

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
JUNE 11, 2024

The City Council of the City of Goldsboro, North Carolina, met in a Special Meeting to discuss gun violence in Wayne County and the City of Goldsboro on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, City Hall, 214 North Center Street, Goldsboro, North Carolina.

Call to Order. Mayor Gaylor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The invocation was provided by Father David Wyly and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call.

Present: Mayor Charles Gaylor, IV, Presiding
Mayor Pro Tem Brandi Matthews
Councilwoman Hiawatha Jones
Councilman Chris Boyette
Councilwoman Jamie Taylor
Councilwoman Beverly Weeks
Councilman Rod White

Also Present: Matthew Livingston, Interim City Manager
Laura Getz, City Clerk
Mike West, Police Chief

Mayor Gaylor opened the meeting and shared comments regarding the recent uptick in crime. Mayor Gaylor also recognized members from the Commission on Community Relations and Development, Sherrif Larry Pierce and other dignitaries in the room.

Chief Mike West shared the presentation attached as *Exhibit A*.

He shared the following: Part 1 crimes are made up of 8 other crimes: violent crimes or homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, property crimes or B&E's, larceny, vehicle theft and arson.

For seven consecutive years, from 2015 to 2021, we dropped crime consecutively for those seven years. In 2022, we saw a 13% increase and in 2023, we saw another 21% increase. For 2022 and 2023, we've increased 34% in our part one crime. Part 1 crimes, violent crimes, have kind of steadied over the last four years. Part 1 crimes make up roughly about 86-87% of our overall crime. Violent crime makes up about 13 to 14% and that's been pretty consistent the last four years. For 2024 we're trending for about a 14% increase in overall Part 1 crimes. Our violent crimes are trending down just a little. We are trending now to come in at about 11% violent crime.

Chief West reviewed the maps in the presentation and shared information regarding ShotSpotter. He shared that in 2023, there were 963 alerts throughout the year in that area, that's 5,318 rounds fired. That's averaging 5 rounds per incident in 2023. 2024 year to date, so far, we've had 299 alerts, 1,498 rounds fired. That's roughly about 5 rounds per incident.

He shared the following comments regarding recent gun violence: On Saturday, May 25th, 300 block of East Elm St. at a residence, at approximately 6:00 PM, one individual was shot during an argument or confrontation and died of his injuries. On Wednesday, June 5th in the 1600 block of South John Street at a residence, two individuals, known to each other, engage in what we believe to be an assault. Both subjects were armed, they shot each other. One victim was then taken by a private vehicle over to the 300 block of Hollowell Street where he died of his injuries, the other victim survived. On Friday, June 7th, 1800 block of Ash Street at the Food Lion, at approximately 1:30 PM, individuals known to each other, confront each other inside the business and as they both began to exit the business, one turns, shoots the other one, almost killing him instantly. Saturday, June 8th, 1800 block of Wayne Memorial Drive, at Burger King, approximately 9:49 AM, one individual was injured when he accidentally discharged his firearm and shot himself.

He thanked Sheriff Pierce for attending the meeting and shared information regarding mutual aid with the Wayne County Sheriff's office and comments regarding the former REACT team. He also shared information regarding other agencies that assist the Goldsboro Police Department including: the U.S. Attorney's office, SBI, ALE, ATF, U.S. Marshall and SBI.

He shared the short-term plan of what's going to get us through this is you're going to see more officers in these neighborhoods and you're going to see deputies with us. Chief West shared comments regarding seeking the communities and local organizations assistance. He shared we have to do something to get this under control and the community has a lot of resources that we need to utilize. He shared we've got to have programs in place we've got to go after and help the

young people. He shared when we dropped the crime for seven years we had SRO's in the schools and he wants the officers back in the schools because his SRO's will be engaged with these young people during the week and we'll also be engaging them on the weekends and during the summer.

He shared we have got to do something but not just law enforcement is going to fix it, we can manage it and we can work through it, but we've got to have the community step up. City leaders have got to step up, community leaders have got to step up. We've got to get into the schools now and get these young people and mentor them, get them through parks and recreation during the summer. He shared he always hears people say there's nothing to do in Goldsboro, but there's a lot of people that can't get to where they need to go to participate in things so there's a transportation issue but he knows we're smart enough to figure it out and what he's asking for from Council and also from the community is to help us get to where we need to be.

Mayor Gaylor asked the Chief what he needed from him. Chief West shared the thing he needs most is transparency.

Councilwoman Taylor asked about the REACT team. Chief West shared information regarding the team.

Councilman White discussed holding the Goldsboro Housing Authority Board and CEO accountable for crime in the housing authority.

Councilwoman Jones asked about the number of crime hot spots. Chief West shared there were approximately 5 areas. ShotSpotter was also discussed.

Councilwoman Weeks asked about the Housing Authority paying for police presence. She also asked about the abatement process. Chief West shared several years ago, the police received a 3-year grant which allowed them to put officers in the housing authority. He shared when the grant ran out, they maintained the officers and called it a housing unit. He shared staffing has affected the police officer presence at the housing authority. Chief West also shared the abatement process.

Councilwoman Taylor asked what percentage of crimes are coming from the housing authority. Chief West shared approximately 70% of the ShotSpotter data comes from those communities.

Councilwoman Taylor and Chief West discussed the police department serving warrants.

Mayor and Councilmember's Comments

Councilman White shared the following: Thank you to everybody for coming out to participate and show their concern for our community. Crime has been a problem in our city for a while now and I think that we're failing to address the root cause of our crime problem, which is poverty and the underperforming schooling system. Lack of economic development is also a recourse of our crime problem and we're still moving forward without a plan to revitalize our low to moderately income neighborhoods. We must be intentional with improving the entire city, we must make a concerted effort to not continue to leave the South side of Goldsboro behind while others move forward. The plan to beef up the Police department is great and is greatly needed. I understand that but I disagree with chief just a little bit and we can't police our way out of this. It has to be a concerted plan that everybody is involved, and everybody has some type of glimmer of hope. I think that we need to hold the parents of these teenagers and juveniles accountable. I don't know what that looks like but when I was going to school it was called truancy, so when you couldn't get the kid, you got the parent, and the parent held the kid accountable so we must begin to go back to things that work. We need to begin to hold the Housing Authority accountable for the actions that happened on their property.

Councilwoman Weeks shared the following: I echo everything you said. This is really not a police issue, but this is a community issue, it's going to take all of us, it takes a village. Often, I'm with the men in jail on Thursdays and they will say, Miss Beverly, I did not have a father figure, I don't know what it's like to have a mother figure and so we've got to start rallying around the youth in our city as well and start mentoring them. It's going to take all of us, the churches, the businesses, everyone needs to get involved. 100%, I believe we need to hold the Goldsboro Housing Authority accountable, and they need to step up and be a part of the solution. Prayer changes things and if you believe in prayer, I'm here to tell you that it works. I don't have all the solutions. As a matter of fact, I'm sitting up here and I'm looking at so many wise people in this audience and I think wow I would really love to hear what you have to say. I don't have all the solutions, but I want to tell you I serve a God who has the solutions and I say it is time for our people, the people of this city, to cry out because he says if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from them and I will heal their land and so I'm asking our city to join together in prayer. I know it's going to take solutions; it's going to take coming together with the Police department and Sheriff's department but I'm telling you one thing that's wrong with this city is we have turned from God and until we turn back towards God we're going to have an even worse situation.

Mayor Pro Tem Matthews thanked Councilman White and Councilwoman Weeks for their comments and shared

the following: First thing that I want to say is, I represent the South end of Goldsboro. I grew up in the South end of Goldsboro. My heart is and forever will be with those people on the South end of Goldsboro so when I speak, my words will be primarily focused towards them and what we can do to better serve them. As I look out in this audience, I see a little bit of everybody, from a little bit of everywhere and I want to be surprised but crime shouldn't have to creep across streets and districts for everybody to care. I need you to care all the time and I need you to invest all the time because that's what's going to change things. I attended a rally last year and so many people were outraged, and they showed up and some people came and stood before this Council and said I'm going to come to every meeting until you do something. That's the accountability that we need as leaders, that's the accountability that you need as residents and community leaders in your respective organizations. I see a little bit of every organization in here. I need you to show up all the time. I want to specifically speak to this board like I have done for every year that I've sat here. What are we going to do because there have been initiatives that have come before this board, there have been ideas and solutions but because of the messenger, the message was missed and here we are again. There are mothers, I talked to a couple today. I talked to a father today. I've talked to nieces, brothers, family and friends of these victims. How do we plan to support them? I'm all for stopping the violence but there's some people that are hurting and how do we support them? How do we offer support? How do we show up for them? I'm not expecting Chief West and Sheriff Pierce to dispatch their troops out into these streets. I'm expecting to dispatch all of us into the streets because some of us go but it's not enough. It's not enough to see Richard Taylor show up on Mondays for an after-school program in the Grand because let's call it the Grand because that's what it is. I don't want us to keep talking about this neighborhood on the South end and then let's give it names. It's called the Grand at Day Point, that's what it is and those people in there are somebody. They're special. We want to talk about God, they're all God's children. He loves us all, but they need opportunities. They need access to quality stores, grocery, gas, all the things, so while we welcome economic development into our community, we ought to hold our developers to a certain standard that says no more on the other end, let's go down here on the South end because those people need that. I will stand in front of anybody and say we will not abate that store down there on the South end, not yet. Why, because then they'll have nothing. So, why don't we pull our resources together and Chief is working on this and thank you Chief for working on setting up a meeting with that store owner to say how can we support you, how can we upfit this store, how can we get these dusty Laffy Taffy's and old expired sodas off your shelves so our people got something, because after 6:00 the buses don't run. Some of our people, that's all they've got. We've got to figure out what that looks like and I'm calling on all y'all to make it happen. I'm just one voice and one vote and oftentimes I'm out heard, and I'm outnumbered in the votes, and I can't get much done, but with you I can. So, I'm asking this board what are we going to do to support these families. I heard one father say today sometimes all it takes is just a phone call to say I was thinking about you. You lost your son and the one thing that you want is for somebody to call and say, I was thinking about you. We can make all these grandiose statements and posts and it can be shared far and wide but until we get into the weeds of it and take some action, ain't much going to change. I also want to put some pressure on these organizations that are sent to help. Now is the time, now has been the time. I don't want to see any more bodies hitting the ground in any area of this city, but I know it's going to take more than these folks right here to make it happen because we've got ideas. But I want to hear from you, so I want to invite all of you to hang around a little while, because I want to hear from you on the steps after we get done here because you can't say anything right here in this setting but you've got a voice and I want to hear it so I want you to meet me on the steps and let's talk about. I'll stay here as long as you want to stay here but from that meeting something has to come out of it. I want you guys to hold us accountable, keep showing up, keep applying pressure, keep inviting us to your events. People say prayer vigils don't work, marches don't work. I'm willing to do anything at this point, any and everything. I talked about a curfew. Some people say what would a curfew help. It'll send a clear message that we are sick and tired of it, that's what it'll do and that's the one thing that we can do immediately. Policing is going to take some time. That's not an easy button, but I can implement a curfew that tells you I'm sick and tired of it and I'm going to take whatever extreme measure it takes to clean up some of these streets. If I had my way, I'd get this gun show out of our city that's coming up this weekend. District 4, I love you. There is a survey that has been circling around for the past 6 to 9 months now. There's been very few responses. I've shared it on my Councilwoman page and for those of you who are not following it, please follow that because I'm always sharing what we're doing and I'm sharing some things that I'm doing in the district and you're always welcome to come and be a part of those events but a lot of that survey said people were scared and we kind of heard that tonight, right. Some of you may be scared. I don't even know how I feel honestly but I want you to take that survey because what it does is, it helps us address the root cause, like Councilman White talked about because it's not just about the guns. We've got some mental health, we've got some education, but I know my folks on the South end, who I love dearly, they don't have access and I appreciate those of you who have brought sand to the beach. Thank you. There are some other questions I will pose at a later date, but I want to encourage you to stay behind. I have let the Council know that some organizations plan to stay behind so some of us will be there to hear you. Also, to the individuals that have been affected by this in any regard, please don't hesitate to let us know what you need and by God, if I can't do nothing else, I can call and check on you. If you know those family members, let us know how we can help them and how we can serve them while they transition through this difficult time. Thank you for being here and I love you and I'm still going to stand strong on, there is gold in Goldsboro.

Councilwoman Taylor shared the following: The thing I wanted to talk to you tonight was about accountability.

When I decided to run for this seat for District 3, I knew we faced long standing issues. A lot of times I think of my part of District 3 as the forgotten areas. These problems we have, they didn't just start yesterday. They've been building up for years due to our acceptance of less than what we deserve. We must adopt a proactive mindset, recognizing that change is both needed and warranted. Just because a neighborhood has always been a certain way for years doesn't mean it has to stay that way. By looking at the bigger picture, you'll see a path forward, even if it's not always clear. This evening, I want to talk about accountability. Not just for myself, but for our city, and for our citizens. Accountability to me means taking responsibility for our actions, recognizing that while we have the power to cause problems, we also have the power to fix them. If we want change, we must hold ourselves accountable and ensure others are held accountable too. If you contact me as your District 3 Rep and I drop the ball, let me know. If your family, your neighbor, or your local store is contributing to crime or dangerous conditions, speak up and let them know. If you see something in this city that needs to be addressed by Chief West, the mayor, the city manager, or any department head, speak up and let them know. Hold them accountable. It's a problem when crime becomes normalized in certain areas and we feel powerless to change it. No part of this city is better than another and no person is more valuable than anyone else. All of our lives matter whether we live in the South side of Goldsboro, Pill Hill or on Berkeley Boulevard. Crime is crime and the only way to reduce it is by being accountable and holding others accountable until we see change, even then, we cannot afford to become complacent. Get out of the mindset that reporting wrongdoing is snitching. Too many lives have been lost and too many murder cases remain unsolved. This is not okay, let's commit to accountability to each other and to our community.

Councilman Boyette shared the following: I would like I'd echo everything that I've heard. I completely agree and support every council member and their comments thus far, completely. As I've said many times this community deserves to feel safe in their home and on their streets no matter what and not one particular side of town, every corner of the city. The citizens deserve to be safe and feel safe and be safe in their community whatever it takes. One of the things that it's going to take, as you've heard this evening, is proactive law enforcement. Proactive law enforcement is necessary to start moving the needle and in order for proactive law enforcement to be successful, we have to have the support of the community. The community has to support the efforts of the law enforcement and I'd echo further the comments that were made in support of our police chief. You have my support, your officers have my support and any resources that you feel that you need to help move this needle, I'm in support of and again I agree with everything I've heard from each of my fellow council mates, and I appreciate everyone's comments.

Councilwoman Jones thanked everyone for being here and shared the following: I may be a little redundant but I'm going to say how I feel. I'm in District 1 and no, we have not had a lot of incidents like that, but it filtrates into my district. We cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that crime perpetuates a vicious cycle of leading and making broken families and shattered dreams and loss of opportunities. The effects of crime reverberate through generations, leaving scars for many decades on children. Every time someone dies, every time someone in that family dies, a child hurts, that family hurts, friends hurt. I have had a friend open a door and be shot so many times until they could not even transfer a body to the car, that's devastating and so are the lives of all these individuals that have passed. Children growing up in an environment that is plagued by violence and crime are most likely to repeat those patterns. They are, it's true, that's history. We have the power right in here, all of us in here and everybody that's listening. We have the power to change that, and we have to make a positive change for more prosperous communities. We must come together as a society, as neighbors, as a fellow human being, to tackle the root and cause of crime addressed by systemic inequalities. Education, economic empowerment, access to quality healthcare, and a strong sense of community, that is the pillar. I echo what my council people have said. By investing in our youth, having mentorship and supporting them. If you see a child, just speak to them. Just say hello. Tell them that they're beautiful. Sometimes that is the only time that child will ever hear that they're beautiful. We have to invest in our community, we have to invest in our children. Our adults must be adults. I'm telling you parents; you can't be sister friend. You've got to be a parent. You've got to be a parent first and you've got to teach them and lead them and be a role model for them and be someone that they will be able to look up to. I am challenging all the churches and I've done it on my Facebook page. I'm challenging all the churches to come together and pray. I'm going to tell you last summer we had deaths. We walked, we sang, we prayed, we had a hearse visual to shock everyone, but two weeks later where were we. We were back in our homes, some of us, doing nothing. How many people have called the lady whose young daughter was killed at the pool? How many of you after you did that walk, after you did your TV shot, where were you? After then did you call her? Did you go by, did you check on her? We need your help. We need the community. I created a crime watch in my district. I have about 15 or 25 people come. But do you know what the other ones say? They say, Ms. Hiawatha, I will tell you, I will call you, but I will not go to your meetings because I don't want anyone seeing me go in that meeting for that crime watch. We've got to do better. It is time for us to stand together. We must work together hand in hand to build a future where every child has an opportunity to learn, where every child feels safe, where every adult feels safe, and we've got to do it and we've got to do it now and I thank each and every one of you for being here tonight. It warms my heart to see you here and thank you.

Mayor Gaylor thanked Council for their time this evening and shared the following comments: To our other representatives, other elected officials from other communities; mayor, thank you so much for being here showing your support; commissioner, sheriff, other council members from other communities, I saw our register of deeds, I

believe I saw our clerk of court, there's true support for wanting to see change in Goldsboro, for wanting to see Goldsboro be what it is built and what it should be. I'm going to echo something that I said last year about this time, violence begets violence, and violence generates retaliation. I'm begging you, find a way, if you know something, get that information anonymously, I don't care if you put it on a paper airplane and drop it through a window, but get the information to the police, to the sheriff, so they can handle this the right way. I do not want to see retaliation and street justice where we have another body laying somewhere. We can do this the right way. We can honor these families by giving them true closure, which is justice through the criminal justice system. We can do this the right way. If you know something, I'm begging you, please step up. We've already discussed this evening what we're going to be doing on the policing side of things, that's important but as has been discussed eloquently, we have to look at the root causes. We have to look at economic development, we have to look at industry recruitment, we have to look at the work that our Chamber of Commerce does and being able to support and grow small businesses in and around our community. We have to look at the work the Development Alliance does, trying to recruit commercial and industrial enterprises, right here to be able to provide not just jobs but careers in Goldsboro. We have to look at what we're doing to support our schools. We have to look at what our nonprofits are doing to support our families. There's a tremendous amount of work that is going. I believe that it is good work, but as everyone is saying, there's room for more and we have to do more because otherwise, see everyone next year just like this, and we can't do that. To everyone who has been sending emails and phone calls, I know my inbox is flooded. You will all get a response. It's not going to be tonight. I so appreciate the energy, the commitment. You're going to get a response. It's going to take a few days. My commitment, my vision, something that was stated time after time, this Council, myself included, has a commitment to public safety. That of course involves the policing angle, it also involves the economic development angle and here's why. Because I believe that every single family member, every single child, deserves to be able to be safe in their bed. It does not matter to me the color of your skin, it does not matter to me if you rent, it doesn't matter to me if you own, it does not matter to me if you are in a hotel. What matters to me is that you can sleep safely and be prepared to go to school the next day, go to work the next day, whatever it is that you can be prepared to do. Council, community, thank you so much for being here tonight. Those that would like to gather, the steps to City Hall are open. Please do converse, talk through options. Members of our Community Relations and Development Committee, stick around if you're able to. Get some input, find out folks that want to get involved and then help me get them involved.

Mayor Gaylor adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.




Charles Gaylor, IV
Mayor


Laura Getz, MMC/NCCMC
City Clerk

GOLDSBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Michael D. West, Chief of Police

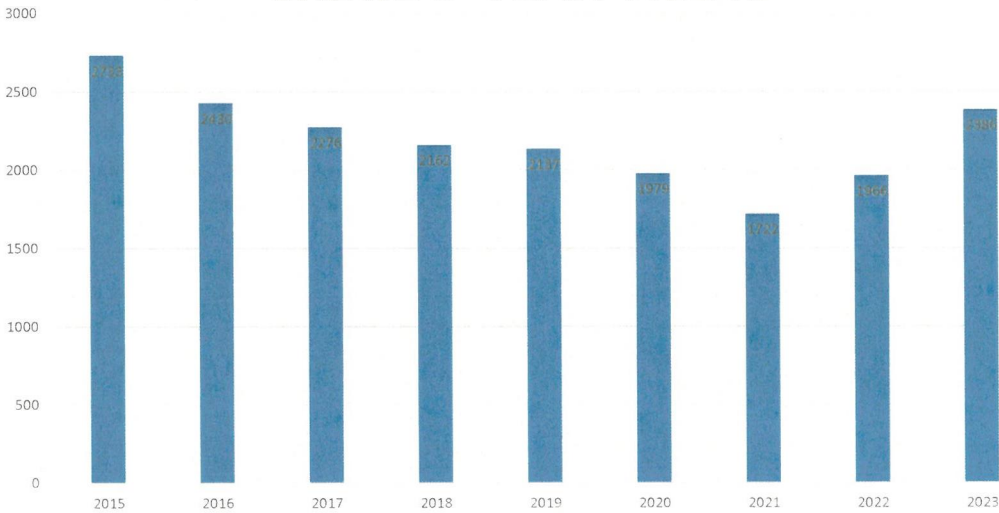
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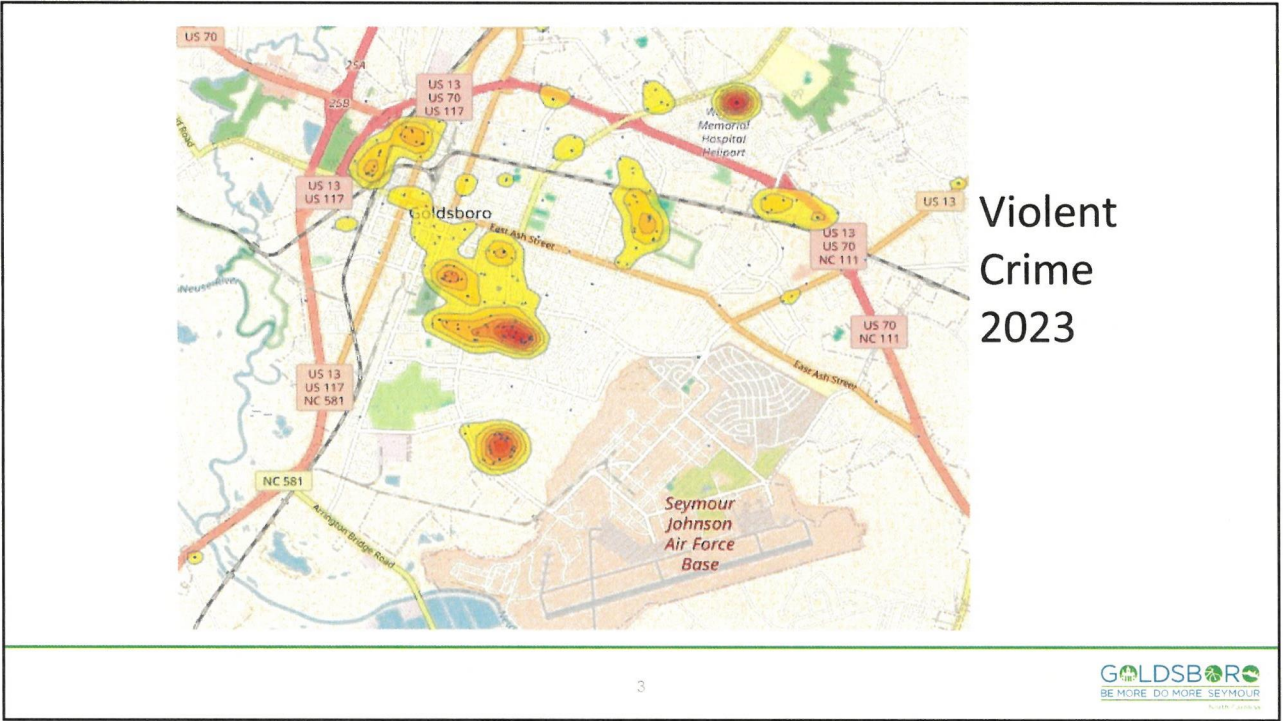
CRIME 9-YEAR TREND



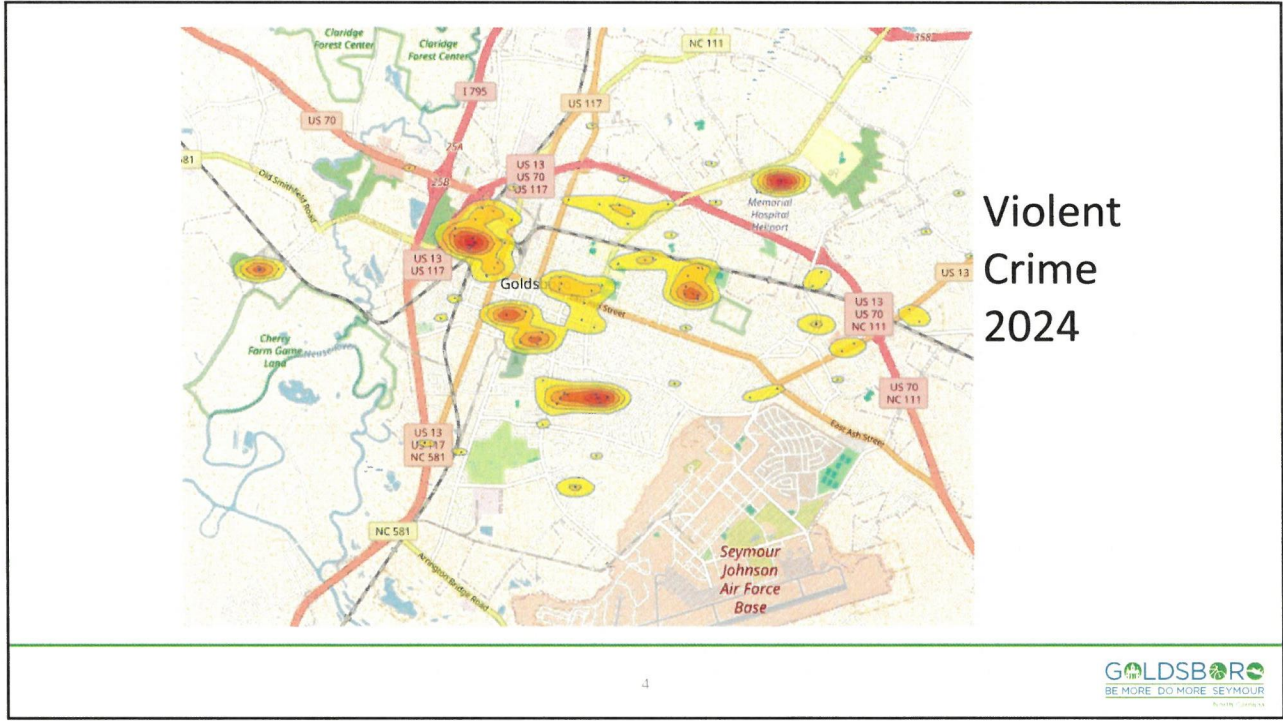
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Thank you for your time.

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