

VIOLENCE AND DRUG TRAFFICKING NEAR JOHN STREET MARKET -DISTRICT ONE-

The Team:

CPD District One Neighborhood Unit, Investigative Unit, and Violent Crimes Squad,
City Law, Health, & Buildings Departments

Scan:

The vicinity of John and Livingston Streets, in Cincinnati's West End neighborhood have suffered longstanding problems related to violence. An open-air drug market operated in this area, and it was a known "hot spot" for gun crimes.



Analysis:

From January 1, 2020, until late 2022, twelve violent crimes involving firearms, including three murders, occurred within a one-block radius of 1715 John Street, the John Street Market (aka Save Way Market). In addition to the market, the area included properties without substantial foot traffic

(warehouses, junkyards, and a plumbing business).

During the same time period CPD seized fourteen firearms here during criminal investigations.

Response:

CPD's District One Violent Crimes Squad (VCS) and Neighborhood Liaison Unit observed various issues at the market, including poor physical conditions of the property and marketing products that were supportive of illicit drug market activity, such as scales and novelties easily used for drug smoking. Officers confronted store representatives but noted no substantive improvements.

In late 2022, VCS investigators documented numerous "controlled purchases" of crack cocaine nearby, and purchases of "kits" from the store operators (used for smoking crack cocaine). On December 9, 2022, a search warrant was executed on the premises. Investigators recovered various items supportive of drug market activity, including glass pens, digital scales, and "chore boy" (used to facilitate crack-cocaine ingestion). Investigators also noted tax violations related to tobacco products, and health code violations related to cleanliness and food expiration.

The same day, the City of Cincinnati filed a Public Nuisance civil lawsuit, prepared by the City's Law Department. On May 5, 2023, this property was declared a public nuisance and ordered secured and closed. CPD and the City's Building Department facilitated the court order.



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Assessment:

In the weeks that followed, officers noted dramatic changes in activities here. Not only was the store no longer in operation, but the drug market appeared to also vanish. This was reflected in data measures, directly in the market and within a block of the market (picture to the right).

As expected, proactive CAD activity and arrests increased in 2022 and leading into 2023 as CPOP activities peaked. Priority calls (those with weapons and/or injuries) and Urgent (those with potential for injury or in progress), as well as reported crime declined in 2023. Most notably, there were no violent incidents, including shootings in 2023 and 2024.

There was a spree of thefts from auto at the nearby vehicle lot in October 2024, and a simple assault offense where a youth shot a passerby in the finger with a BB Gun.



Table X. Full year data measures occurring within 250 feet of John Street Market

		2022	2023	2024	Change (23 - 22)	Change (24 - 23)
CFS	Priority	11	4	11	-64%	+175%
	Urgent	87	58	37	-33%	-36%
	Routine*	190	114	80	-40%	-30%
Reported Crime	Violent	4	0	0	-4	NC
	Property	0	0	6	NC	+6
	Part 2	6	3	4	-3	+1
Arrests		8	5	10	-38%	+100%

Note: 87% of "routine" calls for service are proactive directed patrols or investigations.

