



Department Source: City Manager and Police Department  
To: City Council  
From: City Manager & Staff  
Council Meeting Date: March 19, 2018  
Re: Crime Reduction Strategy

## Executive Summary

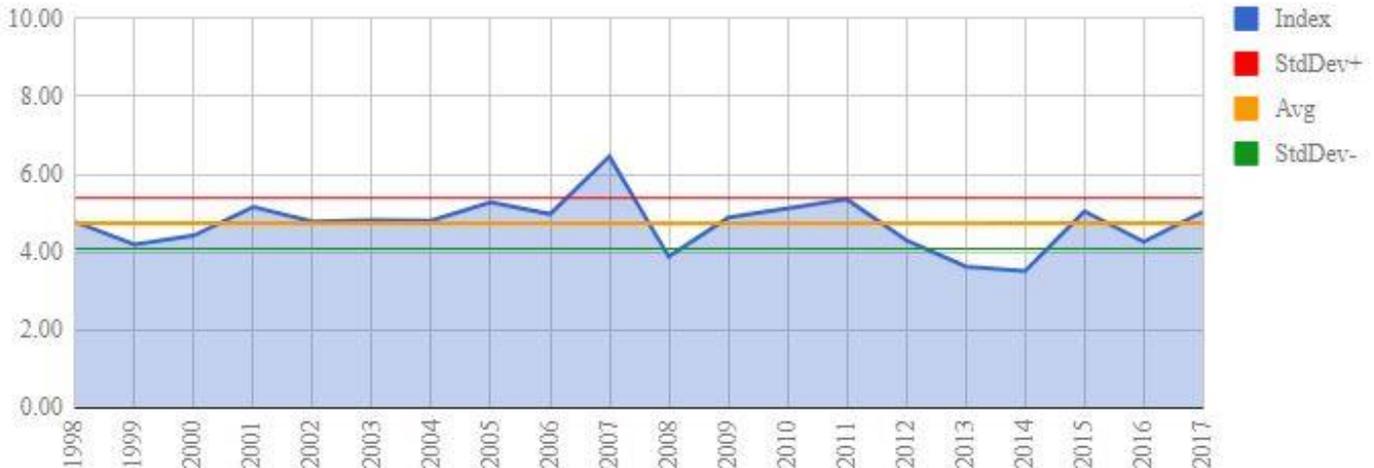
### Mayor Treece made the following request at the December 18, 2017 Council meeting:

*"The second thing and then I will yield to everyone else. So a week ago we had another homicide with an active murder investigation which has now reached a 17 to 20 year high depending on how you count those homicides. I don't need the City Manager to come back to council and nor do I need details of that investigation but I would like to know that we have a comprehensive crime reduction strategy with a short-term objective of getting on top of these murders and these investigations. And I want to know what the city can do and what additional help you need from the City Council to achieve that. And I don't care if it's; I think our detectives are spread thin and if there are other police officers with prior experience as a detective that we can do a short-term surge of detectives until we get on top of this I think we ought to consider that. If the department needs overtime approved so that these guys can stay on that case longer when that happens. If, um, you know; I don't know what the solution is but I need to know that everybody's head is in the game and working on these issues until we get on top of it. And again for sensitive; for discretion and sensitivity it doesn't need to come back to us but I would like to know that there's a plan. That's all I have."*

## Discussion

### Historical look at crime:

Columbia Violent Crime Index - 20 Years



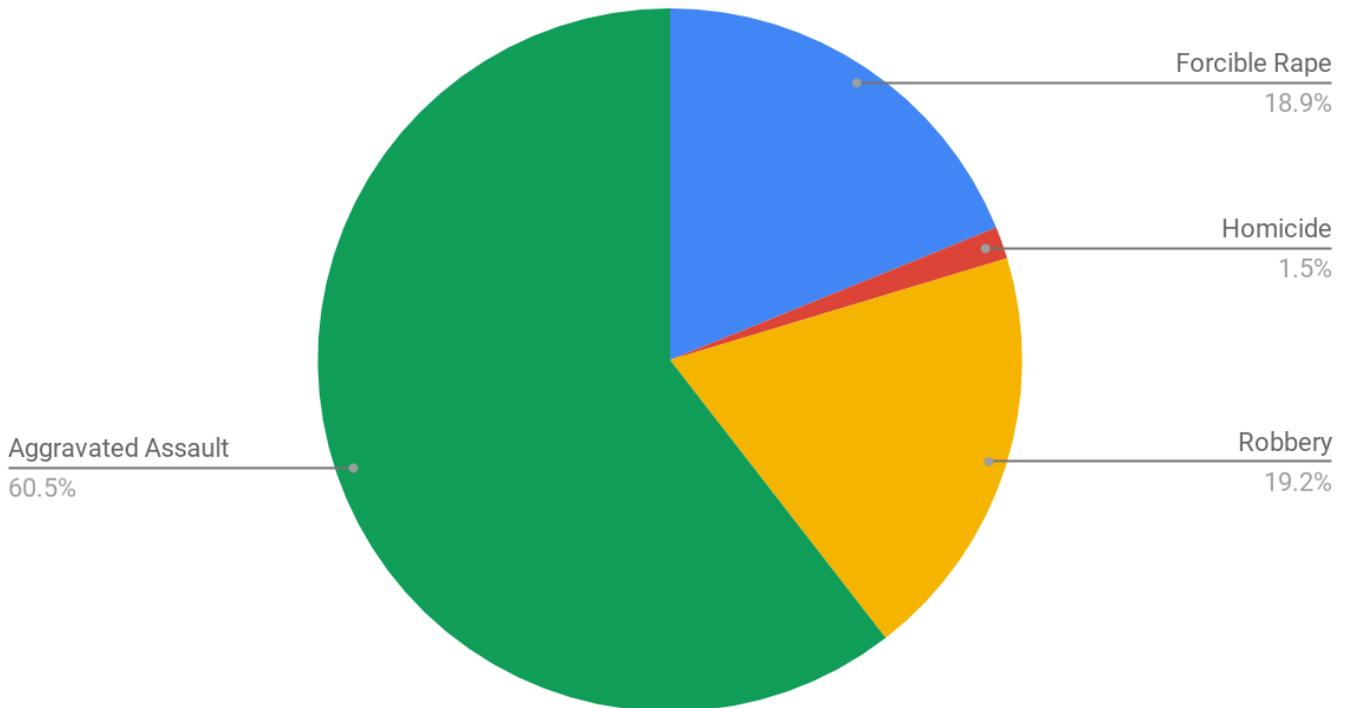


# City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

This chart depicts violent crime as reported over 20 years. For Uniform Crime Reporting purposes (UCR) violent crime includes homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. For 2017 the City was slightly above the historical average number of violent crimes per 1000 citizens, with a rate of 5.04:1000 (610 total victims), but within the standard deviation (normal). The types of violent crimes per 1000 can be broken down into the four UCR subcategories (See Chart 2 below). Homicide= 0.07:1000 (9 victims, or 1.48% of the total), Forcible Rape= 0.95:1000 (115 victims, or 18.85% of the total), Robbery= 0.97 (117 victims, or 19.18% of the total), Aggravated Assault= 3.05:1000 (369 victims, or 60.49% of the total) for a total of 610 victims of violent crime in 2017. Aggravated assaults account for  $\frac{3}{5}$  of the violent crimes in the city. The FBI defines aggravated assault as “an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury”, which can include some domestic assaults, assault with a weapon, etc. Under this definition the victim does not need to be injured for the offense to be considered an aggravated assault. During this 20 year period the highest rate of violent crimes per 1000 citizens was in 2007, with 6.45:1000.

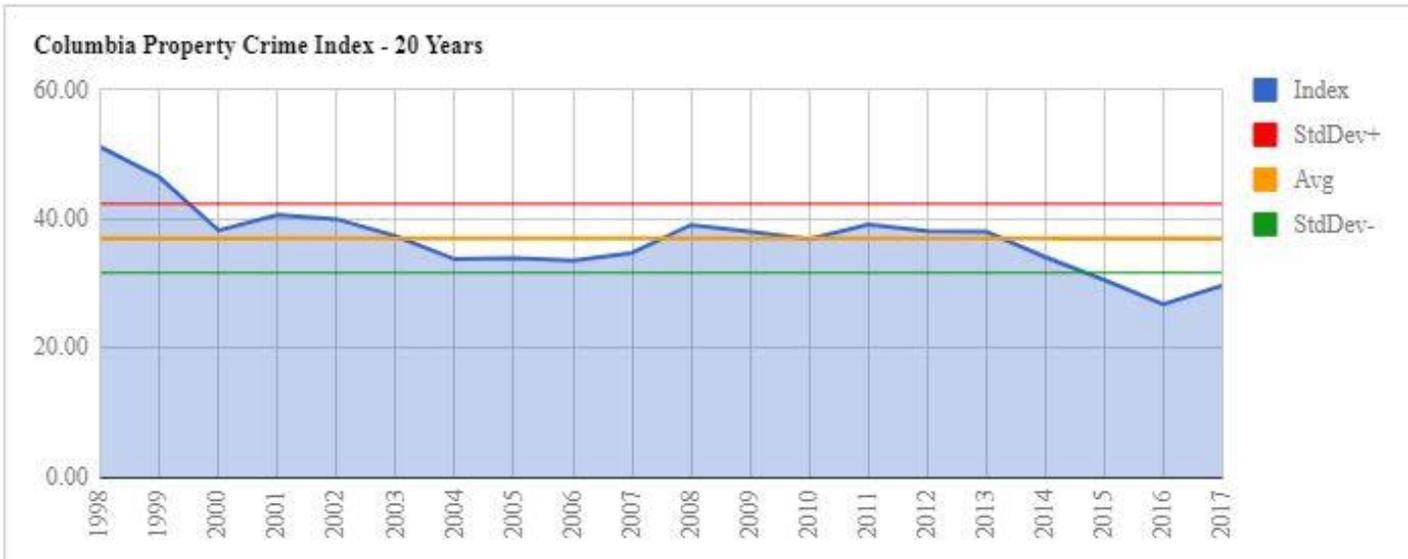
## Violent Crime 2017





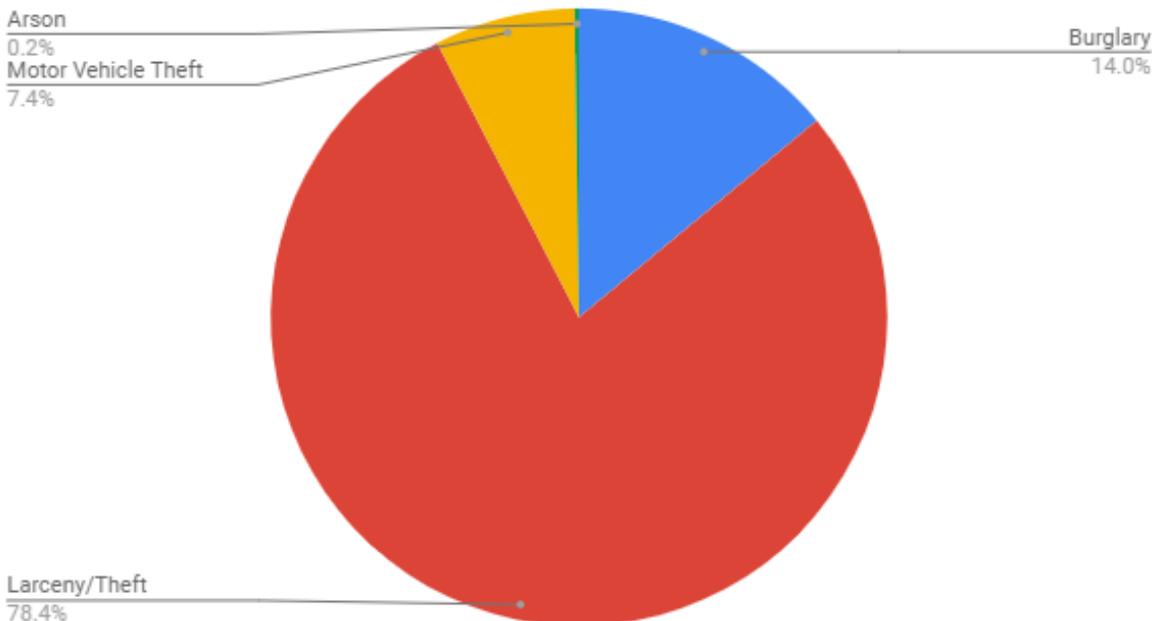
# City of Columbia

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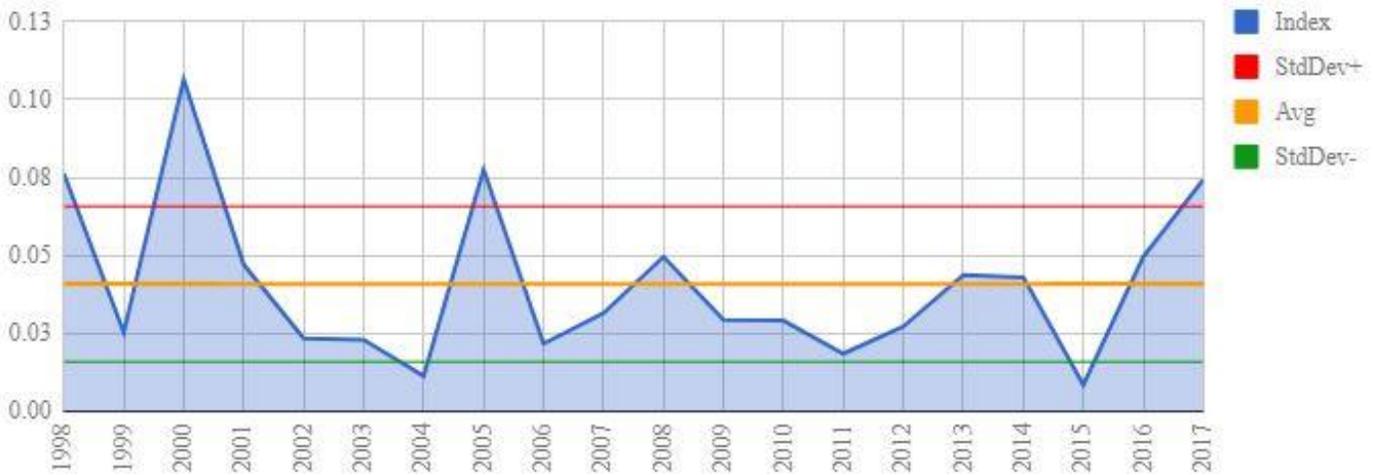
This chart depicts property crime as reported over the last 20 years. For UCR purposes property crime includes burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. For 2017 the city was below the historical average number of property crimes per 1000 citizens with a rate of 29.69:1000 (3,597 total victims), and also below the standard deviation for the third consecutive year. The types of property crimes can be broken down into the four UCR subcategories (see Chart 4 Below). Burglary= 4.17:1000 (505 total victims, or 14.04% of the total), Larceny/Theft= 23.33:1000 (2,826 victims, or 78.57% of the total), Motor Vehicle Theft= 2.20:1000 (266 total victims, or 7.40% of the total), and Arson= 0.07:1000 (8 total victims, or 0.22% of the total) for a total of 3,597 victims of property crime in 2017. During this 20 year period the highest rate of property crime per 1000 citizens was in 1998, with 51.15:1000.

## Property Crime 2017





**Criminal Homicide Index - 20 Years**



This chart depicts the rate of homicide in the city over the past 20 years. The years 2000 (9 total victims), 2005 (7 total victims), and 2017 (9 total victims) account for the 3 highest years. The years 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2015 all fell just at or below the average with 3 or fewer homicides per year.

## **2017 Homicide Review**

**2017-002851** (03/21/2017) Victim Shamyia Brimmage - Darold Pruitt and Devontrae Kennedy both arrested and indicted on second degree murder charges.

**2017-003024 & 2017-003276** (03/26/2017) Victims Michael Walker & Jeffery Jones. There is a strong belief we know who the suspect(s) are in this case. However, witness cooperation has been minimal and information is slow to materialize. This case is considered an open and active case.

**2017-005184** (05/22/2017) Victim Cameron Cruthers. The suspect, Ricky Gurley, was arrested on federal weapons charges in connection with this homicide. This case is considered an open and active case.

**2017-006654** (06/24/2017) Victim Quenten Hurt- This case is considered closed with the arrest of Denico Crawley for 1st degree assault, ACA, domestic assault 1st degree and unlawful use of a weapon.

**2017-007433** (07/16/2017) Victim Jamar Hicks. Once again detectives believe they have a suspect/suspect(s) identified, but lack the needed witness cooperation to close the case with an arrest. This case is considered an open and active case.

**2017-007702** (07/22/2017) Victim Damien Davis- There was an arrest made in this case for evidence tampering. Due to lack of witness cooperation no other arrests have been made.



**2017-009966** (09/15/2017) Victim Nathan Taylor- Jeremy Humphrey was arrested on 09/19/2017 for second degree murder and a weapons charge.

**2017-013530** (12/11/2017) Victim Augustus Roberts. This case is only two months old and is considered open and active.

## **We currently have these programs to combat crime:**

1. **Patrol** - this service is made up of an average of 70 FTE's and responds to all crime-related 9-1-1 calls in the city limits. The top 4 calls for service in 2017 are 911 checks (11608), Disturbances (4723), Alarms (4649) and Accident (4084). As of February 14, 2018, CPD has 10 vacancies, 4 officers in the academy and 17 officers in field training. In 2017 CPD was requested 73,849 times, which breaks down to 436.98 calls per officer. When you include the self-initiated activities the number goes to 147,660 calls for service, 873.73 per officer.
2. **Criminal Investigations**- 14 people currently assigned as Detectives, 1 moving to the Unit from PIO assignment on 2/25/18. Three sergeants supervise each of the three Units:
  - Robbery/Homicide Unit** -includes Robbery, Homicide, Missing Persons and Serious Assaults =1 Sergeant/4 Detectives.
  - Special Victims Unit** -includes DOVE (2), Child Abuse/Sex Crimes (2), Adult Sex Crimes (2) =1 Sergeant/6 Detectives (1 to be added to Child on 2/25/18, for a total of 7 in this unit).
  - Property Crimes Unit**-includes Burglary (2), Theft, Forgery/Fraud, Embezzlement (2) =1 Sergeant/4 Detectives/1 Part-time Civilian Investigator (a retired CPD Detective).

Criminal Investigations also includes 2 Civilian Crime Scene Investigators (one position is currently in the hiring process), a Senior Administrative Assistant, a Part-Time Victim Advocate (supplied by the DOVE grant) and a Civilian Investigative Technician (handles phone/computer/data evidence collection and analysis).

There are currently two Vice & Narcotics (VNOC) detectives assigned to Federal Task Forces with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Detectives also work closely with local agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on a regular basis. These partnerships are invaluable and allow the Columbia Police Department to tap into resources which help combat crime that would be otherwise unavailable.
3. **Community Outreach Unit** -COU fulfills the public safety portion of the 2016-2019 City of Columbia Strategic Plan in the three strategic neighborhoods, and now a fourth neighborhood which was funded by the COPS grant. Chief Burton assigned 8 police officers and a Sergeant to create this unit. Lt. Geoff Jones and Sgt. Hestir created a Mission and Goals for the unit and implemented community policing strategies on a neighborhood level. Pillars of the COU efforts are foot patrol, school visits, handling of calls in their neighborhoods and following up on calls taken by Patrol Division officers. Lt. G.



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Jones, Sgt. Hestir and the 8 officers assigned have diligently engaged citizens and the community. This strategy has resulted in lower incidents of shots fired, armed criminal assault and most other felony and misdemeanor crimes. Satisfaction with the police in these neighborhoods has increased while crime has decreased over a 2.5 year tracking period. To capitalize on the success of this unit, it would need to be expanded, as leaving a neighborhood may result in a return to prior conditions.

4. **Street Crimes Unit:** The Street Crimes Unit is a small group of detectives within the Special Operations Bureau. The Street Crimes Unit's primary mission is to aggressively pursue the most violent offenders in our community. In 2016 & 2017, this small unit of detectives made 1,552 arrests, of which 540 were felony charges. A secondary goal of the unit is to remove as many illegal firearms from the streets of Columbia as possible. In 2016, this six person unit recovered 45 illegal firearms. In 2017, the unit recovered 31 illegal firearms. The Street Crimes Unit accomplishes this mission by partnering with members of the community to develop reliable information on career criminals and violent offenders. The number of success stories this unit has had over the past several years is unmatched, and this unit is vital to making Columbia a safer place to live.

5. **S.W.A.T** - The Columbia Police Department's Special Weapons and Tactics Team originated in 1976 with the mission of resolving difficult police situations outside the realm of ordinary patrol response, through the use of highly skilled officers, using advanced tactics, and specialized tools. Incidents which meet these criteria include, but are not limited to: Hostage Situations; Barricaded Subjects; Active Shooters; High-risk Apprehensions; High-risk Search Warrant Service; Protective Details; and Mass Casualty Incidents. The Columbia SWAT Team is comprised of a total of 22 Sworn Officers (17 Operators, 3 Team Leaders, 1 Operations Officer, and 1 Commander). The SWAT Team is a collateral duty (part-time) team, and all of these individuals have other responsibilities within the police department. This has created problems when operations arise as it drains resources elsewhere within the department due to our overall low staffing numbers. Our team is currently well-equipped and trained, and our goal at this time is continued support in tactical training and operational tempo as this combination provides our SWAT Team with a high level of tactical competency.

6. **School Resource Officers** - Four Officer FTE's positively engage middle and high-school students to decrease or prevent bad decision making by youth. In 2015, we reassigned one SRO from full time at the CORE school, and split his duties among all middle schools. The result was calls for service decreased, and opportunity for increased positive contacts with middle school age students increased.

7. **Crime Free Multi-Housing Program** - The Crime Free Multi-Housing program was first offered in Columbia in March, 2000. This program is offered approximately four times per year. The program educates property owners in methods to reduce crime on their property through the use of universally accepted Crime Free principles. The Columbia Police Department assigns one officer to the City's Neighborhood Services effort, and as part of this officer's duties the Crime Free program is administered. For further information



on the Crime Free Multi-Housing program, click on <https://www.como.gov/police/crime-free-multi-housing-program/>.

8. **DOVE Unit** - Created in 1998. The unit is comprised of detectives from the Columbia Police Department and the Boone County Sheriff's Department. It was formed and funded through the STOP Violence Against Women Grant to strengthen the law enforcement and criminal justice system's response to domestic violence. The DOVE Unit utilizes community policing philosophy by embracing a victim centered approach and promoting changes in policies which have underscored a commitment to reduce the level of domestic violence within our community and provide support for victims.

9. **Community Relations Unit** - The CRU maintains a website with burglary prevention tips, commercial burglary prevention, child safety, identity theft, gun safety, home security, sexual assault prevention, vacation crime prevention, and vehicle safety information. Videos to capture attention and convey critically important ways to avoid become a victim of crime are a core effort.

10. **Online reporting forms/Smartphone App** - These tools make it as easy as possible to report crime. Once the new Records Management System software is live, online reporting for smaller crimes will reduce overall workload from Patrol, thus freeing up a bit more officer time.

11. **AVERT (Alliance of Violence Education Reform Transformation) or Focused Deterrence** - This program was formed in 2017 after several months of research into similar programs in High Point, NC and Kansas City, MO. The goal of the program is to identify the most violent/problem offenders in the community and confront them via customized notification meetings. During those meetings the officers and service providers discuss what options the offender has and the specific consequences of continued criminal activity (swift prosecution and incarceration). If the offender chooses to participate in the program they are connected with the appropriate service providers who can assist them in obtaining employment, licenses, education, training, housing assistance, in the hope that they will become a thriving member of our community. Our program differs somewhat from the Highpoint and Kansas City programs in that we also plan to make contact with inmates identified as being at a high risk for recidivism prior to their release back into the community and offer them services. This program aligns with several goals of the Mayor's Task Force on Violence.

### **Status of Overtime Funds:**

As of 2/10/18 we have expended \$187,775 in overtime. There is \$396,530 remaining for the rest of FY18 (2/10/18 - 9/30/18). Based on this we believe we have sufficient funds available for the rest of FY18.



## **What can the city do and what additional help do we need?**

1. We could explore shotspotter technology - this technology has many advocates, though it is expensive. The most recent cost estimate is \$500,000 for one year of service (\$300,000 to install equipment, \$200,000 per year for the license to use it). This technology listens for shots fired so that officers can respond instantly, without waiting for a dispatch from 9-1-1.
2. We could institute a curfew for children - this has had mixed reviews across the country but it is a strategy to keep children away from dangerous activity at night. Given that much property crime is committed by under-age boys, this might also result in a reduction in property crimes.
3. We could expand video capabilities in public spaces allowing citizens and businesses to submit their information to a database that would make officers aware of the possibility of video evidence of a specific crime.
4. We could use mobile surveillance systems in high crime areas or hotspots.
5. We could develop a fusion center with a total of 3 crime analysts for real time crime information to be pushed out to CPD staff and assist in allocation of resources.
6. Staff has proposed adopting an alarm ordinance that would result in the reduction of false alarms. This legislation is nearly ready for Council discussion and will be submitted soon.
7. We could support/encourage the use of increased online reporting, and mandatory online reporting for certain crimes in order to reduce officer workload. Consider the creation of a civilian position(s) to help process these reports and take reports by phone or in person for those with no internet access.
8. We could increase the number of positions in the Police Department. This is a very well-known need. Current personnel levels in all CPD divisions, sworn and non-sworn, are below the average for similar sized cities. Workload for the department continues to grow (opioid death investigations e.g.) as we continue to look for work we can cease performing (non-injury traffic accidents, the traffic unit, car lockouts, etc.).

In closing, our fundamental struggle in our approach to policing is that we ask too much from too few. Even though we spend 7 of every 10 discretionary dollars on public safety in Columbia, it isn't enough. It isn't enough not because our priorities are wrong, but because we as a community don't actually pay very much in taxes to the City. Columbia's sales tax rate is average in the State of Missouri. Columbia's property tax rate is the lowest by far in the State of Missouri (it is half the rate of any surrounding municipality and produces less revenue than that received by the Boone County Library). The Police Department does an excellent job solving crime, and when it can, preventing it. The work we are now engaged in regarding the community oriented policing resolution should result in a compelling vision for the future of policing in Columbia. If the City Council places that vision before the voters, it will be the community's decision whether to pay for that vision, or to have us struggle on as we are.



## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The City will spend over \$45 Million over the next two years to deliver the comprehensive strategy outlined above.

Long-Term Impact: This work will cost around \$23 Million every year following.

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Public Safety, Secondary Impact: Operational Excellence, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

## Legislative History

| Date       | Action   |
|------------|--|
| 12/18/2017 | Mayor Treece requested a comprehensive crime reduction strategy. |

## Suggested Council Action

This report is informational.