematic landlords.
- Utilize the City's Community Development Division to create a comprehensive and localized resource guide for residents.

- **MORE** -

3. We will bring new community driven ideas, problem-solving efforts and resources to the table.

A City Hall led effort to fight crime can only go so far. What's needed is an even stronger partnership between the community and its government. So I suggest the following:

- Continue to establish, communicate and enforce high standards of personal and group behavior throughout our community.
- Encourage and promote the actions of community leaders, like Allied-Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association President Florenzo Cribbs and his community mentoring program and Reverend David Smith from Faith Community Christian Church and his work to engage his fellow clergy.
- Encourage and promote grassroots efforts aimed at neighborhood redevelopment and strategic marketing.
- Use community buildings like schools and churches to their fullest potential.
- Develop a registration system for rental property owners designed to provide contact information for a local responsible party for each property.
- Support creative efforts like Ernie and Joan Horinek's "think tank" to engage area landlords, develop problem-solving initiatives, implement best practices and hold each other accountable.
- Utilize the City's Department of Civil Rights to coordinate and support communitywide efforts aimed at:
 - Reducing anonymity in neighborhoods
 - Engaging neighbors in discussions about the issues causing concern
 - Reinforcing the anti-gun violence message with offenders, victims and the community at large
 - Addressing the "no-snitch culture"

Public safety is not the business of police or government alone. The City, County and schools must do their part, but they will not be successful without the grassroots efforts of strong community and neighborhood leaders.

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