



When Violence and Crime Hinder Smart Growth: Combating Threats to Improving Community

CREATING SAFE CORRIDORS

Curtis Jones, Jr.

Majority Leader, City Council of Philadelphia

# Safe Corridors Program in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- On April 11, 2013, Bernard Scott a 17-year old Overbrook High School student was shot and killed in a neighborhood playground after watching a basketball game. Bernard was an innocent bystander simply talking with friends when a fight broke out.
- After Bernard's death, parents, students, community activist and political leaders came together to address the gun violence infecting our communities.
- Additionally, due to budget cuts in the School District of Philadelphia, several of our high schools closed causing numerous school consolidations, leaving a lot of students to travel farther to their schools and through rival neighborhoods.
- These two untimely events inspired my office in coordination with members of the affected community to come together to develop and implement a safety plan that would provide safe corridors for our students.

# Creating Safe Corridors for Students in your Community

- . A Community Safe Corridors Plan provides a “turn key” guide to address community violence stemming from school age children after school hours.
- It seeks to use data to drive resources (law enforcement, technology, and communication) that are aimed at reducing crime related incidents.

# Safe Corridors Action Plan

- The purpose of the safe corridors action plan is to help children feel safe on their way to and from school.
- We implemented cameras at key hubs and pathways heavily traveled by students.
- We created a Police district school hotline to guide participants when a violent act occurs.

# Police District School Hotline

- The Safe Corridors Hotline was created to alert key members of our schools along with the police department to violent acts happening in real time in our neighborhoods.
- This allowed law enforcement to promptly respond, stop the act, identify the actors, make necessary reports and implement appropriate consequences.
- This is a universal idea for any city and brings together school officials, law enforcement, community advocates, transportation officials, and parents.

# Police District School Hotline Guide

- Step 1: Violent act is witnessed
- Step 2: Call Hotline Coordinator
- Step 3: Hotline Coordinator sends out blast to established point persons & police
- Step 4: Team mobilizes
- Step 5: Actors identified and information related back to team.





# Safe Corridors Action Plan Parent Engagement

- A critical element of any successful student safety plan is parent engagement.
- Coordinate a meeting with parents at the schools to request input and to provide an update on the status of the safety action plan. Include police department representatives and community leaders in this meeting.



# Safe Avenues Action Plan

## Hot Spots & Safe Passageways

- Coordinate a ride-around with several stakeholders to identify key hot spots and highly traveled areas to place cameras and public safety law enforcement officials.
- Pay special attention to areas where students from rival schools or neighborhoods may intersect and congregate.
- Public safety officers should then create 'safe passage ways' for students traveling to and from school in those areas identified as hot spots and highly traveled locations.
- Review police department shift changes to ensure that officers are available during dismissal times.
- Identify a safe haven where students can go when violent incidents occur.





# ADDITIONAL SAFE HAVENS

**Dominos Pizza**  
6001 Lancaster Ave.

**Hi-Lad Cleaners**  
5553 Lansdowne Ave.

**Dominican Beauty Salon**  
61st & Lansdowne Ave.

**Surprise Mini Market**  
61st & Lansdowne Ave.

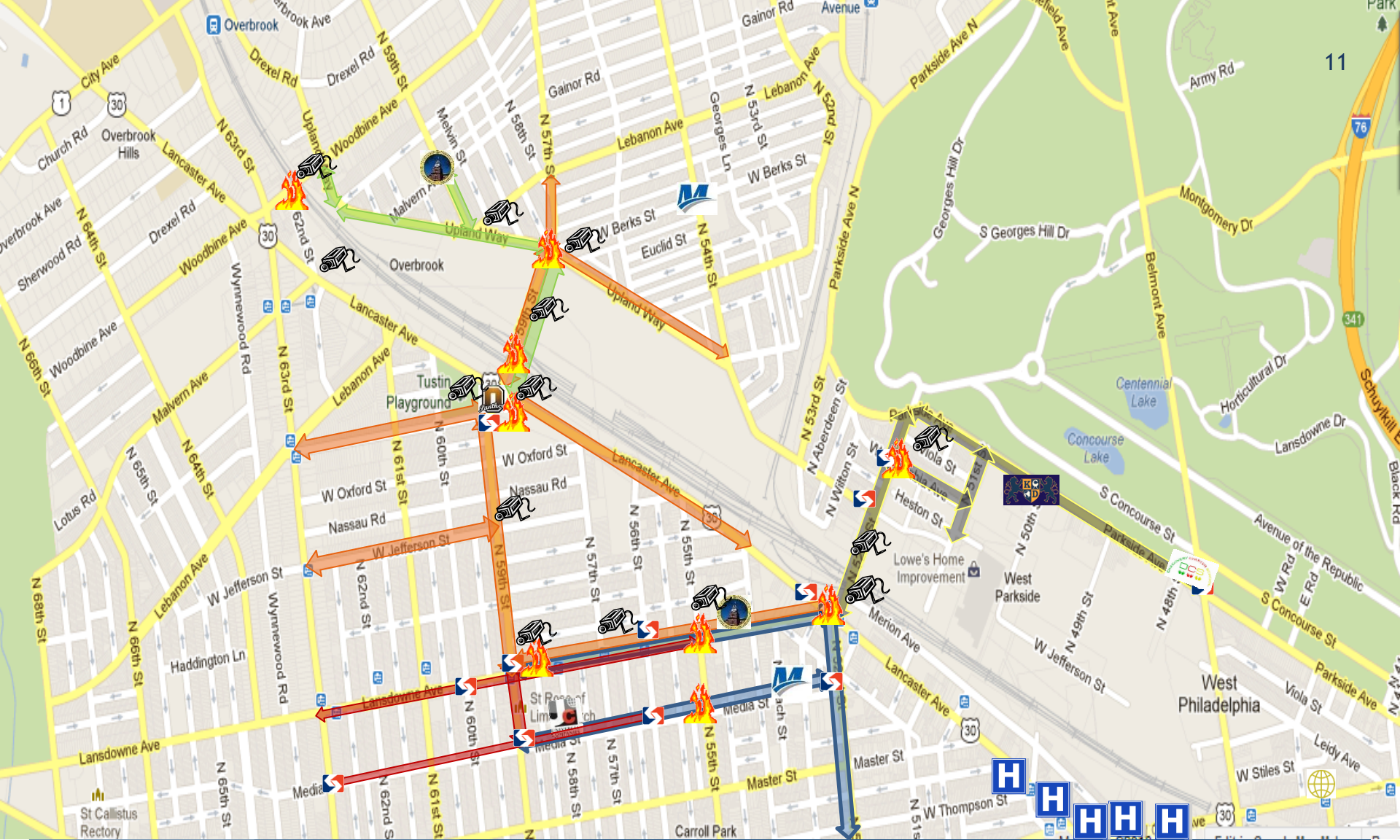
**Aisha's Unisex Salon**  
56th & Lansdowne Ave.

**Bob Turner's Hair Gallery**  
55th & Lansdowne Ave.

# Safe Routes to School Technology



- Technology should play a role as a force multiplier in coordination with law enforcement.
- Work with the appropriate departmental agencies to have cameras placed around school buildings and designated hot spots.
- Collaborate with businesses in the community to install video surveillance cameras to add additional capacity.
- Utilize the SafeCam Program to encourage business owners to participate in your safety program.



Hot Spots



Safe Havens

Safe Avenues

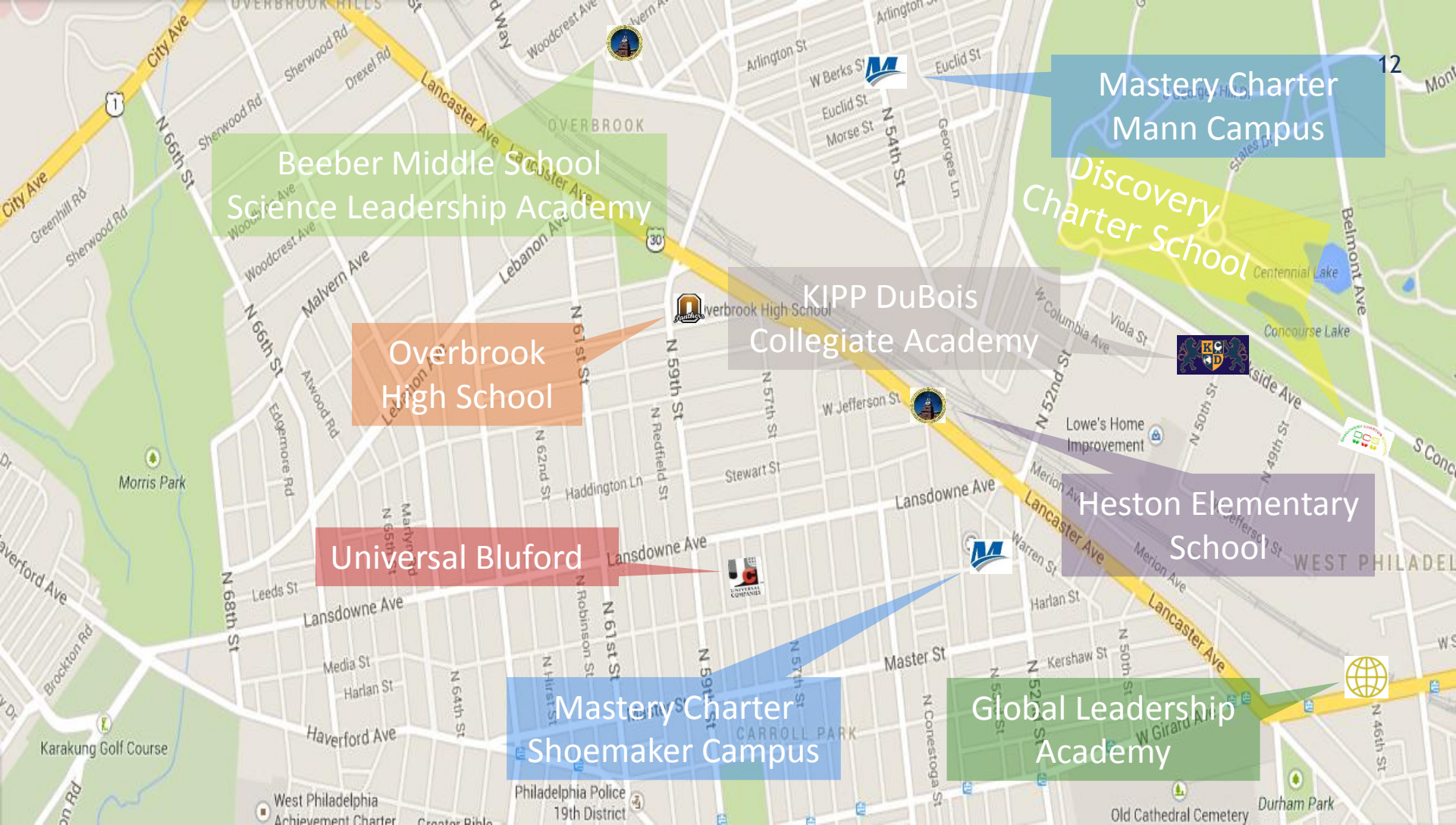


Video Surveillance (suggested)



SEPTA Stops





# Snap Shot: Schools in the 4<sup>th</sup>

# Safe Avenues Action Plan

## Law Enforcement Deployment

- Work with schools in the immediate area to coordinate dismissal times.
- The local school district's public safety officers should meet with the county police officers and transit public safety officers to coordinate presence around the school and along safe passageways.
- Police District Officers should place a car and/or motorcycles outside the school entrance for 15 minutes during dismissal to block traffic for student crossing the streets.
- School district public safety officers should be required to attend annual training courses.



# Safe Corridors Action Plan

## Youth Engagement Part 1

1. Student engagement is essential to the success of the safe corridors action plan.
2. Creating a student council and increasing their academic opportunities will keep students engaged. In Philadelphia we began a youth court program for restorative justice and restored Career & Technical education (CTE) programs in the high schools.
3. When children are able to see a future in education and how to use it to their advantage, they will not have time to focus on participating in negative activities.

# Safe Corridors Action Plan

## Youth Engagement Part 2

- In addition to implementing positive programs for students, program participants must also develop a plan to address those students with a propensity toward negative activity.
- Identify 10 - 20 key 'troublemakers' that contribute to the violent climate in and around the affected school.
- Schedule monthly mentoring/intervention sessions with the problematic students and community partners.
- Coordinate a breakfast with identified youth to discuss their current and future role in the school community.
- Community Behavior Modification Specialist will work with the youth from the immediate communities to get them involved in job training programs and other activities of interest.
- Coordinate a school assembly with local artist and radio personalities that can relate to high school students. During the assembly, the group will discuss crime intervention strategies.



# Safe Corridors Action Plan Monday Morning Roll Call

- Implement a system of checks and balance with appropriate partners to measure the effectiveness of the plan and to monitor student activity.
- This roll call is a teleconference that occurs every Monday school is in session at 7:00am.
- Parties to this conference are Councilman Jones, Principals of the affected schools (about 10), school safety officers from these schools, representatives from the Police Department and representatives from the transit authority.

# Next Steps



- As you closeout the academic school year, it is critical for your group to look forward toward the next school year in an effort to change the environment and culture of the school.
- This is an evolving plan that your group will continue to develop as your needs change.



## Next steps cont.

- We will be working with town watch in the morning and afternoon at arrival and dismissal to monitor students. Principals from various schools will communicate with walkie-talkies with each other and Town Watch.
- As the group moves forward you need to establish several key elements:
  - ✓ Public Safety Plan;
  - ✓ Community Engagement Plan
  - ✓ Youth and Parent Engagement Plan
  - ✓ Academic and programming plan.





THANKS  
for  
LISTENING

FUND  
SCHOOLS

THANK  
for  
LISTEN

FUND  
ARTS

FUND  
MUSIC

FUND  
ARTS