



SHORT NORTH CRIME INTERDICTION PILOT PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by the Short North Alliance

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Executive Summary

In July and August 2021, there were six notable incidents involving gun violence in the Short North Arts District along with thirty-one robberies off of High Street in the adjacent resident neighborhoods. Incidents involving gun violence were on the rise across our city, but to have them occur at all in the Short North Arts District, let alone in close succession, was concerning, especially as so many in the Short North business community were recovering from economic challenges created by the pandemic.

As an organization, we believe safety in the Short North Arts District is a state where everyone is free of harm, thrives, and has their well-being protected and their diversity celebrated. Late at night, that aspiration was not being fulfilled. Beginning in August, the Short North Alliance made a commitment to the community to seek to understand why and to identify solutions to address safety in the short- and long-term.

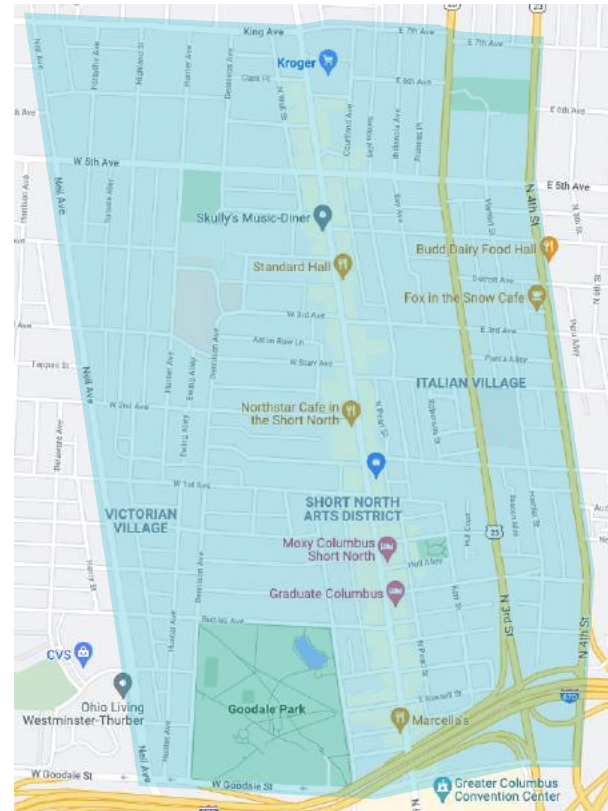
Throughout August, we engaged in conversations with community stakeholders, elected officials, and public safety leaders to ask for an increase in solutions to protect public safety in the District. That resulted in the creation of the Short North Crime Interdiction Pilot Program. Funded with approximately \$8,000 in public investments and \$132,000 in private resources that were administered by the Short North Alliance in collaboration with the City of Columbus Division of Police, the program achieved a total reduction in gun violence originating from within the Short North Arts District between the hours of 11 PM and 4 AM through 22 officers and 2 sergeants working 1,200 collective hours of special duty officer time in a unit that operated four days as week. It also resulted in a reduction of overall crime in the Short North Arts District during the program period and operating hours along with a deeper understanding of issues impacting overall safety. The following report outlines further details of the actions, findings, program impacts, and considerations for the future.

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Overview of the Short North Crime Interdiction Pilot Program

The Short North Crime Interdiction Pilot Program (Program) was a collaboration between the Short North Alliance (SNA) and the Columbus, Ohio Division of Police (CPD) to combat the rise in occurrences of violent crimes in the Short North Arts District during the fall of 2021. The Program began on September 3, 2021, and was under the direction of CPD Deputy Chief Jennifer Knight. While the Program was initially funded by City of Columbus overtime, the Program was transitioned to a “Special Duty” assignment on September 24, 2021, under the direction of CPD Sergeant Joseph Curmode. Funding provided by the SNA allowed the Program to continue until November 28, 2021. CPD personnel assigned to this Program provided an increased law enforcement presence in the Short North Arts District and adjacent residential neighborhoods of Italian Village, Victorian Village, and Weinland Park with the patrol boundaries of Goodale Street to King Avenue and Neil Avenue to North 4th Street, from 11:00 pm to 4:00 am on most Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights.

Short North Crime Interdiction Pilot Program Service Area



Goals of the Short North Crime Interdiction Pilot Program

The SNA outlined the following as goals for the Program:

1. Decrease and prevent the occurrence of violent crimes in the Short North Arts District.
2. Provide assistance to citizens (both residents and visitors) and businesses in the Short North Arts District.
3. Address violations that impact the “quality of life” of Short North Arts District residents with these areas of focus:
 - a. Violence and Injury Prevention
 - b. Enforcement and Mitigation of Excessive Noise
 - c. Enforcement of Traffic Laws
 - d. Enforcement of Mobile Food Vendors
4. Collect information to improve crime prevention efforts in the Short North Arts District.

All special duty officers working directly through the SNA were asked to practice fairness in their enforcement, provide education first over enforcement based on the circumstances of a given incident, wear and activate body cameras, and avoid uses of force. Officers were ultimately guided by CPD Division Policies, Standard Operating Procedures, and local, state, and federal laws.

Notable Incidents Before Project

Prior to the initiation of this Program several violent incidents occurred in the Short North Arts District. Investigations showed that a majority of these incidents involved and were perpetrated by individuals who do not reside in the Short North Arts District, but were drawn to the area as a result of its many bars, clubs, restaurants, and other entertainment opportunities. Some of the more notable incidents prior to the initiation of the Program include:

- 7/18/2021, Shooting at SeeSaw Kitchen and Bar, three Injured (906 North High St)
- 7/23/21, Shots fired, one injured, (North High St and Goodale St)
- 7/24/2021, Drive-by Shooting at Skully’s Music-Diner, four Injured (1151 North High St)
- 8/2/2021, Shots fired at Local Cantina, nobody injured (600 North High St)
- 8/19/2021, Shots fired, nobody injured (3rd Ave and North High St)
- 8/30/2021, Shots fired, nobody injured (West Starr Ave and North High St)
- 7/1/2021 - 8/31/2021, Thirty-one Robberies (Throughout Short North)

An additional incident occurred after the start of the Program during the City of Columbus Overtime Period.

- 9/6/2021, Shots fired, one injured (2nd Ave and North High St)

City of Columbus Overtime Program Period

I. Staffing

The City Overtime Period of the Program began on Friday, September 3, 2021, and concluded the morning of Monday, September 20, 2021. During this period only six nights were staffed in some capacity despite the necessity for coverage on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. A notable issue was obtaining the requested six officers and two sergeants to staff each night; despite numerous notifications, only twelve officers and three supervisors from the entire Division of Police expressed interest in working the overtime. During this Program Period, a total of one-hundred and five (105) hours were worked by Division personnel in five hour shifts (a total of twenty-one shifts) over the six staffed nights. Table One displays the breakdown of Division resources, deployments, total hours, and approximate cost to the division.

Resource Type	Quantity	Total Hours	Estimated Costs
Patrol Officer	12 Deployments	60	\$3,540.00
Patrol Sergeant	9 Deployments	45	\$3,740.18
Division Cruiser	15 Deployments	75	N/A
Division Bicycle	2 Deployments	10	N/A
Total	21	105	\$7,280.18

Table One: City of Columbus Overtime Program Period Staffing, Hours, and Costs

II. Patrol Actions and Stats During City of Columbus Overtime Period

Division personnel working this period were directed to take action to deter violent criminal activity in the Short North Arts District and be a visible deterrent to criminal activity. A “Stat Sheet” was created by Division Deputy Chiefs to document the results of the Project. Table Two displays categories with results from the six nights worked by Division personnel.

Category	Amount	Percentage of Total
Business Checks	29	16%
Hot Spots Worked	38	21%
Field Interview Cards	1	1%
Dispatched Runs	14	8%
Reports Taken	3	2%
Area Disturbance Calls	12	7%
Loud Noise Complaints	3	2%
Citizen Contacts	70	39%
Felony Arrests - On View	1	1%
Direct Indictments	1	1%
CCW Arrests	1	1%
Firearms Recovered	1	1%
Traffic Citations	3	2%
Parking Citations	1	1%
Total	178	

Table Two: City of Columbus Overtime Program Period Incident Statistics

III. Problems with the City of Columbus Overtime Period

This phase of the Program suffered from several problems that would be addressed in the following Special Duty Period. First, and most importantly, staffing the overtime shifts with Division personnel proved to be difficult. During this time period, overtime shifts throughout the Division were significantly difficult to staff; the City overtime rate offered for this Program proved no different. This resulted in multiple nights with minimal to no personnel on patrol, as well as an inability to provide a consistent coordinated presence in the Short North Arts District.

Additionally, the collection of stats proved to be unreliable due to personnel being unsure of definitions of categories (example-“citizen contacts”). Personnel were also responsible for individually keeping track of their stats each night, and some personnel did not compile their stats in a manner that they could be reliably analyzed or documented.

Special Duty Program Period

I. Operational Changes From Overtime Period

The Special Duty Period of this Program began on September 24, 2021. Significant changes were made to several areas of operations, including how stats were collected. Personnel utilized a secure “Google Sheets” document that permitted them to upload stats in “real-time” throughout each night. This document was reviewed by members of the SNA and Sergeant Curmode regularly to discuss on-going patterns and specific incidents of concern. Categories used for stat collection were slightly different from the City overtime phase of the Program, but personnel found them easier to use.

An additional change was made to how personnel patrolled throughout their tour of duty during this phase; personnel were recommended to use a “warning based” approach to violators in an effort to educate, instead of issuing citations. However, citations were still issued for exceptionally egregious violations or if the officer determined a citation was appropriate (reckless operation, OVI, parking in a handicapped space, etc.). A special concern of the SNA was the amount of excessive noise coming from vehicles travelling through the District. Sergeant Curmode observed that the traffic density on Friday and Saturday nights in the District dramatically increases, and that traffic is often at a “stand-still.” It was discovered that many of the traffic “back-ups” were the result of ride-share vehicles stopping in the middle of High Street and blocking traffic for several minutes. This resulted in vehicles playing loud music to move more slowly or stay stopped in traffic throughout the District, instead of the vehicle travelling through at a normal speed (it is believed this resulted in the increase of noise complaints related to vehicles.)

The SNA also was concerned about the incidents of violence and its relationship to the “push-carts” (i.e. food carts) operating throughout the District. It was observed that after the bars and restaurants closed at 3:00 am, many individuals would congregate at and around the push-carts throughout the District. This is believed to have contributed to higher rates of violence and crime occurring throughout the District after 3:00 am due to the crowds staying in these highly concentrated locations. Personnel were directed to enforce the City Ordinance regarding the prohibition of push-carts operating after 3:00 am first via education, with subsequent violations by the same operators resulting in citations. Personnel were also directed to continue being a visible deterrent to violent criminal activity, assist individuals in the District needing assistance, and continue to improve the “quality of life” of individuals in the District.

II. Staffing and Costs

Staffing for this phase was more reliable, partially as a result of the offering of an increased special duty rate for officers and sergeants. A total of two sergeants and twenty-two officers were scheduled throughout this phase. Personnel worked from 11:00 pm until 4:00 am. Table Three outlines the average weekly staffing for this phase of the program.

Day of the Week	Number of Officers	Number of Sergeants
Thursday	1 - 4	1 - 2
Friday	5 - 6	2
Saturday	5 - 6	2
Sunday	1 - 4	1 - 2

Table Three: City of Columbus Special Duty Program Period Staffing

By utilizing this amount of officers and sergeants, information was able to be communicated more easily throughout the “unit” and personnel became aware of individuals within and unique issues facing the Short North Arts District.

During this phase officers and sergeants were paid by the SNA at an increased special duty rate (\$93.92 per hour for officers, \$110.82 per hour for sergeants) and Division cruisers were rented at the contractual rate of \$20.00 per hour. The personnel rates were calculated using double time rates for “F-Step” officers in the Fraternal Order of Police contract. The SNA set a budget of \$132,000.00 for the Special Duty Project using funds provided by private stakeholders. Costs for this phase are outlined in Table Four.

Resource Type	Total Hours	Cost Per Hour	Total Cost
Patrol Officer	904.27	\$93.92	\$84,929.17
Patrol Sergeant	306	\$110.82	\$33,910.92
Division Cruiser	504	\$20.00	\$12,380.00
Division Bicycle	80	\$0.00	\$0.00
Division Administrative Fee	10	\$56.50	\$565.00
SNA Administrative Fee			\$214.91
	Total:		\$132,000

Table Four: City of Columbus Special Duty Program Period Costs

III. Patrol Actions and Stats

SNA provided the unit with an online, real-time data collection system. Data collected via this system was utilized by personnel and provided information on incidents officers were involved with during the special duty phase of the program. Table Five outlines the top ranking incidents and methods of resolution.

Category	Quantity	Percentage of Total	Warnings	Citations Issued
Traffic Stops	49	21%	31	12
Push-Cart Contacts	16	7%	13	3
Pedestrian Stops	2	1%	0	2
Parking Violations	20	9%	6	14
OMVI Violators	3	1%	0	3
Vehicles Impounded	4	2%	N/A	N/A
Misdemeanor Citations	10	4%	N/A	N/A
Summons/Charges				
On-View Felony Arrests	7	3%	N/A	N/A
Shots Fired Incidents	7	3%	N/A	N/A
Total Runs	228			

Table Five: City of Columbus Special Duty Phase Program Statistics and Resolutions

Traffic stops were the top incidents program officers encountered. Of the forty-nine traffic stops performed by personnel during this phase, 31 warnings were given, 12 citations were issued, and six vehicles fled (no apprehensions.)

Officers were involved in 228 documented incident interventions that would have otherwise not have received as timely of a response or any response during this phase of the Program. 15% of all documented incidents resulted in citations or education over arrests. And, this phase of the Program was implemented without any use of force by officers. Of particular note during this phase, personnel observed an arson in progress at a hotel being constructed in the area and apprehended the suspect allowing Columbus Fire Arson Investigators to conduct an investigation. Personnel also apprehended an individual wanted for the sexual assault of a juvenile victim. While there were three incidents involving OMVI arrests, officers reported numerous observations of alcohol-related or other OMVI-related incidents that occurred prior to or outside of their patrol.

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Program Impact

I. Short North Arts District Crime Trends

To determine the impact of the program and evaluate overall safety in the Short North Arts District and surrounding residential neighborhoods now and in the future, the SNA examined comparative crime statistics compiled by the City of Columbus Division of Police, High Street pedestrian counts tracked through kiosks in the public-right-of-way, and historical business and property data maintained by the SNA from 2019 and 2021. 2019 was the most accurate benchmark year for data comparisons and forecasting, as 2020 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and years prior to 2019 were impacted by construction, outdated parking systems, or are not reflective of the present development density of the District.

Historically, June to August of any year has the highest foot traffic and is considered peak season in the Short North Arts District for visitors and annual crime. Evaluation of the program's impact was determined by reviewing overall annual statistics, peak season statistics, and program period statistics from September-November in 2019 and in 2021.

Our analysis showed the following trends:

Overall crime trends in the Short North Arts District at all hours were higher in the Short North Arts District in 2021 as compared to the same time in 2019. See Figure 1 for detailed breakdown of changes in types of crimes from 2019 to 2021.

Late-night, from 11 PM to 4 AM, during peak season and during the Program period, crime trends in the Short North Arts District were substantially higher and more violent in 2021 as compared to the same time in 2019. See Figure 2 and Figure 3 for a detailed breakdown of changes in types of crimes from 2019 to 2021 during peak season and program period.

Figure One Change in Short North Arts District Overall Crime Trends 2019 - 2021

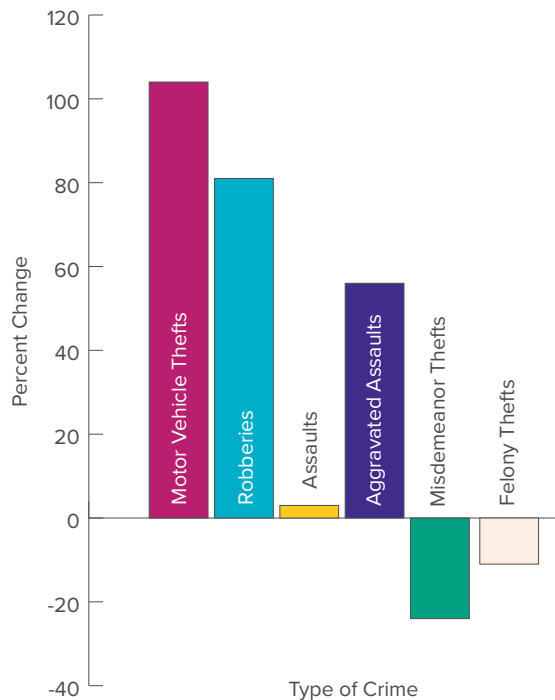
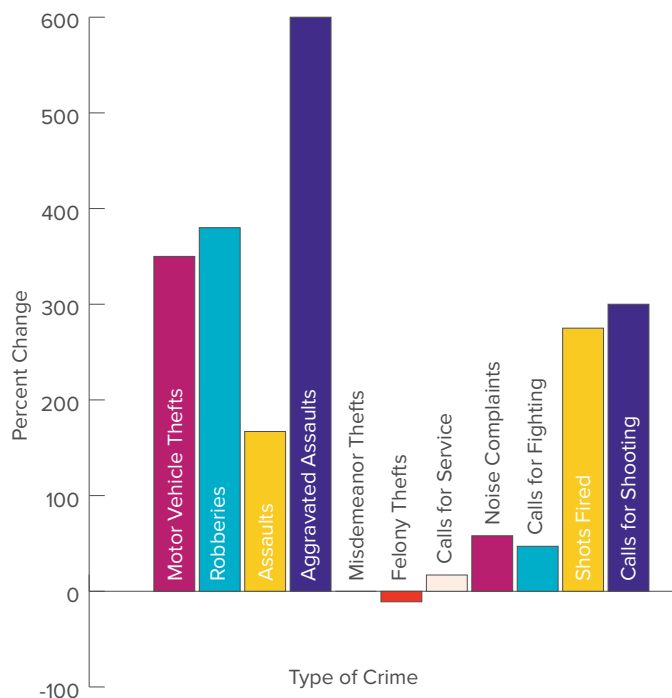


Figure Two: Change in Short North Arts District Late-Night Peak Season Crime Trends 2019 - 2021



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However, when comparing Late-night 11 PM to 4 AM peak season crime trends and program period crime trends in 2021, with the exception of felony thefts and calls for shots fired, all crimes reduced during the time period and operating hours that the Short North Crime Interdiction Program was operational. See Figure 4 for a detailed breakdown of changes in types of crimes from peak season 2021 to program period 2021. Calls for shots fired did not mean that there were necessarily more acts involving gun violence, but that there were more reports filed by officers working in the program of suspected gun violence due to their direct observations through increased presence. And, when compared to the City as a whole, it was well below the rates at which citizen-reported acts of shots fired were received.

Even considering the historical crime growth trends for the Short North Arts District, where there historically has been a seasonal decrease in overall crime in the Short North Arts District from the summer peak season to the fall due to weather changes and the return of schools being in session, when comparing the rate of decline in crimes from 2019 to 2021, the rates of decline among all violent crimes and property related crimes during the program period were even higher than historical rates of decline. See Figure 5 for a breakdown of decline rates in 2019 and in 2021.

Figure Three: Change in Short North Arts District Program Period Crime Trends 2019 - 2021

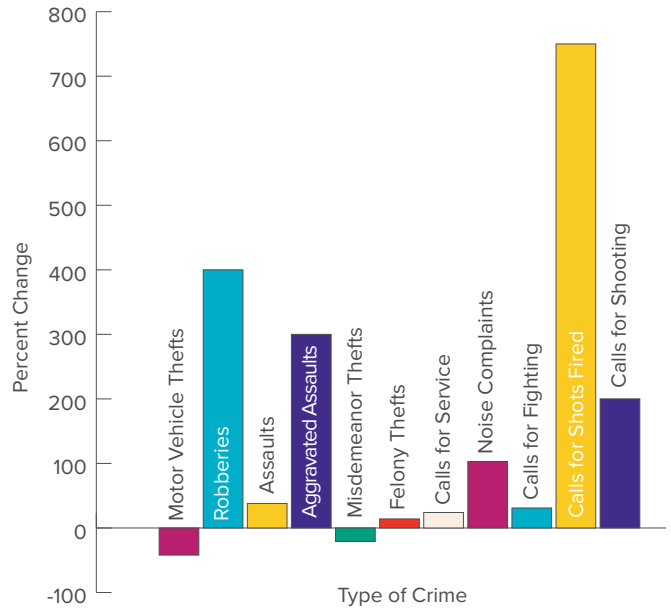


Figure Four: Change in Short North Arts District 2021 Peak Season to Program Period 2021

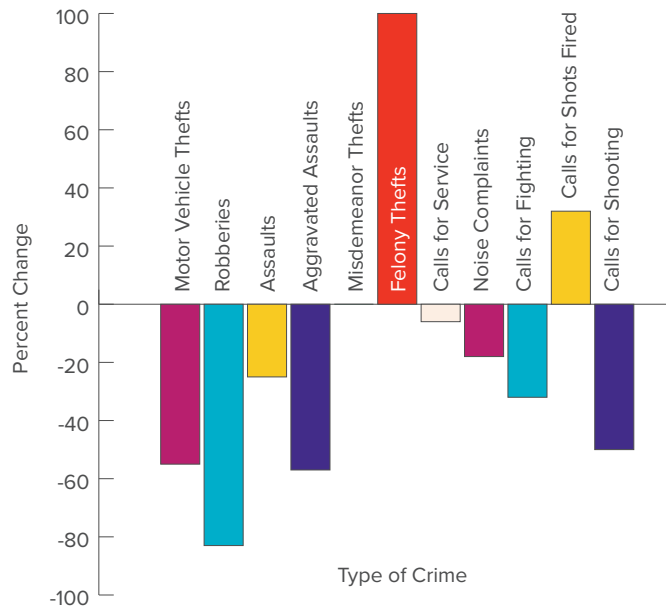


Figure Five: Rates of Decline in Crime From Peak Season to Program Period in 2019 and 2021



II. Other Factors Impacting Short North Arts District Crime Trends

While seasonality factors into the rates of crime, other factors that influence Short North crime include police presence and response, public policies and regulations, and investigative efforts.

The Short North Arts District is served by two police precincts, 4 and 16. When there are priority crimes occurring throughout their zones, on-duty police response is prioritized accordingly. Often, that might result in there being no on-duty police presence in the Short North Arts District for large durations of time. There were several times during the program period, especially in 16 Precinct, when program officers were supplementing entirely the on-duty police presence for both the Short North and other neighborhoods.

Further, there were two public policy changes that occurred just prior to and during the program period. The City of Columbus passed Ordinance 2060-2021 on July 26, 2021, further criminalizing reckless vehicle operations and adopted a city-wide enforcement procedure for reckless vehicle tracking and impoundment. Additionally, the City of Columbus modified regulations to e-scooters, restructuring their operations directly on High Street at all hours beginning September 20, 2021. Both policies, are believed to have contributed to a reduction of these types of crimes in the Short North Arts District.

There were also dedicated investigative efforts by the Columbus Division of Police specific to armed robberies that resulted in the successful apprehension of a key suspect in those crimes, further reducing the number of armed robberies occurring specifically in the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Short North Arts District.

III. Program Interventions

Program officers directly intervened in at least 228 overall safety incidents. Given current staffing challenges and priority crime response needed in neighborhoods outside of the Short North Arts District, had program officers not been present, these safety incidents and crimes likely would not have received as timely of or any police response or any type of intervention.

Additionally, had it not been for the presence of Program officers and had rates of crime continued without any additional public safety or other alternative interventions, we estimate that the Short North Arts District likely would have experienced 31 additional crimes during the Program period.

Finally, during the Program period, there were at least three documented incidents where Program officers received information from individuals involved in incidents that they were armed and were likely headed for allegations that were directly prevented due to the presence of Program officers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Goals Achieved During Program Period

The Program achieved its goals of stopping gun violence in the Short North Arts District during the Program period. Additionally, the Program provided the overall benefit of assisting in the total reduction of all crimes in the Short North Arts District during the Program period.

However, it is worth noting that there were 13 shots fired incidents, 6 aggravated assaults, 3 robberies to individuals, 25 assaults involving gun violence in the Short North Arts District on nights where the Program officers were not on duty and one OMVI incident directly after the Program period concluded.

In addition to goals around prevention, the community now has more detailed information on safety issues late at night. During the Program period, officers functioned as a dedicated unit, not only sharing information directly with one another but sharing information directly with and receiving information directly from the community in real time through the SNA. This resulted in issues resolving quickly, the development of strategies among officers to best meet the needs of the specific and unique safety issues experienced in the community, and an inclusive culture of enforcement that used a system of education first, followed by warnings and reserved citations for extremes.

2. Future Growth

The Short North Arts District continues to grow. With the impacts to business operations from the COVID-19 pandemic expected to subside by early spring of 2022, the urgency around strong and sustainable safety interventions is greater than ever before.

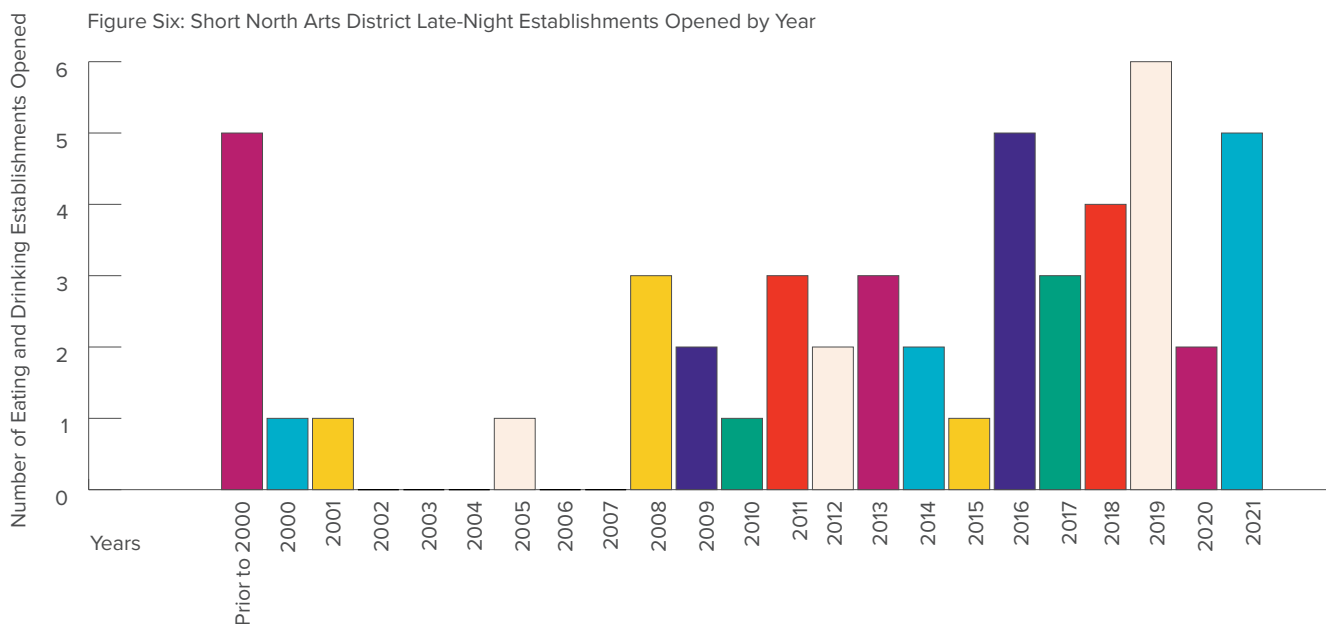
In 2019, evening pedestrian foot traffic from 6pm-4am made up 22% of all pedestrian foot traffic in the District. In 2021, evening pedestrian foot traffic from 6pm-4am made up 32% of all traffic in the District. This 10% increase in evening traffic is assumed to continue and increase in 2022. **Assuming that we return to our 2019 evening pedestrian foot traffic rates with just a 10% increase in evening traffic, that will bring at least 20,000 people nightly on Fridays or Saturdays from June-September in 2022.**

Additionally, we are continuing to see the district grow in the square footage of apartment, retail and dining space in the Short North. In 2019 there was 4,934,187 SF of building area in the Short North Arts District. In 2021 there was 5,039,835 SF of building area. That is a 2% increase from 2019 to 2021. While this growth is expected to slow a bit, it is still assumed that we will continue to have new builds that create new spaces for bars, restaurants, retail and apartments that will draw more residents and visitors to the District, particularly along the 5th Avenue and Fourth Street corridors.

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There is also a continued increase in the percentage of Eating and Drinking establishments in the Short North Arts District from year to year. On average, these establishments represent about 30% of the businesses in the area. There are 102 eating and drinking establishments in the Short North Arts District. Over 50 of those (49%) are geared towards late-night and alcohol related activities. Figure 9 shows that of the 50 late-night operating establishments, half have opened in the last 5 years, representing a 212% increase in the number of late-night establishments opened annually from 2016 to 2021 when compared to 2000 to 2015.

Based on this growth rate and considering that there is presently 71,032 square feet of vacant commercial space currently available in the Short North Arts District, **it is expected that at least four additional (though likely more) new late night establishments will open on High Street in 2022**, further contributing to an environment where safety issues are condensed and felt as extremes if appropriate safety measures and interventions are not planned for and provided.



3. Future Safety Recommendations

Through its analysis of program results and data, the Short North Alliance offers the following recommendations for how to address late-night safety in the Short North Arts District:

- 1. Provide Dedicated, Collaborative Law-Enforcement:** A continued, increased, and dedicated law-enforcement unit presence in the Short North Arts District that shares information and focused on education, enforcement, and continuing safety interventions would add value and continue to support decreased violent and other crime through relationships and targeted, community-focused interventions. The Short North Crime Interdiction Pilot Program worked well to achieve its goals and reduce overall crimes not simply because it was a law-enforcement presence, but because officers working in the program were collaborating with the community and each other to address safety issues and concerns.
- 2. Address Traffic Congestion:** Pedestrian and traffic safety were continuously put at risk due to the sudden stopping and traffic violations of rideshare vehicles. Community noise was also impacted by the congestion vehicles created. Changes to City of Columbus policies guiding rideshare vehicles, providing greater clarity for locations for pick up and drop off in the right-of-way or increasing the penalty for stopping in the right-of-way in a manner that stops or blocks traffic may further address these safety and quality of life issues.
- 3. Limit Pedestrian Traffic After Business Operations:** Patrons lingering in the public right-of-way after close of business contributed to safety issues. Changes to mobile push-cart vendor operating ordinances, prohibiting operations at times outside of business operating hours and designating locations for operations through permitting and reservations, due to congestion issues, would help to dissipate crowds and limit late night safety concerns.
- 4. Engage in Drunk Driving Education and Enforcement:** Incidents involving drunk driving are of a greater concern than was previously known in the Short North Arts District. Targeted efforts involving education through collaboration with businesses and transit or mobility options providers along with intermantant, targeted enforcement are necessary into the future to prevent injury.
- 5. Engage in Theft Prevention Education, Enforcement, and Collaboration:** The number of crimes involving thefts of and thefts from vehicles has grown substantially. Many are preventable with intentional theft prevention practices and could be reduced with greater education and awareness of those practices. However, other areas that are targets could benefit from collaboration with law enforcement to better aid in investigations to reduce crimes.
- 6. Foster a Culture of Care:** As the number of late night operating businesses and number of patrons visiting the District late at night is expected to grow, collaboration is needed to deepen a culture of care among patrons visiting and businesses operating at late hours. Adoption of a Good Neighbor Agreement and Patron Education Campaign, along with safety campaign messaging could assist with building a more caring environment late at night to avoid violence, prevent injury, and support the quality of life for the Short North Arts District community.



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