

The Team

City Manager's Office, CPD District One, PIVOT & CAPS teams, Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC), City Law, Buildings, Fire, Economic Development, Transportation and Engineering, Wesley Chapel Mission Center, Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), Our Daily Bread, Mary Magdalen House, St. Francis Seraph Church, St. Anthony Center, Cornerstone Renter Equity, 3CDC, Model Management, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, & others.

A special thank you to WCPO and Larry Seward for a series of reports on PIVOT efforts in OTR (links below).

Introduction

Place-Based Investigations of Violent Offender Territories (PIVOT) is a strategy developed in Cincinnati to address small areas where violence has been chronic and sustained. The strategy focuses on identifying place networks that facilitate violence. PIVOT's goal is to disrupt offenders' ability to harm individuals and the community, using a problem-oriented approach that capitalizes on place network disruption in addition to traditional offender-oriented responses.

The PIVOT strategy was launched in the spring of 2016 in Cincinnati. By 2020, it had been implemented in eight locations across the city. This strategy has shown promise, as the first five sites saw substantial declines in shootings and violent crime which correlated with PIVOT implementation. Referred to as "Place Network Investigations" (PNI) outside of Cincinnati, this strategy has recently been launched in several other cities throughout the United States. It requires close coordination and support from a wide range of city departments, community groups, invested residents, and business owners.

Problem Identification

Between 2019 and 2020, shootings in the Over-the-Rhine (OTR) neighborhood of Cincinnati dramatically increased (+ 67%). While there have been longstanding challenges with gun violence, particularly in the northern section of OTR, this significant spike further escalated community concern, and these incidents presented capacity challenges for regular district operations and routine crime reduction approaches. Shootings continued at a very high rate in 2021. For this reason, CPD leaders launched the PIVOT strategy in OTR, by January of 2022. This project is continuing today.

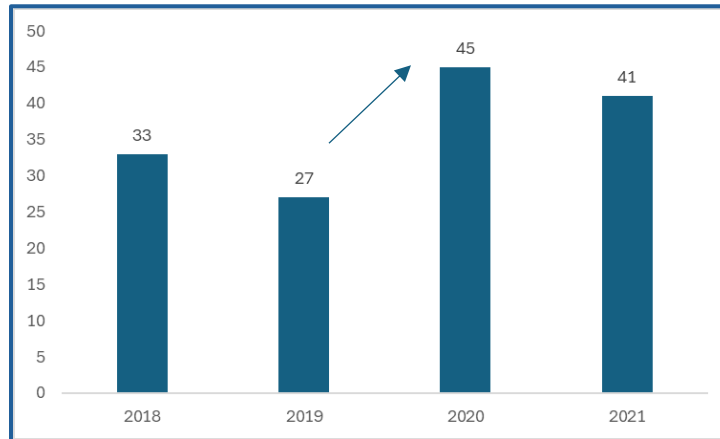
[Cincinnati Police move to counter violence on OTR street](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVWg2dBO15s)

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(click on link to be routed to WCPO story #1)

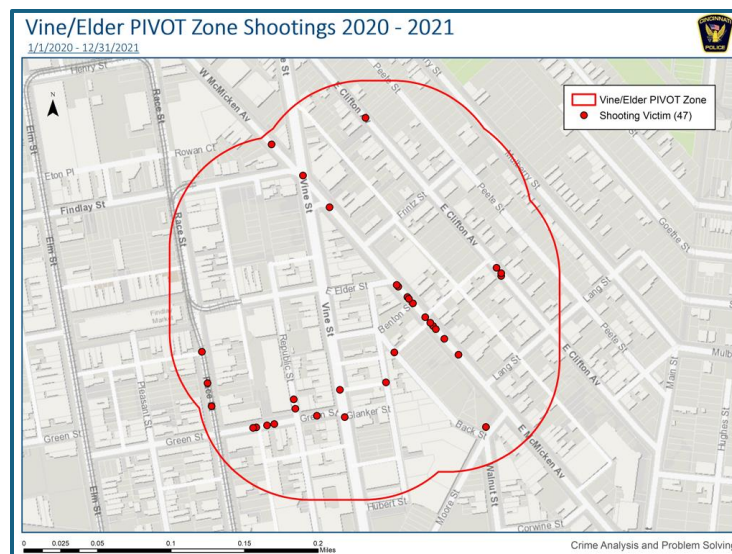
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Gunshot Victims: OTR



Analysis

Careful analysis of the area further highlighted the concentration of shooting victimization in a small area in north OTR, specifically drawing attention to a segment of E. McMicken Avenue, and segments of nearby Green and Race Streets. City officials began to convene meetings with local partners and residents, to discuss challenges in this area, to seek additional information, and to begin creating a stronger response framework.

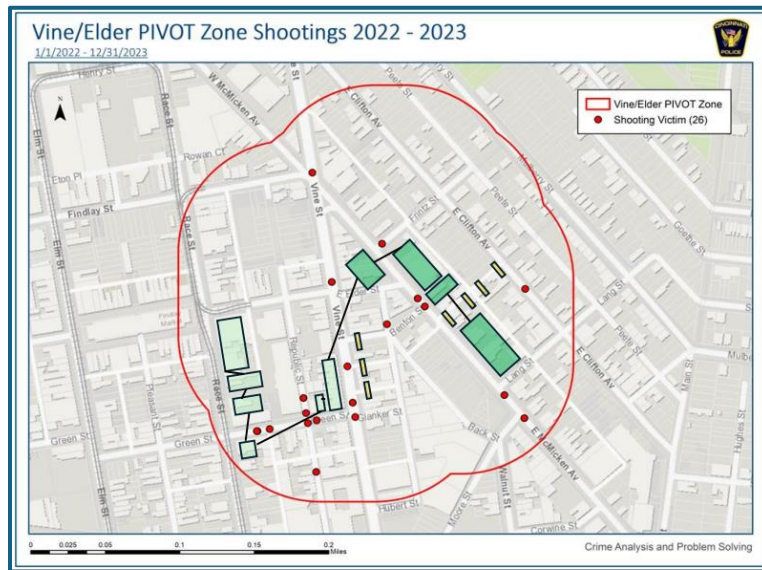


Place Network Identification

Additional analysis, observation, and community conversations led to the conclusion that a network of places was being used by active offenders to support illicit activity nearby, including drug trafficking and violent crimes. It should be noted that place network

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identification was an ongoing process which developed over months, that networks can have some fluidity, and that the existence of a place as a part of a network is not, absent other known factors, suggestive of any wrongdoing on the part of the property owner or manager. It is, however, suggestive that offenders capitalize on environmental aspects of the place to facilitate crime nearby, and that steps may be taken to increase the difficulty of offending by changing aspects of the place.



Responses and Place Network Disruption

The PIVOT strategy's design is based upon identification and disruption of crime supporting elements of a network of places while traditional law enforcement efforts continue. This process could be described as conducting a series of problem-solving projects at the same time, at multiple places that are interdependent on one another. Most interventions are resource intensive. Some of the most significant interventions are listed in the pages that follow. Less significant interventions are not included in this summary. Two of the interventions, while mentioned here, are more completely presented in separate documents that discuss and evaluate their impact independent of the larger project.

70-80 E. McMicken Avenue

In late 2021, as planning for PIVOT OTR was underway, District One officers began to study a series of buildings on E. McMicken Avenue with a common owner, Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH). These properties, including 70, 72, 76, and 80 E. McMicken, were located on the street segment with the greatest spatial concentration of gunshot victims in the OTR PIVOT area, and in the entire city as well.

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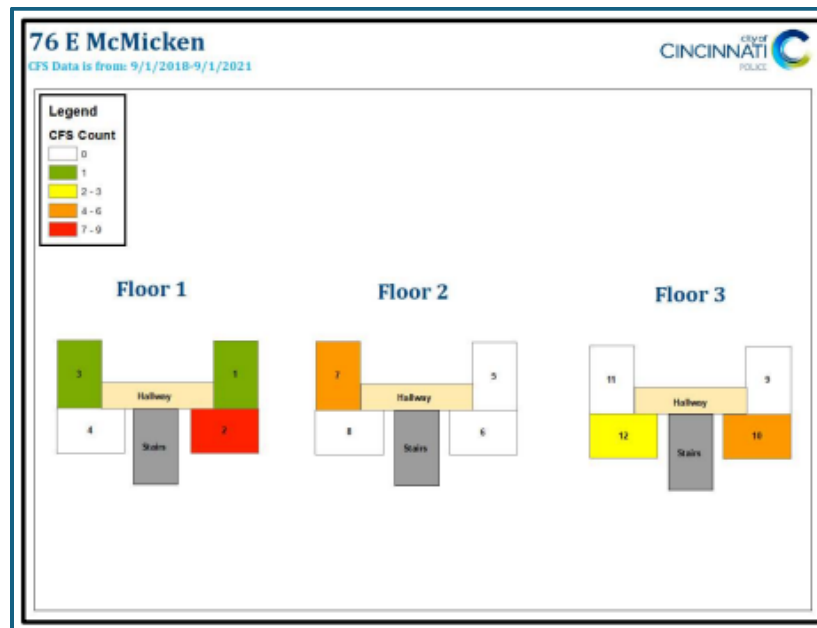
After many informal and formal attempts to work with the property owners to address conditions at these addresses which were thought to allow for crime and violence to occur nearby, District One conducted a full property analysis including a CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) assessment, and a detailed analysis of calls and crime reported – by apartment unit – within each of the buildings. Officers photographed deficiencies, including broken door locks, electrical hazards and lighting conditions, and gave special attention to physical characteristics that might benefit offenders. Officers also conducted a “near neighbor” comparison, after identifying a very similar property several blocks away which suffered 33% fewer offenses, 66% fewer violent crimes, and twenty-times fewer gunshot victimizations than these properties.



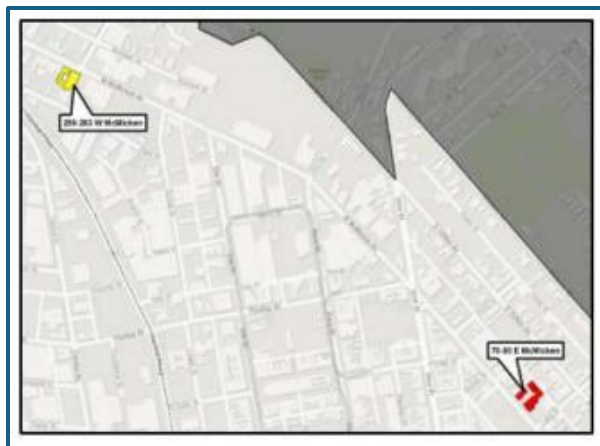
This information was compiled into a twenty-page assessment report and delivered to the property owner by the City’s Law Department, with a list of nine explicit recommendations including: improving access control, adding security cameras, improving lighting, cleaning and maintaining the buildings, beautifying the properties, eliminating the existing laundry facility, reviewing and improving lease and house rules, improving tenant engagement, and continuing to review and assess high-frequency callers.

Following this report, the property owners made numerous changes to the property consistent with recommendations, and collaboration with the City improved in relation to public safety efforts at these locations.

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Near Neighbor Comparison:



Offense Comparison		
Location	70-80 E McMicken	259-263 W McMicken
Violent Offenses	6	2
Total Offenses	25	16

CFS Comparison		
Location	70-80 E McMicken	259-263 W McMicken
Total CFS	227	97

Block Shooting Comparison		
Data from 9/1/2018-9/1/2021		
Block	0 block of E MCMICKEN AV	200 block of W MCMICKEN AV
Total Shootings	21	1

50 E. McMicken Avenue

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (KCB) and community volunteers cleaned an alleyway next to 50 E. McMicken, which was known to be used for illicit activity and had signs of gun violence, including bullets and shell casings. After the cleanup, the owner barricaded the alleyway to deter future use. KCB also painted over gang graffiti on the front of the building.

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[Volunteers hope cleanup in OTR changes crime hot spot](https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/hamilton-county/cincinnati/over-the-rhine/volunteers-police-hope-cleanup-in-otr-changes-perception-of-crime-hot-spot)

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(click on link to be routed to WCPO story #2)

40 E. McMicken Avenue

Officers collaborated with a local nonprofit operator of 40 E. McMicken, and recommended lighting improvements, cleaning of the front courtyard, and closer collaboration with District One officers, to more appropriately address trespass and drug-related concerns nearby. All recommendations were implemented.

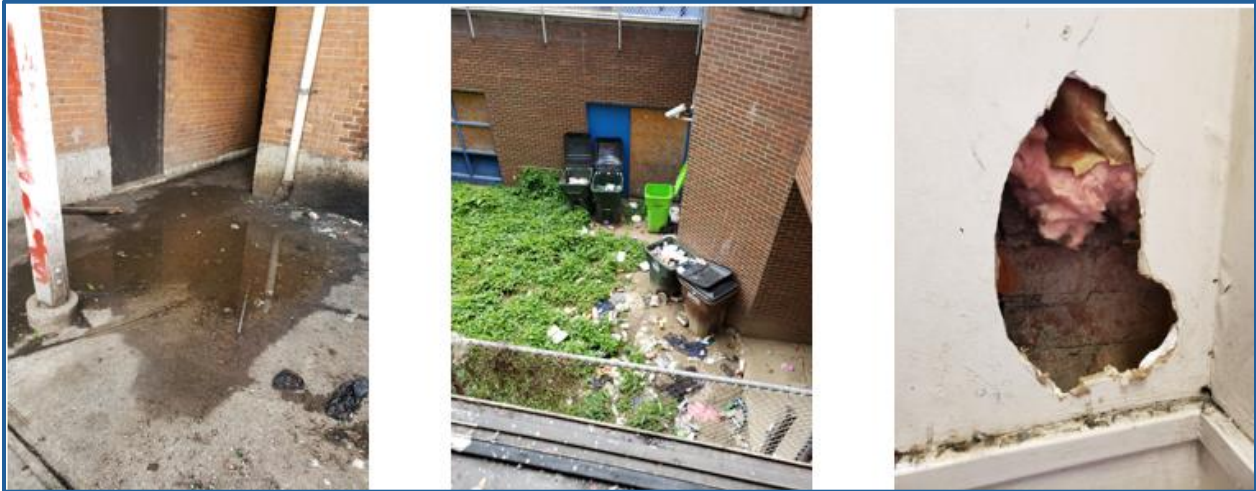
54 E. McMicken Avenue

CPD, Health, and Buildings Departments worked together to address a variety of code compliance issues at this property. Again, evidence of gun violence and illicit activity was noted here, after ammunition was recovered nearby and graffiti was present on the front of the building. Officers frequently noted that offenders were capitalizing on the building design (curb setback) to conceal their activities. After little progress, the City's Law Department engaged with the building owner, who chose to vacate the property until appropriate repairs could be completed.

1708-1724 Race Street

As the OTR PIVOT project progressed, conditions at a series of properties in the 1700 block of Race Street drew the team's attention. Cincinnati's Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) owns and manages the properties. CMHA representatives agreed to partner with the PIVOT team, and a comprehensive review of these multi-family apartment buildings began. The City's Buildings, Health, Fire, and Police Departments all worked to review and document conditions, and they made recommendations for improvement.

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CMHA made substantive changes and improvements, which included vacation of 1716 Race for several months so that mechanical systems could be replaced. CMHA added security cameras to these properties.

Challenges related to drug trafficking and crime continue here. Some improvements have been noted regarding quality-of-life issues. Trash management has improved, and rodent abatement efforts have improved conditions for some time.

40-60 E. McMicken Avenue

In the fall of 2022, after months without a shooting on E. McMicken, two separate shootings occurred at the same spot within days of one another. In response to this, and to complaints that drug traffickers were gathering here, CPD implemented temporary parking restrictions and added a mobile light tower for several weeks. Frequent directed patrols were conducted by District One uniformed officers.

33 Green Street

District One's Violent Crimes Squad conducted a drug trafficking investigation over the course of several weeks, which led to the execution of a search warrant, by CPD's SWAT team. One tenant was arrested and charged with drug and weapon offenses. Drugs and a firearm were confiscated.

1701 Vine Street

District One's Violent Crimes Squad conducted a monthslong investigation into a suspected illegal bar operating at 1701 Vine Street. In addition to liquor law violations, numerous violent crimes occurred nearby, which included a gunfight in front of the address and

several shots fired incidents. This investigation culminated in the execution of a search warrant by CPD's SWAT team. Drugs and a firearm were confiscated during the warrant, as was evidence of liquor and health violations.

Following this investigation, the City of Cincinnati filed a public nuisance action against the property owner and other associates. Numerous property improvements were agreed upon during settlement of the nuisance action, intended to improve public safety at the address and nearby. The commercial space was ordered vacant and barricaded.

12 Green Street

A vacant multi-family apartment building at the corner of Green and Republic Streets drew the attention of investigators due to drug activity, weapon activity, and public disorder. Offenders broke into the property and ran an extension cord to the outside to charge cell phones and speakers. Officers located drug paraphernalia on nearby window ledges, and they observed graffiti on the property. Initial requests to property owners to secure the property were addressed. However, problems at this location continued. The City filed a public nuisance action, and ultimately entered into a settlement agreement which included property rehabilitation activities.

1715 Republic Street

Across from 12 Green Street is the back of the City's Over-the-Rhine Recreation Center, which has very little natural surveillance. The property was built with an overhang, which has been used as a point of congregation for those engaged in public disorder, drug trafficking, and violence. Natural surveillance is limited here, in part due to the design of this building. Two homicides occurred here in a short period of time. The city took action to limit criminal opportunities by physically redesigning this portion of the building. First, a temporary fence was installed to deny access to the area under the overhang. Next, a permanent wall was installed that eliminated the overhang. Finally, additional exterior lighting was installed to provide enhanced illumination.

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Green Street & Republic Street*

CPD's PIVOT team implemented a temporary street barricade at the intersection of Green and Republic Streets for six months during 2024, as a part of the PIVOT intervention. Barricades prevented thru-traffic on Republic Street at Green Street. The purpose was to hamper open air drug market activity, by disrupting a primary driving route for drug purchasers. *This project is presented in more detail in a separate problem-solving project summary.

1646 Vine

CPD's PIVOT and District One teams, and City Law, met with the owners of a local market near Green and Vine Streets. The market owners agreed to a "good neighbor" agreement, voluntarily limiting early hours of alcohol sales, and pledging to cooperate with law enforcement and ensure working CCTV cameras.

1729 Race Street

A vacant parcel of land at this address was temporarily fenced off, denying use of the space for drug activities and public disorder.

Bus Stop at 1729 Race Street*

CPD and City Transportation representatives secured an agreement from the Regional Metro bus transportation organization (Cincinnati METRO) to remove seating from this bus stop for a temporary period of about 90 days, to intervene on drug and public nuisance behaviors here. The stop's shelter remained in place. *This intervention is presented in more detail in a separate problem-solving summary which includes analysis and assessment.

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Saint Francis Seraph Church – W. Liberty Street & Vine Street*

Church leaders and police partnered to improve conditions in front of the church, which included public order problems, assaults, and violence. *This intervention may be presented in more detail in a separate problem-solving summary in 2025.

Alleyways in PIVOT OTR

In 2018, Cincinnati Police coordinated with Law and the City Manager's Office and closed Sharp Alley as a dangerous pedestrian pathway that was frequently the site of drug activity and violent crime. In 2020, as PIVOT began planning for project work here, The City Manager's Office approved an additional request from CPD and Law to close Glanker Street, Specht Alley, and Schedel Alleys with gates. This proposal had overwhelming support from nearby residents who were surveyed. It was also supported by the OTR Community Council and Grant Park Block Watch. All three of these small alleyways are near one another, and they were identified as thoroughfares that facilitated drug activity and allowed violent offenders to escape detection. As with other PIVOT interventions, these alley closures were designed to make offending more difficult here.

Additional Interventions

DOTE completed a lighting assessment throughout north OTR, then upgraded approximately 250 lights in the West end and in this OTR PIVOT area, to enhanced LED. This effort reduced dark spaces that offenders capitalize on when committing crimes.

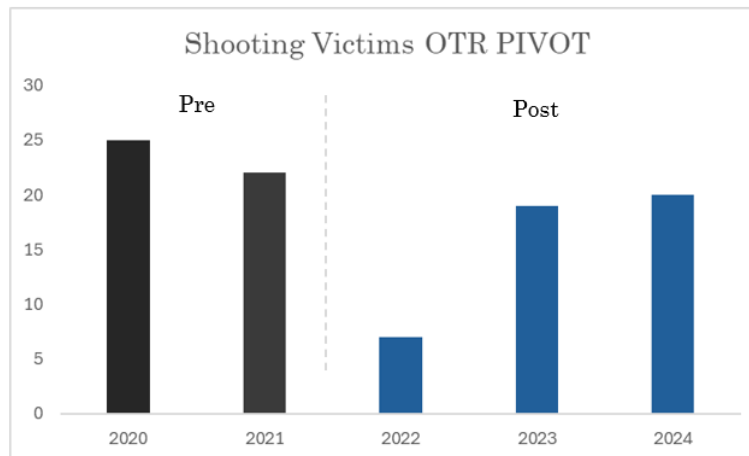
[CPD initiative in OTR sees improvements in violent crime, shootings](https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/hamilton-county/cincinnati/over-the-rhine/police-initiative-in-over-the-rhine-sees-improvements-in-violent-crime-shootings)

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(click on link to be routed to WCPO story #3)

Assessment

The OTR PIVOT strategy's primary goal is to reduce shooting victimization. Shootings victim counts averaged 23.5 in the two years prior to the strategy's launch. In year one of this program (2022), there was a dramatic drop, to 7 gunshot victims. Years two and three saw higher shooting counts than year one (19 and 20) but still fewer each year than pre-PIVOT levels. By July of 2025, two shootings occurred in OTR's PIVOT area year-to-date. Several shootings occurred outside of the PIVOT project area, but in close proximity. At the time of this writing, shooting victim counts in the OTR PIVOT area are down 75% compared with 2024, and shooting victim counts in the OTR neighborhood are down 40%.

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It is not surprising that sustained place network disruption here has been challenging here, as several indicators suggest that this is one of the most entrenched historically violent locations in Cincinnati, and the volume of vacant and under-managed properties in this immediate area provided opportunities for adaptation and network rebuilding, while some places were effectively disrupted. There are reasons to be optimistic, however, not only because of substantive positive changes that have taken place, but also because it appears many underutilized properties in this area are returning to positive use in 2025. This should limit future place-network adaptive opportunities, and it is likely to allow for sustainment of crime reductions in the future.

It is anticipated that PIVOT will continue through 2025, before entering a post-project maintenance phase in 2026.