

OPERATION: SAFE COMMUNITY

A MEMPHIS FAST FORWARD INITIATIVE



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United Effort Drops County-Wide Crime Rate 6.3%, City-Wide Rate 5.7%

MEMPHIS, TN –Major violent crime dropped in both the city of Memphis and in all of Shelby County in 2013 compared to 2012, as did major property crime. The collective action plan driving these reductions is known as Operation: Safe Community, an organized network of more than 100 partner organizations spearheaded by the Memphis/Shelby County Crime Commission.

In the city of Memphis, based on reported major violent crimes (murders, forcible rapes, aggravated assaults, and robberies), the rate per one hundred thousand citizens dropped 5.7 percent in 2013 compared to 2012. Countywide, the drop was 6.3 percent.

The Operation: Safe Community plan to reduce crime was launched in 2007. Beginning in 2007 and through 2013, the major violent crime rate dropped dramatically -- 17.3 percent in Memphis and 21.6 percent countywide compared to 2006. The only slippage in the downward trend occurred in 2012, when the rate of reported major violent crimes went up in Memphis by 9.5 percent compared to 2011 and up 9.9 percent countywide.

The major property crime rate dropped even more dramatically. In Memphis, the rate of major property crimes (burglaries, auto thefts, and other theft offenses) dropped 4.7 percent in 2013 compared to 2012 and 27.8 percent compared to 2006. Countywide, the decline in 2013 compared to 2012 was 4.4 percent and 30.6 percent compared to 2006.

Property crimes are especially susceptible to hot-spot policing tactics such as the Memphis Police Department's data-driven deployment strategy (Blue Crush), a major part of the Operation: Safe Community plan.

Operation: Safe Community is the public safety pillar of Memphis Fast Forward, a shared vision and unprecedented action plan for improving economic prosperity and quality of life in Memphis and Shelby County. Memphis Fast Forward's other four pillars include good jobs, a better-educated work force, a healthier citizenry, and fiscally sound local government.

Memphis Fast Forward is co-chaired by Memphis Mayor A C Wharton, Jr., Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell, Jr., and Gary Shorb, president and CEO of Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare representing the CEOs group Memphis Tomorrow. Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, Bill Gibbons, chairs Operation: Safe Community.

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The Memphis/Shelby County Crime Commission oversees implementation of the Operation: Safe Community plan on a day-to-day basis. Ben Adams, Public Safety Chair of Memphis Tomorrow, also chairs the Crime Commission board of directors; and Michelle Fowlkes serves as executive director of the Crime Commission.

"Under Operation: Safe Community, leaders from all levels of government and the private sector have united behind a common plan and focused on implementation of that plan. That level of cooperation is unique and is paying off in significant reductions in crime. We still have a long way to go to get where we need to be. We will not let up," said Commissioner Gibbons.

Ben Adams further remarked, "Public safety is fundamental to quality of life, jobs growth and our future economic prosperity, which is why Operation: Safe Community is such an important part of the Memphis Fast Forward plan. We still have a lot of work to do to, but I'm really encouraged by our continued downward trajectory in both violent and property crime."

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About Operation: Safe Community (memphisfastforward.com/publicsafety)

Launched in 2007, Operation: Safe Community (OSC) is an historic and ambitious crime reduction initiative spearheaded by top government, criminal justice, and business leaders in partnership with schools, citizens, and faith and community-based organizations. It was Memphis Fast Forward's first collective impact model, and its collaborative approach and shared vision, plan and commitment to improved quality of life continue to propel it forward into what is now its 8th successful year driving reductions in crime.

About the Memphis Shelby County Crime Commission (www.memphiscrime.org)

Memphis Shelby Crime Commission is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that "quarterbacks" the work of the Operation: Safe Community (OSC) plan and its partners. It is governed by a board comprised of 50 public and private sector stakeholders, most of whom are actively involved in leading various initiatives of the OSC plan. It is funded through the generous contributions of many private sector donors who want to see our community continue its crime reduction progress.