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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director   
Legislative Policy Division

DATE: July 13, 2023

RE: **REPORT ON TEMPORARY STREET CLOSURES AND USE OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN**

Council Member Angela Whitfield-Calloway requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) draft a report on temporary street closures and use of environmental design. Herewith is the LPD response.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (“CPTED”) is an evolving field of research which focuses on designing physical urban spaces in such a way as to increase public safety and to reduce and deter criminal activity. Generally, CPTED principles address four different aspects of crime prevention: (1) increasing physical security through various “target hardening” measures, largely related to controlling access to particular places, which may involve the treatment and securing of doors, windows, and alarms; (2) increasing physical security at the larger site-design level through the planning of physical movements, interactions, and surveillance opportunities; (3) increasing physical security through the design and planning of effective community control and policing opportunities, both public and private, through plans and activities related to the use, physical upkeep, and appearance of buildings and nearby sites; and (4) increasing physical security through neighborhood social planning and educational programs related to crime awareness and prevention.<sup>1</sup>

CPTED principles are meant to be flexible so that cities can implement CPTED measures in ways that address the specific conditions present in any urban environment. Cities often implement CPTED measures through the use of police power and through zoning and building codes. As a general example,

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<sup>1</sup> Edward H. Ziegler, *American Cities, Urban Planning, and Place-Based Crime Prevention*, 39 Urb. Law. 859, 860–61 (2007)

cities attempt to control both vehicle and pedestrian traffic in public and semi-public areas by ensuring that entrances and exits to spaces are visible and accessible. There is also an emphasis on visibility and using both actual and perceived surveillance to make it clear that illegal activity can be easily observed by both law enforcement and members of the public. In addition, CPTED principles suggest that public spaces should be well-maintained so that they appear to be used and cared for, which theoretically makes the spaces less attractive to individuals who want to engage in illegal activity without being observed. Detroit Police Chief James White, Mayor Duggan and members from various community organizations held a press conference in April 2023 to outline a new 12-point plan to improve safety in the city amid increased violence and shooting incidents.<sup>2</sup>

The Detroit Police Department's ("DPD") 12-point plan includes:

1. *Implementing mid-summer deployment/ Increased police presence*
2. *Community education/involvement of community groups*
3. *Strategic/timed vehicular shutdowns*
4. *Hard road closures/ enforcement of no parking zones*
5. *Business inspections*
6. *Increased DPW lighting in Greektown and Riverwalk*
7. *Incorporate Eagle-Eye Hotline*
8. *Deploy video wall monitors*
9. *Enforce curfew/parent responsibility*
10. *Enforce public alcohol consumption ordinance*
11. *Enforce noise ordinance*
12. *Cash for anonymous crime tips*

LPD met with Deputy Chief Hayes to discuss DPD's use of temporary street closures and the use of CPTED to improve public health and safety. DC Hayes cited the above 12-point plan. The plan appears to include measures that conform with CPTED. For example, increased police presence, community engagement, and cash for anonymous tips are meant to increase actual and perceived surveillance in the targeted downtown areas. Additionally, the use of video wall monitors puts the public on notice that they are on camera, which is intended to discourage illegal activity.

DPD is also utilizing temporary street closures to route traffic in ways that discourage illegal activity. DPD did not provide specific criteria for when it implements road closures because it is a fluid process that depends on a variety of factors including time of day, weather conditions, large events, etc. The street closures and traffic routing are partially meant to discourage both large and small vehicles from continually circling the downtown area. Enforcement of the City's noise ordinance is also meant to deter individuals from congregating around parked vehicles and playing loud music.

When DPD determines that street closures are necessary based on their criteria, they reach out to the Department of Public Works ("DPW"). DPD and DPW then coordinate to determine the impact of street closures on surrounding traffic, residents, and businesses before implementing the street closures. DPD also coordinates with Michigan State Police if it is necessary to control traffic entering and exiting the freeways surrounding downtown.

According to DC Hayes, DPD is constantly looking at best practices of other police departments in comparable cities such as Baltimore and Miami when it comes to street closures and CPTED. DPD coordinates with Buildings, Safety, Engineering, and Environmental Design ("BSEED") to implement

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wxyz.com/news/new-12-point-dpd-safety-plan-includes-more-metal-detectors-street-lights>

CPTED measures. Specifically, DPD continually coordinates with BSEED and the Public Lighting Authority to ensure that areas of downtown have sufficient street lighting.

Because DPD's strategy for street closures and crime reduction in the downtown area is fluid and evolving, City Council may want to consider inviting DPD to appear before the Council to update the Councilmembers and the public on their efforts or answer specific questions.

Please contact our office if you need any further assistance.