

J P

MORRELL

**CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE
DIVISION 2**



**A SAFER CITY FOR ALL:
NOW & INTO THE FUTURE**

CRIME REDUCTION PLAN

JULY 12, 2021



A SAFER CITY FOR ALL: NOW & INTO THE FUTURE

CRIME REDUCTION PLAN

Crime and violence in New Orleans need to be addressed immediately. Crime has been one of the greatest challenges facing our city for generations. And it's on the rise. In fact, a June survey found that 74% of our city's residents feel that crime has gotten worse over the past year and 64% do not feel the city is safe.

Deeply rooted in broken and biased systems, poverty, and failed policies, we need a comprehensive strategy to begin turning the tide. As a lifetime New Orleans resident, former public defender, state legislator, champion for criminal justice reform, and brother of two NOPD officers, JP has worked with public safety experts, reform advocates, data analysts, community leaders, victims and the formerly incarcerated for many years; and over the past several months he has tapped into this broad network to gather best practices and innovative ideas to build a safer and more equitable New Orleans.

These policies are outlined in the following Crime Reduction Plan, which is being released as part of JP's campaign for the October 9, 2021 City Council At-Large, Division 2 election.

This multifaceted approach focuses on four major objectives:

1. Create Educational and Economic Opportunities for Our Young People to Reduce Juvenile Crime
2. Reimagine and Support the NOPD
3. Disrupt and Prevent Violence
4. Empower People and Our Communities

Within each of these categories are a number of short- and long-term policies. Highlights include:

- New legislation to expand state RICO laws to include prosecutions for recruiting children to commit crimes, like carjackings, and increased collaboration and cooperation with federal law enforcement for these crimes
- A lateral hiring policy that would allow NOPD to quickly add qualified officers to its alarmingly dwindling ranks

As we all know, crime – with its root causes – is a complex issue. This initial plan is by no means exhaustive and will require our entire community to come together to make our city more equitable. However, this plan offers effective strategies to make our neighborhoods – all of them – safer.

We invite you to participate and to help us continue to develop ideas for crime reduction strategies. Please send them to info@jpmorrell.com so they may be considered by our campaign's volunteer advisory group of experts, advocates, and community leaders.

CRIME REDUCTION PLAN



1 Create Educational and Economic Opportunities for Our Young People to Reduce Juvenile Crime

Toughen Penalties for Recruiting Children for Criminal Activity

JP is working with State Representatives Jason Hughes and Aimee Freeman on legislation that would expand the definition of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) crimes in Louisiana law to include recruiting children for criminal activity. Oftentimes, adults are behind the crimes committed by young people, directing them to commit dangerous illegal activity, like carjackings. With the proposed law, these adult “ringleaders” will face much lengthier prison sentences, keeping them off the streets and serving as a deterrent.

This would also require a commitment by the New Orleans City Council to find additional funding to create specialized units within the New Orleans Police Department and District Attorney’s Office to aid in arresting and prosecuting offenders.

Additionally, it will require us to work with our congressional delegation to facilitate increased cooperation with federal law enforcement to also see prosecution under the federal RICO statute.

Improve Juvenile Court Services

As City Councilmember, JP will immediately assess the resources needed to provide wraparound services, like those provided by surrounding parishes, and identify why kids are committing specific crimes. Additional resources will be necessary at all levels to end the cycle of young people entering the criminal justice system.

Ensure Collaboration Across Local Government on Juvenile Justice

Once elected to the Council, JP will require monthly budget meetings with Juvenile Court, the City Council, the Mayor and law enforcement agencies to establish a pipeline for emergency support, when necessary, to all parts of the juvenile justice system. This will be part of a larger effort to track spending across all departments, akin to the Joint-Committee on the Budget in the Louisiana Legislature, so that the City Council can be actively involved in aggressively reallocating resources as needed.

The Children Youth and Planning Board should be utilized to strengthen the system by:

- Creating real solutions and identifying funding sources for pilot programs
- Differentiating between youth spending and youth incarceration spending
- Establishing specific goals, strategic outcome, and accountability metrics

JP will facilitate partnerships with charitable organizations that provide re-entry programs, like the First 72+, to provide a mentorship program between formerly incarcerated adults and young people in juvenile court to help prevent recidivism. Additionally, we need to include non-profit organizations such as Friends and Family of Incarcerated Youth as well as Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights (LCCR) in the process of seeking ways to engage kids that enter the system and disrupt the environments that lead to crime.

Invest in Parks, Education & Recreation

As Councilmember, JP will direct more investments toward parks and recreation, especially through NORD, to help youth fill unsupervised time with positive activities. Providing these opportunities has proven to reduce juvenile crime, and we will incorporate some of the best practices from BREC, which manages playgrounds and recreation programs in East Baton Rouge, as well as some of the previous ideas from Friends of NORD. Relying on best practices, New Orleans will:

- Elevate the most dilapidated playgrounds first
- Create a baseline of service so that no park or recreation center is left behind
- Aggressively pursue business and non-profit investment in our parks and playgrounds
- Create job and sport opportunities year round, especially when young people are otherwise idle
- Work with the New Orleans Public School Board (NOPSB) to identify educational opportunities, beyond the traditional model, which allow our kids opportunities for school year round
- Work with school principals, teachers and staff to help us identify at-risk youth who need additional resources and investment due to environmental challenges
- Revisit the re-creation of a Truancy Center as an alternative to juvenile incarceration for kids who should be in school, and work with the NOPSB, as well as charter management organizations, to get kids back to school

Provide Young People with Career Exposure & Paid Work Experiences

Too many of our young people are not graduating high school with the skills and life experiences required by the region's fast-growing, high-wage industries. Once elected to the Council, JP will increase opportunities for students to explore the range of careers available to them and gain the soft and technical skills needed to enter high-wage career pathways. And, like structured recreation, connecting young people with paid internships helps fill their free time with constructive activity:

- Provide more employment opportunities directly through the City of New Orleans
- Facilitate early access to apprenticeship programs subsidized by the building trades
- Expand internship opportunities, powered by local businesses, similar to the City's partnership with YouthForce NOLA
- Bolster existing mentorship programs through public-private partnerships facilitated by the City
- Give the New Orleans Public School Board unfettered access to the Harrah's Grant money, to which it is entitled



Reimagine & Support the NOPD

Create Crisis Intervention Teams

Cities around the country have enacted effective, community-centric mobile crisis intervention teams that respond to those in mental and substance use crises (such as the CAHOOTS model). As City Councilmember, JP will work to establish Crisis Intervention Teams (CITs) in the budget to relieve police from roles for which they are poorly matched while connecting those

in crisis with care and medical resources, not the criminal legal system. CIT will be a completely new branch of First Responders, with NOPD, EMS and the Fire Department. They will be dispatched, like other first responders, and given similar resources. Freeing police resources from having to respond to these crises will give officers more time to address serious and violent crimes, while increasing response times citywide.

Additionally, the City will be able to rely on third-party organizations to enroll eligible people in Medicaid and Medicare programs.

Help the NOPD Hire the Best Candidates

Once elected, JP will direct the Civil Service Board to immediately review their position on Lateral Hiring to allow the NOPD to actively recruit at all levels, pursuant to any requirements within the consent decree. This would allow the NOPD to quickly find and add to its ranks qualified officers who are trained and ready to work on day one.

Analyze NOPD Retention

Among the greatest challenges facing the NOPD are unique and serious recruiting and retention problems. As Councilmember At-Large, JP will immediately analyze NOPD retention to determine why its officers are leaving the force in droves. A first step will be to require the NOPD to produce the following:

- The number of new officers that begin separation after less than 3 years on the job
- An independent review of exit interviews to determine root cause for separation
- A comprehensive report on the issues of starting salaries, pay raises, workload (versus comparable cities) and other issues that make recruitment and retention difficult

With this information, the City and Department will devise strategies to improve the situation, possibly with little or no additional costs.

Reevaluate Police Substations

Based on national best practices, JP will reevaluate the value of police substations throughout the city as a way to:

- Engage the community
- Increase police visibility
- Improve response times to emergency calls, especially in New Orleans East and Algiers
- Help officers with routine complaints and concerns from area residents
- Hire more civilian staff to engage the community and create safe spaces for reporting crime and potential criminal activity

To advance these objectives, JP will explore quickly redeploying existing Districts and/or substations that are undermanned or have been closed.

Build Public Trust

The NOPD must keep bad cops off the streets and out of the department to protect the public and build trust. It should prohibit the use of inactive, suspended, or soon-to-be-fired officers from essential activities, such as reviewing live action resources and investigatory oversight.

Reimagining community policing for this new millennium by utilizing civilian community engagement in a new way, as a combination community watch and neighborhood liaisons, where friends and neighbors can communicate concerns, to the NOPD or about the NOPD, without fear of retaliation from anyone is key to rebuilding our public safety.

More Resources for NOPD Vehicles

Providing more resources for vehicles will improve the way the NOPD functions while also addressing retention. Once on the Council, JP will create a goal of providing a take home vehicle to all NOPD officers in Orleans Parish. It will further establish NOPD Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Fund to prioritize NOPD vehicles for repair, replacement or return to service. This policy will require that all insurance proceeds for destroyed or disabled vehicles must be returned to the vehicle and maintenance fund.

Deploy License Plate Readers & Smart Technology

JP will prioritize the deployment of License Plate Readers (LPRs) over passive Crime Cameras. LPRs do not violate privacy, are constitutional, and automatically provide specific data that are proven to catch criminals and close cases.



Disrupt & Prevent Violence

Recreate the TIGER Unit

JP will work with NOPD to create a successor to the TIGER (Tactical Intelligence Gathering and Enforcement Response) Unit and task it with disrupting carjackings in geographic areas with the highest concentrations of incidents. There is a direct correlation with the disbanding of the original Tiger Unit and the increase in carjackings. TIGER was disbanded in late September of 2020 and the current spike in carjackings and armed robberies began the following month. TIGER's proactive, investigatory elements address violent crimes in advance and in progress to disrupt repeat offenders and organized groups of criminals before they strike. Focusing resources into solving crimes, quickly, makes it difficult for criminal organizations to stay in business.

Coordinate Deployment of Local Law Enforcement Agencies

The NOPD is stretched thin, and a quick way to supplement it is to expand the jurisdiction of existing law enforcement agencies through Cooperative Endeavor Agreements to handle

traffic and other non-criminal enforceable violations. JP will leverage this policy to expand the ability of departments – like the Levee Police, University Police, Port Police, Orleans Parish Sheriff as well as 1st and 2nd City Constables – to provide visible police presence to handle minor incidents and deter crime. As a State Senator, JP passed legislation to facilitate coordination between local law enforcement agencies departments. It's time to put those policy ideas into action.

Reinstitute the “Big Duck” Committee

When elected to the City Council, JP will immediately reinstitute the Jerome “Big Duck” Smith Justice System Advisory Committee, which was created in 2020 to “examine the allocation of City resources across the entirety of our local justice system to make recommendations on investments and associated policy priorities.” Furthermore, JP will amend the ordinance that created the committee to allow it to meet independently and have recommendation authority.



Empower People & Our Communities

Continue Advancing Criminal Justice Reform

The deeply concerning spike in crime needs addressing, but we must not allow fear to influence decision making and upset progress we've made toward reforming the criminal justice system. Faced with serious public safety concerns, the City must embrace our community's values and data-driven criminal justice system reforms which are proven to uplift people and reduce crime. Crime is a systemic problem that has plagued New Orleans for decades. Locking up as many people as possible has never worked.

Pursuing reform does not mean we will not seek justice. For too long our community has been divided by the idea that one must pick between being for reform and fighting crime. This is a

false choice. Criminal justice reform is about fundamental fairness, not ignoring crime that hurts our communities.

Victims' Rights

As Councilmember-At Large, JP will establish the Victims Engagement Subcommittee of the Criminal Justice Committee. This will ensure that the victims of crime and their advocates are given a platform to address issues and concerns, as well as seek out best practices for protecting and providing services to the members of our community who have been victimized by crime. This will create a safe space for victims and will address the critical need for increasing cooperation with our criminal justice system by those who have been victims or witnesses to crime.

Increase Non-Police Resources in Target Geographic Areas

Beyond the NOPD, the City has at its disposal a broad spectrum of agencies and departments that can be brought to bear to support people and communities in ways that can prevent crime. JP will help reallocate ineffective municipal resources to address the specific needs of geographic “hot spots.” There are many examples of what the City Council could be doing to help:

- The Council could direct more resources to Code Enforcement to truly eradicate blight, and demand more than simply securing abandoned dwellings, which would lead to bringing Katrina-damaged homes back into commerce
- Public Works must ensure street lights are working throughout the City
- Public Health will develop a more extensive plan to work with the homeless and people with substance use disorders
- Economic Development to invest in people and workforce development and Social Services to provide assistance to those in need

This coordinated effort aligns with the above proposal to establish a community-centric mobile crisis response team to respond to those in mental and substance abuse crises (like CAHOOTS).

Furthermore, JP will allocate additional resources to enlist more “violence interrupters” who are well known and trusted in neighborhoods and can identify and intervene in conflicts before they intensify.

Provide Alternative Resources for Non-violent Offenses

Instead of tying up severely limited NOPD resources, JP will direct the City to publicize the underutilized online portal for reporting non-violent offenses like shoplifting and car break-ins.

Similarly, rather than just relying on NOPD officers, more community liaison officers will be utilized to complete insurance reports for non-moving offenses, like car break ins, to quicken response times and relieve demands on our thinly stretched force.

Keep Guns Out of the Wrong Hands

As Councilmember, JP will investigate and close down businesses known to law enforcement partners (like ATF) that promote illegal activities, especially illegal gun sales. The Council will do

more to be an active participant in fighting crime.

In addition to keeping guns out of the wrong hands, the City Council will be actively engaged in promoting gun safety. We will create a program, across the Greater New Orleans Area with surrounding parishes, to offer free gun locks to help prevent the trend of stolen guns being used for crime. Criminals are breaking into cars to steal guns. If trigger locks are placed on just 25% of those stolen guns, that would mean 25% less guns used in future crimes of violence.

Listen to & Empower Neighborhoods

Every neighborhood in New Orleans has its own unique character and specific challenges that contribute to crime, whether they’re faced with blight, drug dealing, carjackings, a lack of parks and recreation, broken streetlights, gangs, poor public transportation, or a shortage of safe spaces for kids to go in their free time. No one knows the unique circumstances of a neighborhood better than the people who live there. JP will establish more robust and regular methods for gathering information from residents, providing platforms for peoples’ concerns and ideas to be heard, and creating systems for responding.

Strengthen Re-Entry Programs

To break the cycle of crime and violence, we must set people up for success. For those who have re-entered, we need to provide tools and resources so they have better life opportunities. Re-entry services reduce recidivism rates, and a dollar invested here is far better spent than a dollar spent keeping people behind bars. JP will double down on the City’s investment in re-entry services and support of organizations, such as the First 72+, that are doing this important work.

Equity & Opportunity

The greatest crime-prevention strategy is to improve people’s prospects for meaningful, gainful employment and overall success in life. This is done through workforce development initiatives to prepare people for high-wage jobs and sustainable economic development that meets the economic, health, housing and transportation needs of ALL our communities. JP will leverage the City’s power to play a leading role in these areas, whether through direct investments, permits, policies, or regulatory authority. Additionally, JP will fight to make sure all of our first responders are making more than a ‘living wage’ and that the City **leads by example** when it comes to fighting for a minimum of \$15 and beyond.

JP

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