

# NOTES FROM THE FIELD

## PARTNERSHIP-FOCUSED MANAGEMENT: MAINTAINING A SUSTAINED, INTENSIVE FOCUS ON REDUCING VIOLENCE

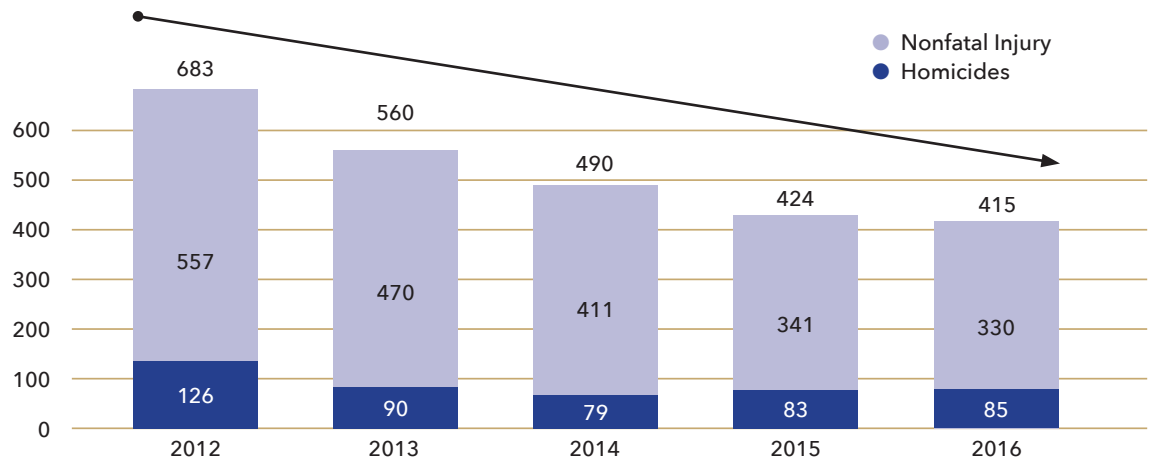
### OVERVIEW

This update marks the fourth full year since Oakland embraced the Ceasefire violence-reduction strategy (see summary on page 3). Over that period, injury shootings have declined by almost 40 percent – no small feat for a city that’s been among the most violent in the U.S. for more than four decades.

But continuing to achieve reductions is enormously difficult. In 2016, Ceasefire implementation was frequently disrupted by tumultuous changes in police leadership, widely publicized policing scandals, and volatile community-police relations. And, even with this 40 percent reduction in shootings, a serious crime takes place every few hours in Oakland, potentially diverting the time and attention essential to achieving further reductions in violence.

In the face of these challenges, the Ceasefire partners – civic, criminal justice, and community leaders – are developing a management strategy that has helped maintain the intensive, uninterrupted focus required to sustain reductions in shootings. The backbone of this strategy consists of three types of meetings: shooting reviews, coordination meetings, and performance reviews. These meetings build on each other in fast-moving weekly cycles, progressively tackling analytic, strategic, and implementation challenges.

By incorporating principles of transparency, mutual accountability, and procedural justice, these meetings also increase trust and commitment among Oakland’s Ceasefire partners. This has helped bind these diverse partners together for the long-term work toward their triple bottom line: reduced violence, reduced incarceration, and increased community-police trust.





**Weekly shooting reviews** bring together knowledgeable practitioners, most often police, to systematically analyze and respond to recent shootings. The reviews identify those individuals at risk of violence and direct resources where they will be most effective in reducing that risk.

**Weekly coordination meetings** include community leaders, police, probation, outreach workers, and case managers. They build on the risk assessments and preliminary plans developed in shooting reviews by tailoring needed supports and services to individuals most likely to be involved in violence.

**Semi-monthly performance reviews** led by the mayor, include a dozen or more stakeholders – community leaders, department heads, and the Ceasefire project managers – who come together to review data on the quality of implementation in order to solve operational challenges, refine strategies, and monitor progress toward violence-reduction goals.

## SHOOTING REVIEWS: UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

A team made up of senior and mid-level managers, working closely with a crime analyst and a researcher, facilitate shooting reviews.<sup>1</sup> The first part of the meeting involves a review of every shooting that resulted in injury (and many that didn't) in the previous week. Participants note basic information about each incident, including the date, time, place, and people involved. The facilitator then leads the group through a series of analytical questions about the circumstances of the shootings and the motives of those involved. This process helps identify those individuals at imminent risk of being involved in violence.

The second part of the shooting review consists of exploratory but purposeful planning for responding to identified risks. The goal is to broaden the focus from solving crimes to crafting interventions that can quickly interrupt cycles of violence and save lives. Facilitators lead a group discussion that gradually produces a plan of action. The group designs plans to reduce violence quickly while avoiding tactics, such as indiscriminate stop-and-frisks and buy-and-busts, that tend to focus on those at low risk of violence and sweep them into the criminal justice system with little public safety benefit. Instead, these plans draw heavily on analysis, high-quality police intelligence, and strong community-police relationships to focus on the small number of individuals who the review indicates actually drive violence.

This planning and implementation process moves rapidly. A key objective is to share the output of the shooting review – an accurate assessment of risk and the emerging response plan – with community and outreach partners as soon as is practically possible.

## THE CEASEFIRE STRATEGY

Ceasefire combines the efforts of police, community leaders and service providers to:

1 analyze serious violent incidents and trends to identify individuals at highest risk of violence; 2 respectfully communicate the risks associated with violence to those individuals through group meetings (call-ins) and one-on-ones (custom notifications); 3 offer supportive relationships that lead to safety and opportunity; and 4 narrowly focus enforcement efforts on those individuals who persist in violence.

This approach is strikingly effective. In 2012, the Campbell Collaboration, an interdisciplinary group of social scientists who analyze the best available research on important social issues, published a rigorous review of all evaluations of the Ceasefire approach. They concluded that it significantly reduced violence and recidivism in 10 of 11 locations.

## COORDINATION MEETINGS: ORGANIZING PARTNERS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

The Ceasefire partners begin coordination meetings by developing a shared understanding of the groups and individuals most at risk of being involved in shootings. This includes an update from the police department on: (a) actively violent groups and networks; (b) conflicts across and within those groups; and (c) individuals at especially high risk. Working within confidentiality protocols, the partners refine this assessment, shaping an agenda that focuses their joint efforts on these high-risk individuals.

Partners identify short-term steps designed to reduce the risk to these individuals. As in shooting reviews, this is an exploratory but purposeful process that draws on the expertise and experience of each partner to fashion effective, individualized interventions. The group may discuss who among them is best positioned to deliver a persuasive custom notification; the most effective strategy for connecting young men at risk to needed supports and services; and the role probation or police officers can play in reducing the probability of retaliatory shootings. Such steps are then assembled into a fast-moving plan that mobilizes a wide range of supports and services crucial to both the safety and well being of individuals at most risk.

## PERFORMANCE REVIEWS: ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

Led by the mayor and facilitated by the Ceasefire project director, performance reviews have three parts. Partners begin each meeting by assessing progress toward the violence-reduction goals they established at the outset of their joint efforts. In Oakland, this is a reduction of at least 10 percent per year in homicides and non-fatal injury shootings. The Ceasefire partners fully realize that no amount of violence is acceptable but that the impact of violence on young men of color requires the concrete commitments and hard choices generated by a public commitment to measurable results.

Next, the partners assess the quality of implementation based on indicators drawn from the main operational components of Ceasefire, including communication, outreach and support, enforcement and coordination. For each component, indicators help the partners understand whether they are: focused on the small proportion of individuals actually driving violence; working at a scale that promises citywide results; and implementing in a way that is consistent with best practice and evaluation findings on effectiveness. The data on outcome and activity indicators is assembled into a single worksheet that quickly and clearly conveys this information to concerned community leaders and busy department heads.

The third element of performance reviews is a running conversation about the measures needed to strengthen implementation, including reallocating funding, modifying program activities, and resetting priorities. The meetings conclude with a summary of these commitments.

## REDUCING VIOLENCE GOES HAND IN HAND WITH REFORM

This management cycle integrates efforts to reduce violence, to reduce over incarceration, and to strengthen community-police relationships – and it does so in ways that use cities’ limited resources wisely.

1 Shooting reviews position police to direct enforcement resources where they will be most effective in decreasing violence while moving away from tactics that sweep low-risk offenders into the criminal justice system at significant social and economic cost and with little public safety benefit. 2 Coordination meetings align the efforts of police and providers to maximize safety and opportunity for people at high risk of violence while reserving expensive jail space for those who truly pose a danger to the community. 3 And, performance reviews support quality implementation while building community confidence and trust in police by embracing accountability and transparency.

## CONCLUSION

Oakland’s long history of violence is a reminder that sustained reductions in shootings require an uninterrupted and intensive focus on quality implementation. Oakland’s experience has been that when that focus wavers, even for a short time, shootings quickly increase. This management cycle links the real-time assessment of who is at risk of violence to the rapid mobilization of social service and criminal justice efforts designed to reduce that risk that are, in turn, continuously informed by an active civic commitment to performance management.

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i See Braga, Anthony A., David M. Hureau, and Leigh S. Grossman. 2014. *Managing the Group Violence Intervention: Using Shooting Scorecards to Track Group Violence*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

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