Mt. Scott-Arleta Community Safety Project Evaluation Report

Submitted to: The Community Safety Division
City of Portland Office of Management and Finance

By: Michelle Helman Consulting, LLC

June 30, 2022
# Evaluation Report

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**Evaluation Report submitted and written by:** Michelle Helman Consulting, LLC, a white, woman-owned, full-service consultancy committed to co-creating peace, health, and justice. We design, facilitate, and evaluate transformative processes and outcomes and support teams to work together more effectively across differences to create solutions, achieve goals, and build community. In our work, we apply an equity and trauma-informed approach and commit to ongoing critical reflection and learning.

**Acknowledgement & Thank you** to interview participants for their voluntary support and participation in the evaluation - in particular to Dr. Jonathan Jay, DrPH, JD, Assistant Professor at Boston University School of Public Health, for his data analysis contributions during the project and for this evaluation, which were included with permission. This evaluation work was engaged on the land of living descendants of many native Indigenous peoples including the Upper Chinook: Multnomah/Clackamas/Wasco, Chinook Nation, Clatstop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, amongst others. We also acknowledge the persisting legacy of predominantly Black and African slavery, labor, and exploitation that was used to create the structures and oppressive systems that perpetuate ongoing harm, violence, and inequity.
Mt. Scott-Arleta Community Safety Project Evaluation Report Summary

Major Findings
The project aimed to increase safety and reduce shootings and traffic speeding by using a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) approach. It came about due to a network collaboration between local community members and a multi-bureau response from the City of Portland, which was successful due to community organizing efforts. This process was a significant and unintended outcome that led to creating the project model.

Findings are promising and suggest that the project may have contributed to the decrease in shootings during the project timeline. Analysis of Portland Police Bureau (PPB) shooting data in Figure 1 shows the number of shootings decreased in the ‘project area’ (where joint patrol missions with Portland Parks & Recreation took place) during the implementation timeline (Sept-Dec. 2021) - within a trend of overall increase. An increase in shootings post-intervention suggests the intervention may have had an impact, and this demonstrates the need for the project to continue with more comprehensive data analysis to determine outcomes.

Challenges to determine whether the intervention caused or contributed to the change include that statistically, shootings decrease in the summertime, there is inconsistency in reporting the number of shootings per month, and it is unclear how the project work area was defined by all sources. Complimentary data on space use and sense of safety would have aided the analysis to determine project outcomes and impact.

Strategic Recommendations
> **Project Management & Structure** - Continue the project, consider a collaborative governance management structure, and build a more representative network. Create a communications strategy and strategic plan naming safety as an outcome. Continue and expand coordination with City, County, and local organizations who provide culturally-specific support. Continue to apply an equity lens and include a trauma-informed approach throughout the project.

> **Evaluation & Data Collection Design** - Consider an experimental research and evaluation design such as action research, and data collection methods like outcome harvesting and network mapping. Along with crime data, neighborhood perceptions of safety are important evaluation metrics and indicators of change. Community members should be involved in all aspects of the project, particularly during evaluation design to define what ‘safety’ means to them, and to use that definition as a metric.

About the Evaluation
The evaluation is a retrospective review of the 2021 pilot project. It seeks to better understand the project’s processes and outcomes - with an aim to make recommendations for learning and adaptation to potentially replicate and/or scale the project.

Data & Methods
The analysis is based on findings from Key Informant Interviews with staff from City of Portland Bureaus and Community Members, and a desk review of project documents provided from the City of Portland. This is a descriptive analysis only.

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Project Associate
Evaluation Findings

Project Outcomes

ABOUT THE PROJECT - In July-Sept. 2021, the Mt. Scott-Arleta area, like many neighborhoods in the City of Portland, experienced a rapid increase in gun violence and high-speed traffic in comparison to the same months in 2020. In response to the problem, the Mt. Scott-Arleta Community Safety Project was implemented as a short-term, site-specific pilot intervention, intended as part of a long-term solution. The project came about due to a collaborative network of action-driven parties with lived and professional experience, skilled in relationship building, project planning and implementation.

Essential factors that contributed to the project implementation involved ongoing Mt. Scott-Arleta community organizing and civic engagement from the community members, the Neighborhood Association, local businesses, and organizations. As well as a swift, multi-bureau response from the City of Portland, led by Commissioner Hardesty’s office, that was successful due to staff’s community organizing skills. The project utilized a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) approach, and drew from contributions by Dr. Jonathan Jay, DrPH, JD, Assistant Professor at Boston University School of Public Health (see Appendix for additional project detail).

The project goal and intended outcomes were found to be defined as “reduce shootings and traffic speeding” by using traffic calming measures. An additional underlying, but not as clearly defined goal, was to increase safety by reactivating the space through space-regeneration planning, drawing from CPTED approaches focused on design and use of built-environment to reduce crime and the fear of crime, without relying on traditional policing methods. Findings show that the process was the most significant and unintended outcome that led to creating the project model: a community-driven, collaborative, multi-bureau approach using CPTED methods - which can be learned from and adapted to potentially replicate and scale. Process-related outcomes included the project model, community member engagement, and a multi-bureau response.

The Project Model - A collaborative network that prioritized equity and safety outcomes was engaged via outreach and ongoing communications in response to community-driven efforts. Relationships were key factors that helped to expedite processes and make the project possible. Knowledge of the neighborhood context and history, combined with lived experiences and skills in advocacy and organizing also contributed. Since the pilot, the project has expanded in 2022 to grow the network and reach more community members. A significant outcome is the impending slip lane closure and the Mt. Scott-Arleta Triangle-Square Project, which launched in June 2022.

Community Member Engagement - Through the process, involved community members fostered community, built neighborship, and improved peer-to-peer support. Some noted an increase in their experience of safety and space-use by attending events including block parties and a Peace Market. They demonstrated capacity to problem-solve and mobilize through outreach and civic engagement by building on pre-existing efforts since 2004 to address the slip lane and improve pedestrian safety. They showed up with facts, solutions, ideas, and specific requests. They also responded to other neighborhoods who expressed interest in learning about the project (i.e., Brentwood-Darlington). Collaboration with City Bureaus was supported due to the location having a Community Stewardship Agreement to maintain the space, which is part of the ongoing project efforts.

City of Portland Multi-Bureau Response - To increase safety, City Bureau staff mobilized a multi-bureau network of people and resources to engage the rapid response to community requests for support. This demonstrated that they were effectively fulfilling their duties and roles as public servants by utilizing their professional skills in community organizing and lived experiences, driven by values of relationship-building and equity. This effort resulted in an increased awareness of localized interests and concerns and led to PP&R anticipating increased park use in summer 2022 and therefore increasing park patrols to promote safety.
Limiting Factors to Determine Intended Outcomes

The following limiting factors and challenges are highlighted with the intention to learn from - and both mitigation and adaptation strategies are noted in the Recommendations section.

Preliminary findings are promising and suggest that the project may have contributed to the decrease in shootings during the intervention timeline. However, because other activities occurred simultaneously within a complex context, the implementation was likely a contributing factor that influenced the change and cannot be isolated to measure attribution to the intended outcomes. Adaptations to the project design, approach, and data collection are needed to determine if and how the project contributed to the intended outcomes.

Challenges to determine project outcomes and limits to the evaluation are based on the available data and design of the intervention. Notably, an outcome evaluation is ideal after a project is established and stable. Existing data and findings about the process can be used to determine if the intervention produced the intended results of planned work, and to identify strengths and weaknesses of the project. Based on available data, the evaluation primarily utilized process evaluation, which is ideal at the pilot phase and critical for learning, adapting, and informing adjustments for future project iterations or expansion.

Evaluation findings from data provided and KIs show that the primary sources used for analysis by Commissioner Hardesty’s Office to determine if any intended changes took place were Community Survey responses and Portland Police Bureau (PPB) data on shootings and dispatched 911 calls for service. Comparative data on sense of safety and space use, and the frequency, type, and location regarding the following were limited and/or not available - and necessary to determine outcomes:

- Actual vs planned and changed barrel placement numbers and locations
- PP&R/PPB ranger patrols
- 911 call location of reported incidents
- Park lights and security cameras
- Outreach to the convenience store, Church, and local organizations/NGOs/businesses
- Community engagement via meetings, formal, and informal conversations

> A post-intervention survey was conducted in December 2021, and of the 400 surveys distributed in person to community members, 98 responded (this is a 25% response rate). To determine (with 95% statistical confidence) that those responses are representative of the whole community, a 40% response rate is necessary. Survey questions focused primarily on speeding rather than shootings and sense of safety, so there was insufficient data to determine an effect of the intervention on increased safety. However, there was valuable and useful information collected on attitudes and beliefs about the project regarding unsafe streets, barrels, and policing.

> PPB shooting data in Figure 1 shows the shooting decrease in the ‘project area’, defined as where joint patrol missions with Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) took place, during the implementation timeline (Sept-Dec. 2021). Shootings did not decrease in the rest of Portland over the same period. However, there is inconsistency in the data reporting the number of shootings per month, and it is unclear how the geographic ‘project area’ was defined by all sources (see Appendix E for additional detail). The data shows a trend of overall increase in the project area within the calendar year and compared to the same months in 2020. An increase in shootings post-intervention suggests the intervention may have had an impact and demonstrates the need for the project to continue with more comprehensive data analysis to determine outcomes.

> PPB data on dispatched 911 calls for service show that during the intervention in October 2021, there was an increase in shooting-related emergency calls. However, data provided for 911 calls were not reflective of the actual number of shootings since callers reported loud noises confirmed as fireworks, and the data reflected calls from the neighborhood, not the project work area. Only yearly data was provided for analysis for the project work area, which did not allow for comparative analysis of pre-during- and post-intervention data. Additionally, this data could have potentially aided analysis if the location of reported incidents was provided to compare with community perception of safety, as it correlates with the increase in confirmed shootings.
A contributing factor and potential challenge to determine intended outcomes was due to the barrels being the most visible activity and an incomplete narrative about the project goal - that placing barrels would reduce gun violence. This framing was not comprehensive or reflective of the actual project objectives and CPTED methods. While unintentional, this appeared to be embedded in the project design, which influenced what and how data were collected to determine outcomes, as well as informed media narratives and limited community buy-in to the process. KII insights indicated that the communications approach has since been adapted to support 2022 project expansion.

Structural and contextual factors that may have contributed to the challenge to determine intended outcomes were influenced by systems of oppression creating asymmetrical power dynamics and impact. For example, while the City of Portland response was swift and necessary, the organizational structure is generally siloed, hierarchical, and bureaucratic - which makes processes lengthy and contingent on funding. Some departments are understaffed, e.g., Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) has a significant backlog, and Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) currently has 25 FTE but requires at least 50 FTE to manage the 12,000 acres it oversees. While the project design was intentional to not utilize traditional policing, PPB did contribute overtime FTE to joint patrols with PP&R, amidst public and high-profile criticism of police and related budget cuts. PPB data was (and is) needed to engage a comprehensive analysis. Notably, civic engagement is voluntary labor that requires significant time, effort, and skills. Community member Nadine Salama shared:

“These efforts were made by a handful of active community members, the work was consuming and fueled by our inherent desire to restore peace and feel safe in our homes again. It required a lot of time and attention.”

Additionally, while environmental and land-use focus is appropriately context-specific, local Indigenous communities whose traditional lands the City of Portland is located on were not intentionally included in the process. This is an essential equity component since these communities continue to live in the area within an ongoing experience of settler-colonialism and related forms of oppression. Importantly, BIPOC have a disproportionate experience of police-related violence and access to nature spaces. While unintentional, the cultural and linguistic diversity of community members was not represented (e.g., Spanish and Vietnamese), as all meetings were held in English. People experiencing houselessness who live in the project area were not involved and could have added essential perspectives. The process could have benefited from a trauma-informed approach to foster a sense of safety in a community experiencing heightened stress due to ongoing safety threats and traumatic experiences. Lastly, COVID-19 impacts limited access to socializing and public space use.
Strategic Recommendations
The following recommendations draw from anecdotal KII needs and are offered as suggestions when considering how to sustain promising outcomes and to inform potential project adaptation, scaling, and replication.

Project Management & Structure
Based on the promising data and ongoing need for services demonstrated by the community asking for them and an increase in shootings post-intervention - the primary recommendation is to continue the project with adaptations. To ensure ongoing success, consider how the project exists within an asymmetrical relationship dynamic where the City has more power (granting funding, resources, and access to public space-use). To mitigate this, create a collaborative governance management structure driven by the continued aim to benefit the public. Components include collective decision-making, implementation, and evaluation; facilitated dialogue and conflict resolution; consideration of purpose; representation; belonging; and being intentionally adaptive and flexible.

To build a representative network of project collaborators, consider who is involved, and clarify all roles, responsibilities, strengths, and limitations. Ensure representation by people and groups who have been historically marginalized, ex. BIPOC, LGBTQIA2+, as well as people experiencing houselessness, disability, youth, and those who have been accused of or committed an offense or may potentially commit an offense. Continue multi-bureau coordination, including with Multnomah County and local non-profit organizations (such as AYCO, IRCO, or POIC) who provide culturally-specific services focused on peer mentorship, crisis-intervention and public health. Include a goal to get BIPOC and urban youth into natural/nature spaces, as nature can help downregulate and prevent acting violently. While the model does not follow a traditional policing approach, since PPB data and resources for patrols with PP&R were needed, consider context-appropriate engagement based on identified project needs and goals.

To sustain positive outcomes and effectiveness of the project, create a strategic plan and communications strategy that include a problem analysis, project definition, and evaluation framework for data collection and analysis. Share information with community members that clearly defines City Bureau roles and who to contact for what e.g., fridge magnets or fliers. Ensure that communications (paper, electronic, meetings, etc.) are accessible, i.e., English, and other primary languages spoken in the community, including sign-language interpretation. In all project materials, cite sources. Provide and integrate skills training and capacity building for all parties in conflict resolution, communication and dialogue, and restorative justice to support communications for meeting, planning, and decision-making throughout the project. For all project components, continue to apply an equity lens and include a trauma-informed approach throughout the project.

Project Evaluation & Data Collection Design
To identify whether or not the intervention affected any change AND to collect data to inform real-time changes and adaptations, consider the following: 1) Define the project goal to prioritize community safety in addition to decrease gun violence and speeding by applying a CPTED approach, and 2) Apply an experimental research and evaluation design such as action research, and data collection methods such as outcome harvesting, most significant change technique, and network mapping that can complement pre- and post-intervention survey and comparative data. In addition to crime data, neighborhood perceptions of safety are important evaluation metrics and indicators of change. Involve community members in the evaluation design to define what ‘safety’ means to them and what they believe is needed to feel safe. Note that violence measures and well-being measures are interwoven, not parallel outcomes, and each is necessary to understand the other. Neighborhood greening, while related, is a proximal cause and/or outcome. Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping could support the mapping analysis component to better understand correlation between location of project activities and perceived changes.
The following suggestions are meant to be part of a larger evaluation framework, they are not comprehensive:

> **Context-Specific Data Collection:**
  - Compare shooting data in and outside the project area and in the City of Portland over a 12-month period to assess for statistical significance
  - Consider pre- and post- PPB and PP&R patrol timelines, location, and frequency
  - Map locations of traffic-calming and space-regeneration measures; and track changes
  - Data on 911 calls on location of reported incidents to compare with community perception of safety
  - Draw from existing resources and data (Multnomah County Health Department’s Healthy Portland Survey)
  - Draw from PP&R data from successful park patrol models at Dawson, Holladay, Kenton, McCoy, New Columbia, Peer, and University parks

> **Survey Design Basics:**
  - Pilot the survey and involve parties in the survey design
  - Offer the survey in the primary languages spoken in the area
  - Include mental health support resources
  - Adapt questions to reflect project goals and objectives
  - In the survey, include a short introduction naming the intention, how data will be used, share-back strategy, and estimated time to complete the survey

> **Survey Questions for Space Use and Sense of Safety:**
Consider a Likert Scale and compare pre- and post-intervention data, and ask:

In the past 7 days...
  - How many times have you visited the park for recreational purposes?
  - How many times have you visited the park for commuting purposes?
  - How many events in the space have you attended?
  - How often did you greet and interact with your neighbors?
  - How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?
Appendices

A. Evaluation Design & Approach

Evaluation Project Team
Michelle Helman, MA (she/her) – Project Lead & Principal Consultant
Perla Padilla, MA (she/her) – Project Associate
Lisa Freeman, MA (she/her) – City of Portland Project Manager

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Evaluation Purpose
The purpose of the evaluation was to engage a retrospective review and analysis of the Mt. Scott-Arleta Intervention project, with an aim to better understand the project’s processes and outcomes and inform future decision making. Recommendations were drafted from the Key Informant Interview (KII) responses and evaluation findings for potential adaptation and replication of the project. The evaluation timeline was May - June 2022.

The line of inquiry to inform the evaluation was:
1. What outcomes (intended, unintended, positive, and negative) did the interventions in Mt. Scott in 2021 have?
   a. Did the interventions contribute to a reduction in shootings and high-speed traffic in the area? If so, how? If not, what are possible reasons the intervention did not have the desired effect?
   b. Were any interventions more or less effective, why or how?
2. What are recommended next steps to sustain positive outcomes in the neighborhood, and to improve positive outcomes if this approach were to be adapted and implemented in other neighborhoods?

Evaluation Approach
The evaluation consisted of a desk review of project documents and KIIs with primary parties who collaborated on the project. KII outreach was to 13 people from City Bureaus and Community Members; 8 were available to participate. KIIs were 60-minute virtual, voluntary, and confidential sessions. Interview protocol was applied to all interviews and utilized semi-structured interview questions.

Desk Review Data Sources
- Community Survey Responses (12/2021)
- Email communications - retrospective and ongoing re: questions about the project
- Maps and images of barrel placement and project work areas
- Mt. Scott Community Forum recording and associated PowerPoint Presentation
- News articles and media recordings
- PPB Shooting Incident Statistics
- PPB Dispatched Calls for Service Statistics

Interview Outreach & Participants
City of Portland
Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty (team member) 
Commissioner Carmen Rubio (team member) *
Community Safety Transition Division
Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)
Portland Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)*
Portland Police Bureau (PPB)
Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R)

Mt. Scott/Arleta Community Members
SE Uplift; SE Neighborhood Coalition
Green Tulip Peace and Nature School

Dr. Jonathan Jay, DrPH, JD, Assistant Professor at Boston University School of Public Health

*Received outreach communications and were unavailable to participate.
B. Interview Questions

1. How did you and/or your organization/community get involved in the Mt. Scott intervention, and what was your role?

2. From your perspective, what was the vision the project aimed to contribute to?
   a. What did you hope to see change or happen?

3. If you were involved in planning and/or implementation, was the project implemented as planned, if not, why?

4. Looking back at the planning and implementation process, what went well (what made it effective)?
   a. Was this built-in or emerged as part of the larger context?

5. Looking back at the planning and implementation process, what was challenging (what got in the way)?
   a. Was this built-in or emerged as part of the larger context?

6. From your perspective, was this project inclusive? (Who was included and who was excluded?)

7. If you were to do it over, what would you change (what could be improved), why?

8. Would you recommend replicating and/or expanding the project to other neighborhoods, why?
   a. What would you do differently? Who would you involve?
   b. If not, what alternatives would you consider?

9. What would you love to see happen?
   a. What would it take to get there? (i.e., what knowledge, skills, capacities, and/or resources would be required to do it?)
   b. How would you know if it was working?

10. Anything else you’d like to share?
C. Project Activity Timeline

The content in this timeline was drawn from document review and KII. As the evaluation did not focus on a timeline analysis, it is meant to be a general (not a comprehensive) overview.

- **(2004)** History of community advocacy in the area including slip lane closure requests

- **(July - Aug. 2021)** Community recognized significant shooting increase and took action to get support including outreach to Federal District Attorney’s Office, Multnomah County District Attorney, Civic Life, OMF, OVP, Community Safety Division, and Commissioner Hardesty’s office. The community asked to shut down the streets to prevent access, get the block closed, and to add barrels and park lighting
  - Commissioner Hardesty’s office responded rapidly and mobilized to create a multi-bureau effort and integrated the CPTED approach, Collaborators included: City Repair, Civic Life, Community Safety Team, Dr. Jay, OVP, and PBOT amongst others; Commissioner Rubio’s office supported
  - Ongoing communications and site-visits; Church installed parking lot gates to limit traffic

- **(Late Sept-Oct)** Safety and traffic-calming intervention activities initiated:
  - Late-September: begin PP&R/PPB joint patrols
  - October 1: barrels placed
  - Ongoing community meetings, interactions, and site-visits

- **(Dec 2021)** Commissioner Hardesty’s team distributes 400 surveys to community members to learn more about their experiences and opinions related to the intervention, 98 people responded

- **(Jan 2022)** PPB ceased project-related patrols in the area; PPB data sharing and analysis was initiated

- **(Mar 2022)** Commissioner Hardesty’s office led a Community Forum to share-back information related to the project with the community and answer their questions

- **(To-date)** Ongoing project work including Mt. Scott/Arleta Triangle-Square project, to create permanent structures such as sidewalks and planters, and impending slip lane closure - with additional project partners including:
  - STRYVE – Multnomah County Office of Youth Violence Prevention
  - PSU Center for Public Interest Design (CPID), School of Architecture
  - PSU Design Build Studio – build structures into a Pickathon stage, then rebuilt in plaza as furnishings for process prescribed
  - Pickathon – philanthropic wing to help transform slip lane into community space; build a stage to host a concert; whatever they build will stay there and serve the community
D. Key Collaborator Network List

The content in this list was drawn from document review and KII. As the evaluation did not engage a network analysis, it is meant to be a general (not a comprehensive) list. We intentionally use the word collaborator rather than ‘stakeholder’, as the latter is deeply rooted in white supremacy culture and settler-colonial practices by ‘staking a claim in the land’.

City of Portland
Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty’s Office
Commissioner Carmen Rubio’s Office
Community Safety Transition Division
Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)
Portland Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)
Portland Police Bureau (PPB)
Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R)

Mt. Scott/Arleta Community Members and Organizations
Dunja Marcum, Program Director at Vibe of Portland
Matchu Williams, SE Uplift and SE Neighborhood Coalition
Nadine Salama, Director at Green Tulip Peace and Nature School
Pastors at Fremont Church

Dr. Jonathan Jay, DrPH, JD, Assistant Professor at Boston University School of Public Health
Multnomah County - Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE) Program
Pickathon - Slip Lane transformation support collaboration with Portland State University (PSU)
Portland State University - Center for Public Interest Design (CPID)
Portland State University - Design Build Studio
E. Comparative Shooting Data in the Project Area

Figure 2 shows the inconsistency across data sources regarding the months and verified number of shootings in the project work area, which was not clearly defined in the data provided. PPB data from the 6x6 project area in July was not included in the dataset. In Table 1, July - December 2021 are the only months with consistently available data across sources, which were used to create the graph. This limited comparative analysis to determine outcomes.

![Figure 2: Inconsistency across data sources when comparing number of shootings in the project work area](image)

Table 1. Project area shooting data provided for the evaluation

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<th>PPB 'Mt Scott Park Area' Jan 2022-May 2022 (Area of joint patrol missions with PP&amp;R)</th>
<th>PPB 6x6 project area data Aug-Dec 2021 (From the 6x6 project area)</th>
<th>Community Forum PowerPoint July-Dec 2020 vs. July-Dec 2021 (Assessment Area)</th>
<th>Dr. Jon Jay Jan 2021-Jan 2022 (Area within 0.5 mi. of SE 72nd &amp; Knight)</th>
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Additionally, when comparing PPB data on neighborhood shooting locations during the implementation with post-implementation (images below), it appears that shooting incidents continue occurring mainly in the southeast corner of the project work area where slip lane efforts are underway. The decrease and change are suggestive of a positive intervention effect, but more data is needed to determine causes and outcomes.

**PPB Neighborhood Shooting Incidents ('all type') in Mt. Scott-Arleta neighborhood:**
- July 2021 - December 2021: 29 incidents
- January 2022 - May 2022: 19 incidents

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Source: PPB Portland Shooting Incident Statistics