



# Trendspotting Forum: Don't Take Your Guns to Town

## September 10, 2024

### ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

- **Andrew Robinson**, Sergeant, City of Pittsburgh (oversees the Southside Entertainment Patrol)
- **Kayla Knabe and Glen Main**, Officers, Denver Police Department
- **Bret Kunash**, Nighttime Economy Coordinator, City of Pittsburgh
- **Dwayne Crawford**, Executive Director, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE).

### SUMMARY

This trendspotting forum highlighted the importance of maintaining a visible but non-hostile public safety presence, focusing on inclusive community engagement over a heavy-handed approach. Education is critical to ensure that venue managers, patrons, and the general public are informed about safety protocols. Collaborative efforts were also emphasized, with the need to share best practices across different regions to improve safety in entertainment districts. Below is a synopsis of the safety challenges and strategies used in Pittsburgh and Denver.

### CITY OF PITTSBURGH: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

#### PITTSBURGH: SOUTH SIDE ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT CHALLENGES

- **Post-COVID-19**, several new bars opened in the **South Side**, a mixed-use district with residents and venues in close proximity. There has been an increase in assaults, drug use, and general crime in that area.

#### SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE POST-COVID

- **South Side Entertainment Patrol**: Two supervisors and 12 officers actively engage with community members to create a sense of security. Andrew Robinson states that his dedicated team of officers has a strong connection with the bouncers and bar owners, which creates a sense of community engagement and helps de-escalate crimes before they occur.
- **Nighttime Economy Office**: The focus of educational campaigns and trainings include prevention of active shooters, use of Narcan to prevent overdose deaths, and "Stop the Bleed" training.
- **Violence Interrupters**: Cornell Jones leads community engagement work focusing on youth to interrupt cycles of violence before they escalate. (Cornell Jones serves as the Group Violence Intervention Coordinator for the City of Pittsburgh and John Jay College, where he unites outreach teams and law enforcement to collaborate on preventing and reducing community violence.)

## EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGIES

- **Proactive Engagement:** The 14 officers in the South Side during patrol are highly visible, walking and engaging with bar patrons, bar owners, and community members.
- **Collaborative Training:** The Department of Public Safety hosts quarterly training sessions city-wide. On the South Side, the Department of Public Safety works with business owners and staff and will train on active shooter, stop-the-bleed, de-escalation, and Narcan training.
- **Reinforcing all the laws and ordinances:** South Side Patrol believes an effective strategy for reducing crime is reinforcing all laws and ordinances. For example, if you're with an open container down the street, you will get a citation, and if you urinate in public, you will also get a citation. No rules are bent, and this seems to deter any person who is disruptive to leave the area.

## CITY OF DENVER: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

### CITY OF DENVER: LOWER DOWNTOWN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT (LODO) CHALLENGES

- **LODO has narrow streets, heavy pedestrian and car traffic, food trucks causing congestion, and crime in parking lots.**
- **The district sees 20,000-40,000 visitors on weekends, leaving police feeling outnumbered and out-armed**
- **Multiple shootings have occurred in the same parking lot, raising concerns about public safety.**

### SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE IN LODO

- **Rideshare and Food Truck Zones:** Denver has created a rideshare pickup zone, which has significantly helped reduce congestion. However, efforts to create designated food truck zones have faced pushback from the community.
- **Impact Teams and Detectives:** Special teams handle nightlife-related incidents. Twenty to thirty officers are heavily deployed on weekends in parking lots and conducting spotting operations for traffic stops.
- **Open Carry of Firearms Prohibited:** Colorado state law requires a concealed handgun permit to conceal a weapon; open carry of firearms is not allowed.

### CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS IN LODO

- **Officers are assigned 90% of their time to service calls on Fridays and Saturdays in LODO, resulting in understaffing for other calls for service in other areas. Denver has no specific training for officers to address nightlife safety issues. They are considering training from Edmonton to fill this gap.**

### EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IN LODO

- **Rideshare Pickup Zones:** A proactive solution to ease congestion and improve traffic flow and crime.
- **Officer Presence in Entertainment Districts:** Denver's police are deployed to nightlife areas to deter crime and respond to incidents.