



Thursday, August 3, 2023

Chairman Conway and Members of the Public Safety and Government Operations Committee
City Hall, Room 550
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

RE: LO22-0039 – Brooklyn Mass Shooting

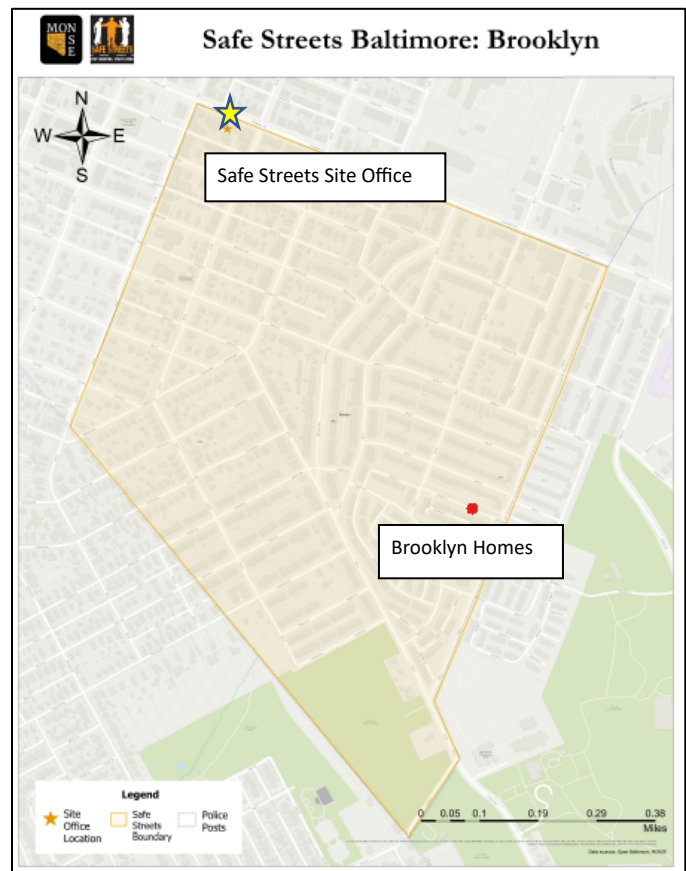
This report provides MONSE's responses to committee requests made during the July 13 hearing on the Brooklyn mass shooting.

I. Safe Streets Conflict Mediations Prior to the Shooting

The Brooklyn Homes shooting occurred in the early morning hours of Sunday, July 2 in the 800 block of Gretna Court -- within the Safe Streets Brooklyn catchment area, which stretches north-south from E Patapsco Ave to the city line and east-west from 10th St. to 4th St.

The Safe Streets team in Brooklyn includes a staff of three frontline violence interrupters who work Tuesday-Saturday from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., and a site director and violence prevention coordinator who typically work a 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. shift. Violence interrupters work selected shifts based on a data-driven analysis of trends in the timing of violent crime where they serve.

As Baltimore's flagship community violence intervention program, Safe Streets has been a trusted "credible" messenger in the community since 2007, spreading anti-violence messages and encouraging positive changes in individual behavior as well as community norms around



violence. Grounded in the evidence-based Cure Violence model created at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health, the Safe Streets program focuses on identifying and mediating conflicts that might otherwise result in gunfire. Mediation entails 1) listening to each party involved, 2) calming the situation, 3) identifying ways to meet each side's needs, and 4) addressing the parties' interests such that each side is satisfied with the outcome. Once violence interrupters have intervened in a conflict, the protocol is to continue ongoing mediation efforts until the conflict is resolved. Violence interrupters also intervene to prevent possible violence in situations that do not involve conflict mediation. For example, workers may intervene with an armed individual in a context where no other parties are involved.

Data on Safe Streets mediations are collected to inform evaluation, implementation, and measurement of program impact – not for law enforcement investigative purposes. Violence interrupters must operate independently from law enforcement in order to maintain the credibility and trust required to do their jobs. Frontline workers are tasked with using their relationships and street knowledge to intervene among individuals at highest risk of perpetrating and/or being victims of gun violence, risking their lives to save others. If they were to function as extensions of the police, workers would be at even greater risk while losing the credibility and access to sensitive information needed to de-escalate conflicts and prevent shootings.

On Saturday, July 1, violence interrupters on the Brooklyn Safe Streets team mediated five conflicts – all during the evening in Brooklyn Homes involving individuals attending the Brooklyn Day event. The team covered traditional hotspots elsewhere in the catchment area during the first part of their 3 p.m-11 p.m shift. Brooklyn Day celebrations had been peaceful in previous years, and Safe Streets staff had no advance information about conflicts among attendees or likely violence.

Of the five mediated conflicts, two were arguments between groups that had the potential to turn violent; one was a relationship dispute between two individuals; and two interventions involved Safe Streets staff persuading individuals known or believed to have guns to put them away and be safe. No shots were fired in any of the five conflicts and/or interventions. All mediations resulted in the conflicts being resolved, with two requiring follow up to ensure that conditions for conflict resolution¹ are met.

In addition to conflict mediation and intervention to prevent violence, an important component of the Safe Streets work is connecting people at highest risk with social services, resources, and employment opportunities, thereby addressing underlying conditions that drive violence. Traditional social support systems often fail to reach the population served by Safe Streets; violence interrupters engage where others cannot, connecting community members resources that would otherwise be unattainable. Safe Streets leadership maintains a partnership with BPD

¹ Definition - Conflict Resolved as long as Certain Conditions are Met: A compromise has been agreed upon and as long as both uphold the compromise, the conflict will remain resolved. (Ex. Two individuals are fighting over a girl. The compromise is neither date her. As long as they keep their word, they will not fight.)

	Conflict and/or Intervention	Outcome	Shots Fired?
1	Argument between groups	Resolved	No
2	Relationship dispute	Resolved	No
3	Individual exposed previously concealed weapon	Resolved*	No
4	Argument between groups	Resolved*	No
5	Individual thought to have a gun	Resolved	No

**Resolved as long as certain conditions are met*

that includes getting referrals from BPD of individuals who could benefit from Safe Streets outreach and connections to services.

As of January 2023, Baltimore’s 10 Safe Streets sites are administered by two community-based organizations – Associated Catholic Charities and LifeBridge Health. MONSE provides regular technical assistance to each site’s staff and leadership with the goal of ensuring that the Safe Streets program operates with high fidelity to the Cure Violence model. The agency’s oversight priorities include 1) workforce safety, 2) accountability of the program, 3) staff training and development, 4) workforce morale, and 5) overall program efficacy.

II. Timing of Data Entry – Brooklyn Safe Streets Conflict Mediations from July 1

Brooklyn violence interrupters entered information from their July 1 conflict mediations on July 11 and July 12. The table below indicates the date and time of each mediation entry.

Date of Conflict ▼	Creation Date ▼
07/01/2023	07/11/2023 3:45 PM
07/01/2023	07/11/2023 7:17 PM
07/01/2023	07/12/2023 9:21 PM
07/01/2023	07/12/2023 9:46 PM
07/01/2023	07/12/2023 10:00 PM

III. Written Answers Provided by Catholic Charities to MONSE Prior to the Hearing

MONSE did not receive formal written responses from Catholic Charities to the committee's questions prior to the hearing. Included below is the only official written communication received from Catholic Charities regarding the mass shooting:

Background of Safe Streets

Safe Streets operates an evidence-based, public health model of violence prevention. Our job is

to use our long-standing relationships within the community to prevent the NEXT shooting by intervening in conflicts, “beefs”, and teaching peaceful means of resolution. In doing so sensitive information which is often well-known among community members is shared with our team members, who are trusted and credible messengers to keep the community safe. If our teams were to pass this information on to police, it would have two significant results:

- It would reduce the likelihood of information being shared with our team, which will directly impact future negotiations where we have the chance of saving lives.*
- It would put the lives and safety of our team members and the communities they work in at a greater risk of violence.*

This boundary is well-established and is one of the primary underpinnings of the model, and without it the program could not be successful.

Brooklyn Day – Safe Streets’ Involvement

There were four Safe Streets Brooklyn staff members who went to the Brooklyn Day event after 9pm, after covering traditional hotspots around the community earlier in the shift. Upon arriving, there were opportunities to intervene in a few minor conflicts; none directly involving any guns. Several members of our staff’s family attended this traditionally family friendly event as they are residents of the community. Upon their shift ending at 11pm, the staff left the event around 11:30.

Once the Safe Street’s staff heard of the shooting they immediately returned to the scene, remaining on-site and, or at the hospitals where victims, including their loved ones were being treated until 5am. The team returned to the scene at 10 am the following morning to continue to support the community.

Follow up

Catholic Charities is proud of our team members in Brooklyn. They, like so many others including their own families, were directly impacted, injured, and traumatized by this event. We will continue to surround our Safe Streets teams with support so that they can continue to do the work they are passionate about which is reducing gun violence in the city the know and call home.

IV. Contracts with Catholic Charities and LifeBridge for the Administration of Safe Streets Sites

The Board of Estimates-approved contracts with LifeBridge Health Center for Hope and Catholic Charities are included as an attachment to this email. Note: These contracts include funding for ten sites over a 3-year period and include budgeted one-time costs in FY23 associated with the transition of new sites to new site administrators.

V. (Forthcoming) Report on Safe Streets Mediations - Including Successful Mediations and Those Where the Conflict Escalated to Violence

MONSE requires additional time to analyze the data from all 10 Safe Streets sites and produce a report on mediation processes and outcomes, as requested by the Committee. This information will be shared as soon as the data analysis is complete.
