

**Safe Streets 2010**  
**Neighborhood Legislation**  
**Package**

**An Anti-Crime Initiative**

**Public Dialogue #2**

**October 12, 2010**

# What Is Safe Streets?

An Umbrella for Multiple Anti-Crime Initiatives

“You cannot lock your way up  
out of this....”

-- Billy Stanfield, former drug kingpin  
and speaker at gang seminar Oct. 7, 2010  
as reported by the *Daily Times*

# What Is Safe Streets?

- What does the “umbrella” cover?
  - Law enforcement strategies, e.g. Violent Offenders
  - Multi-jurisdictional partnerships (governor, local police, county sheriff, state police, DOJ, DJS, S.A.)
  - Community agencies, non-profits, churches, schools
  - Housing initiatives reducing slum, blight, criminal activity within neighborhoods
  - Citizen/Private Sector education & involvement

# What's In Progress?

- Crime Task Force – Brought players to table; identified problems, solutions, resp. parties
- Safe Streets Coalition – Multi-jurisdictional law enforcement, violent offenders database, warrant service, DJS info sharing, etc.
- First Neighborhood Service Center Open
- School Cooperation (e.g., truancy) Engaged
- Special Programs (e.g., prostitutes in Project Hope)

# Safe Streets Implementation

- Goals are:
  - Immediate/Short-term
  - Mid-term/Long-term
- Not one set program; adaptable to locales, but the Violent Offenders & Multi-Jurisdictional Partnerships are the focal point.
- Without longer-term solutions, short-term solutions will provide only temporary relief – both are needed.

# Why a Housing Strategy?

- One “leg” of Safe Streets initiative
- Poor housing practices & management are proven to attract crime, and they exploit vulnerable populations and neighborhoods.
- When criminals establish a base in neighborhoods:
  - Residents are endangered
  - Long-term residents move out
  - Properties have high turnover in occupants
  - Neighborhoods decline more
  - Criminals take over neighborhoods
  - Everyone left suffers

# Why a Housing Strategy?

- When structures are converted and overcrowded, problems result for both occupants and nearby residents:
  - Marginal, hazardous and unfit living conditions, often with overpriced rents
  - Foot & vehicle traffic all hours of day and night
  - Congested streets and parking
  - Excessive trash
  - Nuisances to dangerous activities, from noise to drug dealing, prostitution and gang fights.

# What Is This Package?

- 6 Proposals & 1 “re-activation” of existing code:
  - “Three Strikes” – Chronic nuisance properties
  - Crime-free Lease Addendum (national program)
  - Tenants’ Rights – Ensures tenants know them & number of occupants allowed
  - Prostitution Abatement – Empowers neighborhoods
  - Amortization – Single-family neighborhood restoration
  - BZA Evidence – Heightens standards of proof
  - Property Area Search – Renewed inspection program\*\*

# Is It All or Nothing?

NO!

The 2010 Safe Streets Neighborhood Legislative Package:

1. Can be modified so each piece can be adopted on its own;
2. Can have some portions combined and passed, but not others;
3. Can be adopted as a whole, w/wo changes
4. Can be changed in any way council deems and mayor approves.

# Miscellaneous Questions

- Does this have to go to the Planning & Zoning Commission first?
  - No. Only the Amortization & BZA Standards ordinances have to go to the P&Z Commission at some point, but typically not first. With the 4-to-2 occupancy legislative compromise, it was the last step before the bills went to legislative session – the P&Z Commission’s recommendation to the council was non-binding and not followed.

# Miscellaneous Questions

- Can our staff and resources handle this?
  - Staff and resources are always in short supply, but with improvements in technology and by eliminating some of the systemic problems they have to deal with, their burden will improve along with quality of life.

# Miscellaneous Questions

- Doesn't a lot of this exist in state law already and aren't a lot of landlords already doing this, i.e., isn't all of this redundant?
  - For landlords who are already diligent about managing their properties, parts of this package won't be new. If you don't drink and drive, you don't worry about drunk driving laws.
  - Three Strikes's goal is to follow a national model of administrative intervention to nip problems in the bud before they get so bad they go to court under state law, having already damaged lives & neighborhoods.

# Miscellaneous Questions

- What impact will this legislation have on an already ailing housing market?
  - Since most of the package is designed to intervene early with nuisance and criminal activity, it will likely help the current housing market by making houses more marketable with reduced crime in neighborhoods.
  - The impact of the Amortization bill takes place over 10 years, not today's housing market.

# Miscellaneous Questions

- How does this compare to other municipalities' Safe Streets implementation?

At the time we were awarded the first Safe Streets grant, the only other “Safe Streets City” in Maryland was Annapolis. The Violent Offenders and Multi-jurisdictional portions are similar to Annapolis. Annapolis focused its housing effort on nine problem public housing complexes. Salisbury’s problems are in a couple of complexes, but mostly in abused single-family home neighborhoods. Portions of the package follow the national Crime-free Housing Program.

# Does This Affect All Rentals?

- Three Strikes, Crime-Free Lease Addendum, and Tenants' Rights would apply to all rentals.
- Prostitution Abatement applies to everyone – owner-occupants, landlords, tenants.
- Amortization and BZA standards applies ONLY to those single-family homes converted to multi-family dwellings ONLY in single-family residential districts. Legally constructed apartment complexes and buildings are not affected, wherever built.

# Should Owners Be Held Responsible?

- The question here really is, can/should owners be held responsible for conduct at their properties?

The law recognizes that persons who “knew or should have known” that a problem exists, but do nothing to abate it can be held accountable (but not with the same charge as the perpetrator – bartenders are held responsible when serving drunk drivers, but not with the driver’s charges). In this case, the law would consider someone as “maintaining a nuisance,” or similar language.

# What About \$10,000 to Write This?

- That's \$1,600 an ordinance. It costs money to write legislation, any legislation. Writing legislation well up front saves money in costly appeals and re-writes later.
- Reviewing and revising drafted legislation in work sessions is the most cost-efficient way to produce an end product, which puts the process on the public record and makes it accessible to the public.

# What Will It Cost?

- Depends on what portions are passed and how they are enforced.

Examples:

Crime-free Lease Addendum – cost is \$0  
(enforcement can be done as part of other processes)

Tenants' Rights – cost is \$0  
(enforcement can be done as part of other processes)

# What Will It Cost?

- Three Strikes – Fees cover all or most of administration/enforcement plus fines.\*\*\*
- Prostitution Abatement – cost is \$0 because action is initiated by empowered associations.
- Amortization – Fees cover all or most of administration/enforcement.\*\*\*
- BZA Standards – cost is \$0, change in procedure only. Appeal fees pay process costs.

\*\*\*Once monitored, fees can be adjusted, if necessary.

# What Is the Cost Without This?

- Another 35 police officers cost in excess of \$2.65 million (salary, benefits, training...doesn't include capital expenses for expanded force).
- Costs to community in lost business and lost long-term residents due to crime has not been measured, but is anecdotally substantial.
- Costs to victims in property damage, reduced property values, physical injury and emotional trauma has not been measured, but is anecdotally substantial.
- Cost to human life – priceless.