



Staff Report

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TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Keith Stahley, City Manager
FROM: Trevor Womack, Chief of Police

SUBJECT:

Joint Salem City Council work session with the Marion County Board of Commissioners to discuss awareness of gun violence in our community.

Ward(s): All Wards
Councilor(s): All Councilors
Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods
Result Area(s): Safe Community; Welcoming and Livable Community

SUMMARY:

In response to an increase in community violence, the Salem Police Department commissioned a Gun Violence Problem Analysis (GVPA) to better understand the factors involved. The analysis was done in collaboration with law enforcement partners in Marion County.

ISSUE:

Informational report regarding the increase in gun violence in the Salem community.

RECOMMENDATION:

Informational Report

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

1. Statistics show a rise in community violence since 2008.
2. Community violence is defined as violence that happens between unrelated individuals, who may or may not know each other, generally outside the home. Examples include assaults or fights among groups and shootings in public places, such as schools, shopping areas, and on

the streets.

3. In July of 2023, the Salem Police Department sought out Dr. Lisa Barao Ph.D., and Sgt. Chris Mastroianni of the City of Hartford, Connecticut Police Department to conduct a GVPA for the City of Salem.
4. A GVPA is a set of analytical exercises designed to support the implementation of violence reduction strategies, seen as a first step in the development of effective intervention strategies.
5. Researchers studied Salem's fatal and nonfatal shooting incidents which occurred in Salem between 2018 and June 2023.
6. Data was provided by our criminal justice partners in Marion County to support the project.
7. The findings and recommendations regarding the demographics, motives, and locations surrounding gun violence are contained within the attached reports.
8. Salem's 10-year average homicide rate is one to two times greater than the average statewide homicide rate. When fatal and non-fatal shootings are combined, the city experienced a 100 percent increase in gun violence incidents over five years (2018-2022).

BACKGROUND:

While communities across Oregon vary in their experience of crime, the Salem community has seen a steady increase in violent crime in the last decade-and-a-half. Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. A [15-year crime summary](https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/18424/638097318386700000), updated annually by the Salem Police Department, shows the city's violent crime has increased by 40%. Most recently, the community has experienced an increase in crime connected to gun violence.

Although factors for the rise in any crime category can vary and may involve complex issues, there were no obvious reasons why rates are increasing in Salem. To better understand the issue, a gun violence problem analysis (GVPA) was commissioned in July 2023 to assess the circumstances. The goal of the GVPA was to examine the circumstances of incidents, explore the characteristics of individuals involved, and identify social networks or the greatest risk for involvement in violence.

The analysis also explored risk factors and criminal trajectories among violence-involved youth in the city of Salem through a combination of law enforcement data and interviews with a range of criminal justice partners and stakeholders in Marion County.

Trevor Womack
Chief of Police

Attachments:

1. Gun Violence Problem Analysis Report (2018-2023)
2. Gun Violence Problem Analysis Report (2018-2023) - PowerPoint Presentation
3. Community Violence Problem Analysis: Key Findings