Shift Budget Needs to Achieve Police Retention and Recruiting Goals

What it means
Retention and recruiting problems are at the heart of police effectiveness. Only a fully-staffed IMPD can police proactively, rather than reactively.

Why?
Indianapolis has fewer police officers now than we had in 2017 (5). Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) staffing is below nationally recommended levels. Current data suggests Indianapolis has just under 2 police officers per 1,000 residents. IMPD currently has 1,554 uniformed police officers (6). This puts Indianapolis below the budgeted number of officers this year, meaning more than 250 police-officer positions are unfilled (7).

Our problems begin with retention and extend to recruiting. We cannot continue to struggle retaining veteran police officers and expect our police force to grow. Veteran officers are leaving and more are scheduled to leave. As mayor, I will help reestablish morale — our city needs veteran officers and yes, their city and mayor will appreciate them during my administration. We also cannot recruit officers and abandon them later in their career. We must financially incentivize good, veteran officers to stay on the force. There is no excuse for a mayor to continue to throw money at starting salaries alone. Losing veteran officers means losing the expertise to train future officers.

Both recruiting and retention suffer from competition with growing counties that surround us. To the extent this competitive threat is financial, we must find the resources to pay higher compensation for work that is, in fact, more difficult in our urban environment than in suburban counties.

Support Law Enforcement Beyond Funding

What it means
The moral support of police work by the mayor, and the rallying of citizen support for our front-line police force, is essential to morale, recruitment, retention and effectiveness on the force. The mayor and the Public Safety Director must be visible - often literally - standing with the police in their sometimes dangerous efforts to protect us.

Why?
In the summer of 2020 our city saw unprecedented riots that turned deadly and left downtown in ruin for months (8). Joe Hogsett was absent when Indianapolis and IMPD needed him most. Our police need support from a strong leader in the mayor’s office for recruitment, retention and morale.

How?
As mayor, I will personally attend police roll calls once a month. A leader visibly present sends a message to residents that their city government is serious about safety. No one will have to ask where their mayor is in times of crisis, because I will be present, along with our PSD.

5. Fact checking Mayor Hogsett’s claims on IMPD recruitment, high officer salaries
6. IMPD to streamline recruitment process to address officer shortage
7. IMPD faces tough competition for police recruits – Indianapolis Business Journal
8. This weekend marks 1 year since protests, riots rocked Indianapolis. Here’s a look back.
Give IMPD the Tools They Need

What it means
Ensuring our streets and parks are well lit, increasing the number of cameras, and exploring innovative technology solutions to monitor criminal hotspots. Innovative solutions include implementing audio technology or gunshot detection tools to pinpoint where shootings take place and allow officers to be dispatched to the area immediately. Cameras used in tandem with gunshot detection tools provide the opportunity to monitor high crime areas, and provide law enforcement more tools to mitigate risk, de-escalate conflict, and sort out investigative leads.

Why?
We cannot stay the course of the last 8 years and expect different results. An astounding 65% of homicides are going unsolved in our city (9). Crime and violence occur in areas where criminals feel emboldened by the idea that no one is watching or they will never be caught. Citizens feel safe in areas where they believe there is an involved community looking out for each others’ safety and criminals will be held accountable. Sufficient lighting, cameras, and exploring new audio detection systems will assist law enforcement in gathering information, should a shooting or other crime occur (10). It also deters criminals, as they are less likely to commit a crime when they think their actions are being recorded. A proactive, present, posture of safety is crucial in both deterring and solving crime.

How?
As mayor, I will shift funding so that our streets are well-lit and cameras are installed in areas where they are needed the most. Innovative solutions like audio detection equipment will be explored and implemented when effective. Using innovative technologies can allow us to collect more data that will be used to identify high risk zones in our city. Using this data, we can develop a more accurate response and deterrence strategy to our city’s crime problem. This includes proactively reviewing data acquired and utilizing the data to focus on crime issues as well as quality of life issues. We must share this data with our robust non-profit community and regularly meet to share data and forge partnerships to deal with myriad issues.

9. IMPD 2022 homicide clearance rate at 35%
10. 3 people wounded after shooting on Indy’s canal as efforts continue to keep the canal safe