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SUMMARY

- Participants from cities across the country discussed the growing trend of youth gatherings in nightlife districts and public spaces, sharing challenges and response strategies. Common themes included the lack of safe "third places" for teens, social media's role in rapidly organizing large gatherings, and the need for age-appropriate programming and engagement opportunities.
- Cities including Raleigh, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and Atlanta highlighted initiatives such as chaperone policies, youth-focused activities, violence intervention programs, community policing, and partnerships with local organizations. Participants emphasized the value of engaging youth influencers, collaborating with businesses and community stakeholders, and creating positive alternatives for young people.
- The discussion also explored proactive measures such as monitoring social media trends, managing access to high-risk locations, and coordinating efforts across city departments. Participants agreed that youth gatherings are a complex issue requiring a balanced, multi-faceted approach that combines public safety, community engagement, and youth development. Jim Peters concluded the forum by noting that key findings would be shared with attendees and inviting suggestions for future trendspotting discussions.

STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES

CREATE POSITIVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop safe "third places" where teens can gather outside of home and school.
- Expand age-appropriate recreation, arts, sports, entertainment, and weekend programming.
- Involve youth influencers and young people in planning activities and solutions.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS

- Collaborate with schools, nonprofits, faith organizations, neighborhood groups, and violence intervention programs.
- Engage local businesses, venues, and nightlife stakeholders as partners in prevention and outreach.

ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Use community policing to build trust and positive relationships with youth.
- Increase outreach, mentorship, and violence prevention efforts that address underlying risk factors.

LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA AND DATA INTELLIGENCE

- Monitor social media and emerging trends to identify potential gatherings early.
- Track incidents and share information to support proactive, informed responses.

IMPLEMENT TARGETED OPERATIONAL MEASURES

- Utilize chaperone policies, crowd management plans, and access restrictions when appropriate.
- Deploy location-specific strategies to reduce risks in high-impact areas.

SUPPORT INCLUSIVE SOCIAL SPACES

- Collaborate with community organizations, local authorities, and businesses to create safe environments for younger audiences.
- Encourage the development of social spaces that complement, rather than compete with, the broader hospitality sector.
- Explore demographic-specific initiatives and future trend analysis focused on both younger and older consumer groups.

COORDINATE MULTI-AGENCY AND CROSS-CITY RESPONSES

- Align efforts among police, parks and recreation, schools, transportation, public works, and youth services.
- Continue sharing best practices, lessons learned, and successful strategies among cities nationwide.

Key Takeaway: Participants agreed that youth gatherings in nightlife and public spaces are complex and influenced by social, technological, and community factors. Effective responses require a balanced approach that combines youth engagement, public safety, community partnerships, and coordinated citywide action.

