

City Of St. Louis, Business, Civic And Community Leaders Come Together To Form Downtown Engagement And Public Safety Initiative

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ST. LOUIS - Today, Mayor Tishaura announced the formation of a new initiative composed of downtown civic, business, governmental, and community leaders to activate downtown's cultural potential while improving public safety.

The group - the Downtown Engagement and Public Safety Initiative - will engage stakeholders across downtown St. Louis to improve public safety while presenting a positive vision for an activated and engaged cultural destination.

“An idle downtown is a troublemaker's workshop, and we need to develop a positive, not punitive, vision for how downtown St. Louis fits within the fabric of our entire city. Government cannot bear this burden alone, and the City looks forward to working alongside civic, business, and community leaders to make our downtown a place where residents can feel safe and enjoy all the great amenities it has to offer, from Busch Stadium to the iconic Gateway Arch,” said Mayor Tishaura O. Jones. “While we are stepping up enforcement downtown immediately, we’re putting together long-term solutions to activate downtown St. Louis in new ways to make it an engaging, safe destination for youth, families, residents, and visitors alike. Revitalizing downtown will be a team effort that takes into account the complexity of the issues we’re facing and thinks beyond just short-term enforcement.”

With disturbances at their highest levels over weekends, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department will increase police presence downtown Friday night through Sunday morning with 30 roving and fixed-post officers and more strictly enforce parking regulations and park curfews. The City will evaluate the effectiveness of these policies with Initiative members and make further steps accordingly after a 6-week period. In the longer term, the Initiative will address infrastructure needs to make downtown more appealing while planning cultural and artistic events, like concerts and art installations, to enhance downtown St. Louis as a true regional destination.

“Downtown St. Louis is critical to the long-term performance of our metro. It is a regional employment, sports, recreational, cultural, and residential neighborhood. It also has an outsized impact on the metro reputation in the global competition for jobs and talent. A vibrant, inclusive, and safe Downtown benefits everyone,” said Greater STL, Inc. Director Jason Hall. “The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the vibrancy of Downtown in St. Louis and cities across the country as the economic drivers were adversely impacted. The violence and shootings Downtown must be addressed through a comprehensive approach. On behalf of the regional business community, Greater St. Louis, Inc. is rolling up its sleeves to work with Mayor Jones, law enforcement, Downtown stakeholders, and others to enhance public safety Downtown and continue the implementation of the recently adopted Design Downtown STL neighborhood plan. Our region will thrive only if Downtown St. Louis thrives. The success of Downtown St. Louis is a regional economic priority.”

Initiative members will meet on a consistent basis with public weekly briefings to provide the public with information regarding upcoming opportunities and updates on progress. A copy of the list of Initiative members is attached. Aldermanic leaders will receive consistent briefings and will be invited to serve in an ex officio capacity.

The formation of the Downtown Engagement and Public Safety Initiative comes after the City cited downtown bars for underage drinking and public nuisance in the preceding weeks. While homicide rates are at a 5-year low, down 35 percent from last year, Mayor Jones' administration continues to work to address root causes of crime and improve public safety. The mayor's initial round of federal American Rescue Plan funding included \$11.5 million for community violence intervention initiatives, youth programming and jobs, and social workers.