

**PUBLIC SAFETY INSTITUTE SPRING 2021**

Interim Assessment of  
**GANG INJUNCTIONS  
AND SAFETY ZONES**  
in Memphis

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## INTRODUCTION

In September 2013, as the result of Multi-Agency Gang Unit (MGU) investigations into reports of criminal gang activity in the Riverside area of South Memphis (part of the Memphis Police Department's [MPD's] Airways precinct), the Shelby County District Attorney's Office (DA) filed the first nuisance petition against the "Riverside Rollin' 90's Neighborhood Crips" (R90). In response to the petition, General Sessions Court Judge Larry Potter issued an injunction against R90 members, creating a 4.6-square-mile "safety zone." This process was followed three more times to obtain five more injunctions: 1) October 2014 against the "Dixie Homes Murda Gang/47 NHC" (DHMG) in the North Main MPD precinct; 2) December 2014 for two injunctions against the "FAM Mob" in two areas of the Old Allen (now Austin Peay) MPD precinct and 3) January 2016 for injunctions against the "Grape Street Crips" (GSC) and "Vice Lords" (VL) in two overlapping areas of the Tillman MPD precinct.

In each instance, the gang was declared a "public nuisance," and members were required to abide by the following 11 requirements with respect to their behaviors in the safety zones:

1. Do not associate | Members may not appear together in public view or any place accessible to the public (does not include inside a school while attending classes or a place of worship).
2. No intimidation | Members may not confront or provoke any person known to be a witness to any activity of gang members.
3. No guns or dangerous weapons | Members may not possess any gun ammunition or illegal weapons, and must not remain in the presence of them.
4. No graffiti or graffiti tools | Members may not damage or deface private property of others or possess tools for the purpose of "tagging" private property of others.
5. Stay away from drugs | Members may not possess, sell or use any controlled substance or paraphernalia without a prescription.

6. Do not act as a lookout | Members may not act as lookouts to warn of the approach or presence of law enforcement.
7. Stay away from alcohol | Members may not possess any open alcohol container while in public view or in any public place.
8. No trespassing | Members may not be present on or in any private property not open to the public without owner consent.
9. No forcible recruiting | Members may not make threats to strike or assault another person nor damage or destroy personal property or disturb the peace to encourage a person to join the gang.
10. No preventing a member from leaving the gang | Members may not make threats to strike or assault another person nor damage or destroy personal property to prevent a person from leaving the gang.
11. Obey all laws.

The injunctions give law enforcement the authority to arrest any gang member found in violation of these court-ordered conditions. Police may arrest violators and charge them with contempt of court. However, violating gang members subject to injunction must previously have been served notice (i.e., informed that they are subject to the injunction) by Shelby County deputy sheriffs before they can be arrested and charged under the injunction. In addition, an individual can “opt out” of the injunctions by providing a 30-day notice to the DA, providing a written declaration that he or she was not or is no longer a member of the gang and by providing proof of that non-association.

While anecdotal evidence may suggest that these injunctions are effective in curtailing gang activity and reducing violent crime in Memphis, no systematic investigation into their impact previously had been conducted prior to the University of Memphis Public Safety Institute’s (PSI’s) interim assessment issued in 2019. This need was recognized by the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission (MSCC) in developing the third iteration of a “Safe Community Plan.” Goal B of the five-year plan is to “strengthen law enforcement’s ability to reduce violent street crime.” Within this goal, Objective B4 aims to reduce gang violence through

enhanced intelligence and data-gathering. The process of filing a petition for an injunction is driven by street-level intelligence and data that must be assembled to support the need for an injunction. A finding that injunctions are indeed effective at reducing gang violence would provide evidence that Objective B4 is being attained. In addition, gathering and analyzing data to measure whether injunctions are effective can inform and enhance law enforcement and prosecutorial strategies to address gang violence.

In 2019, the PSI issued an interim assessment to provide some insight into violent crime and gang member behavior since injunctions were implemented. The interim assessment covered the period January 2014 – June 2018. Moreover, this process set up the templates required for a full evaluation. The PSI has conducted a follow-up assessment covering the additional period of July 2018 – June 2020, which is the subject of this report.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***What is a Gang?***

No universally accepted definition of “gang” exists, so jurisdictions usually develop their own.

The image most commonly associated with a gang is that of the “street gang.” This term often is interchanged with “youth gang” and “criminal street gang,” although the latter is characterized by criminal activity of specific interest to local, state and federal gang-related legislation. The term “street gang,” however, may be most instructive because it implies crimes committed by a group with a street presence, which is a key characteristic of youth gangs. Most importantly, the acts committed by these groups often are serious violent crimes that take place on community streets, such as aggravated assaults, drive-by shootings, robberies, car-jackings and homicides. Citizens and policymakers are especially concerned about these offenses because their perpetration increases resident fear and significantly impacts the community’s ability to effectively implement mechanisms of informal social control (National Gang Center, 2019).

Jurisdictions often use the following criteria to classify groups as gangs:

- The group has three or more members, generally aged 12–24.
- Members share an identity, typically linked to a name and often other symbols.
- Members view themselves as a gang and are recognized by others as a gang.
- The group has some permanence and a degree of organization.
- The group is involved in an elevated level of criminal activity.

Currently, federal law (18 U.S.C. § 521) defines a “criminal street gang” as an “ongoing association of five or more persons that has as one of its primary purposes the commission of federal felonies involving controlled substances for which the maximum penalty is not less than five years, federal felony crimes of violence and conspiracies to commit such offenses, whose members have engaged in a continuing series of such offenses within the past five years and such activities affect interstate or foreign commerce.”

This federal definition differs markedly from other definitions because the federal system is more concerned with large-scale criminal enterprises that cross state or national boundaries. At the state and local level, results from the National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS), conducted by the National Gang Center (NGC) from 1996 through 2012, indicate that law enforcement agencies believe a group name, group identity, criminal activity and using symbols and signs to represent the group to others to be the most important characteristics of defining a group as a gang (National Gang Center, 2019).

### ***What is a Gang Member?***

The definition of a “gang member” is also inconsistent across jurisdictions, with common definitional points being admission of gang involvement, being

identified as a gang member by a reliable witness (often a parent or guardian) and having identifiable symbols associated with the gang such as clothing or tattoos (National Gang Center, 2019). Developing a solid operational definition for the term “gang member” is crucial for communities to identify these individuals, to develop effective strategies to deal with them and for prosecution efforts.

Federal law (18 U.S.C. § 521) considers a gang member to be any person who:

- 1) Participates in a criminal street gang with knowledge that its members engage in or have engaged in a continuing series of [gang] offenses.
- 2) Intends to promote or further the felonious activities of the criminal street gang or maintain or increase his or her position in the gang.
- 3) Has been convicted within the past five years for:
  - a) A federally defined gang offense.
  - b) A state offense:
    - (i) Involving a controlled substance (as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act [21 USC § 802]) for which the maximum penalty is not less than five years’ imprisonment; or
    - (ii) That is a felony crime of violence that has as an element the use or attempted use of physical force against the person of another.
  - c) Any federal or state felony offense that by its nature involves a substantial risk that physical force against the person of another may be used in the course of committing the offense.
  - d) A conspiracy to commit an offense described in subparagraph (A), (B) or (C).

Several states and local jurisdictions require an individual to meet certain criteria and/or thresholds to be classified as a gang member. Many states require that multiple criteria be met, such as the identification of the person as a gang

member by a reliable source and the outward display of gang symbols, hand signs and/or gang tattoos by the individual in question (Tita & Papachristos, 2009).

### *What is a Gang Crime?*

Definitions of gang crime also vary between jurisdictions. These definitions range from wholly encapsulating statements regarding crimes committed with the knowledge that the crime was being committed as part of a gang or with others known to be in a gang, to more specific lists of violations and offenses considered gang crimes (e.g., acts involving controlled substances or deadly weapons, assault, burglary and arson). Many state definitions specify that the crime must have been committed with the knowledge that the crime may further the individual's standing in a gang or that the activity can be identified as gang activity by a reliable witness (National Gang Center, 2016).

Many jurisdictions encounter difficulty in determining when to classify a criminal act involving a gang member, or potential gang member, as a "gang crime." Jurisdictions use the terms "gang-involved," "gang-related," and/or "gang-motivated" and often erroneously use these terms interchangeably when they should be distinct.

Most distinctions relate to the intent or motive of the offender in determining which criminal acts are related to his or her status as a gang member. Clearly, crime committed by a gang member that is irrelevant to his or her status as a gang member should not be considered gang crime in the strictest sense. Some jurisdictions, however, call these types of crimes "gang-involved" or "gang-related" simply because they are committed by a gang member.

Acts that are committed with an intent or motive directly related to the offender's gang membership, or potential gang membership, often are termed "gang-motivated." These are the types of offenses about which jurisdictions are most concerned. Gang-motivated crime is directly linked to gang membership and comprises most reported gang crime. These types of crimes include violence between rival gangs or crimes committed on behalf of the gang (Rosenfeld, Bray & Agle, 1999).

Determining intent, motive and whether an act is simply committed by a gang member or is committed by a gang member for gang purposes can be problematic. Domestic assault, for example, may be committed by a gang member and be classified as simply gang-involved or gang-related because the offender is a gang member. When the assault, however, is encouraged by fellow gang members or is used by the offender to attain status in the gang, it becomes gang-motivated. The definitions regarding gangs and gang violence must be considered in relevant policies, which may impact the criminal justice proceedings dealing with gang members.

### ***Gangs, Gang Members and Gang Crimes in Tennessee***

Tennessee law (T.C.A. 40-35-121) defines a “criminal gang” as a “formal or informal ongoing organization, association or group consisting of three or more persons that has:

- (A) As one of its primary activities, the commission of *criminal gang offenses*;
- (B) Two or more members who, individually or collectively, engage in or have engaged in a *pattern of criminal gang activity*.

The statute outlined a limited number of *criminal gang offenses* prior to July 1, 2013. However, beginning on July 1, 2013, the scope was broadened to include the “commission of or attempted commission of, facilitation of, solicitation of, or conspiracy to commit” a list of 27 criminal offenses, from murder, rape and kidnapping, to witness coercion, retaliation and inciting to riot.

Also important to the Tennessee statute is a “*pattern of criminal gang activity*.” To constitute a pattern, the individuals in questions must have “prior convictions for the commission of or attempted commission of, facilitation of, solicitation of, or conspiracy to commit:

- (i) Two or more criminal gang offenses that are classified as felonies.
- (ii) Three or more criminal gang offenses that are classified as misdemeanors.
- (iii) One or more criminal gang offenses that are classified as felonies and two or more criminal gang offenses that are classified as misdemeanors.
- (iv) The criminal gang offenses are committed on separate occasions.
- (v) The criminal gang offenses are committed within a five-year period.

Tennessee is one of several states that has established criteria for defining a “criminal gang member.” For an individual to be considered a criminal gang member in Tennessee, he or she must meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Admits to criminal gang involvement.
- Is identified as a criminal gang member by a parent or guardian.
- Is identified as a criminal gang member by a documented reliable informant.
- Resides in or frequents a particular criminal gang’s area; adopts its style of dress, use of hand signs or tattoos; and associates with known gang members.
- Is identified as a criminal gang member by an informant of previously untested reliability, and such identification is corroborated by independent information.
- Has been arrested more than once in the company of identified criminal gang members for offenses that are consistent with usual criminal gang activity.
- Is identified as a criminal gang member by physical evidence such as photographs or other documentation.

## *Programs and Policies to Address Gang Violence*

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) lists 24 programs and one practice that have been developed to address gang violence ([crimesolutions.gov](http://crimesolutions.gov)). Of the 24 programs, six have been rated as “effective,” 13 as “promising” and five as having “no effects.” Of the six effective programs, two were focused deterrence programs (Los Angeles and New Orleans), two were problem-oriented, community-policing programs (Operation Ceasefire in Boston, Operation Peacekeeper in Stockton, Calif.), one was a detention-based intervention program (Project BUILD in Chicago) and one was a Los Angeles program based on “crime-prevention through environmental design” (CPTED) principles that installed physical street barriers in some residential areas with high levels of gang violence.

The practice identified by NIJ as focused deterrence rated as “promising.”  
Focused deterrence strategies:

Target specific criminal behavior committed by a small number of chronic offenders who are vulnerable to sanctions and punishment. Offenders are directly confronted and informed that continued criminal behavior will not be tolerated. Targeted offenders are also told how the criminal justice system, such as the police and prosecutors, will respond to continued criminal behavior; mainly that all potential sanctions or levers will be applied. The deterrence-based message is reinforced through crackdowns on offenders, or groups of offenders, such as gang members, who continue to commit crimes despite the warning. In addition to deterring violent behavior, the strategies also reward compliance and nonviolent behavior among targeted offenders by providing positive incentives, such as access to social services and job opportunities.

Although two of the effective programs used focused deterrence and these strategies are deemed “promising,” two of the five programs with “no effects,” also were based on principles of focused deterrence (Group Violence Reduction Strategy in Chicago and No Violence Alliance in Kansas City, Mo.).

In addition to programs and practices, jurisdictions plagued by gang violence also have legal tools at their disposal. Civil gang injunctions (CGIs), for example, are a type of restraining order issued by courts to prohibit gang members in specific areas from participating in specific activities. They are based on the legal theory

that gang activities create a public nuisance that prevents other community members from having public order and peace. Usually, injunctions are obtained against the gang as a unit. However, police and prosecutors later identify specific gang members who are subject to the injunction.

The Los Angeles city attorney and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) obtained the first CGI against gangs on July 22, 1982, specifically to address gang graffiti (Simpson, 2013). Since then, cities in California have been the primary users of this tool. Throughout the 1980s and into the mid-2010s, hundreds of CGIs covering tens of thousands of individuals were obtained in several California cities based primarily on anecdotal evidence of their effectiveness.

A few studies have attempted to measure the impact of CGIs on gang activities. One study evaluated 25 gang injunctions from four California counties matched with similar communities with similar gang problems but no injunctions. Researchers evaluated calls for service during the year before the injunction and the year after the injunction. Calls for service in the injunction areas significantly decreased over the baseline and compared to the matched communities. The authors concluded that gang injunctions, implemented correctly, can reduce gang crime (O'Deane & Morreale, 2011).

A more recent and comprehensive study from Los Angeles examined the impact of 46 injunctions enacted from 1993 through 2013 (Ridgeway, Grogger, Moyer & MacDonald, 2018). The researchers compared reported crime in affected geographic areas before and after the injunctions and contrasted those data with data from areas not covered by injunctions. This allowed them to examine the average short- and long-term impact. They concluded that injunctions seemed to reduce crime by about five percent in the short-term and by as much as 18 percent in the long-term. The reduction in assaults was much larger, about 19 percent in the short-term and 35 percent in the long-term. The authors also found no evidence that the injunctions displaced crime to nearby areas.

Other research indicates that positive results may be short-lived. A study of five San Bernardino neighborhoods found that while most of the neighborhoods had less crime and gang presence immediately following the injunctions, the reduction was short-lived. Moreover, one of the neighborhoods experienced increased gang activity after the injunction (Maxson, Hennigan & Sloane, 2005).

Gang injunctions are not without their critics. Numerous lawsuits have challenged their constitutionality (i.e., freedom of assembly, due process). Other criticisms include those related to the suppression effect which may diminish alternatives and diversion programs for at-risk youth, their zero-tolerance nature, which may punish even benign activities of two gang members, and their disproportionate impact on youth of color.

In 2016, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed suit against the city of Los Angeles, arguing that the filing of an injunction against a gang, rather than against an individual, denied an individual the opportunity to disprove his or her alleged gang affiliation in court. Following this suit, the Los Angeles city attorney and the LAPD conducted an audit of the injunction rolls to determine which individuals could be removed due to no longer posing a threat, being deceased, having relocated, etc. This resulted in the purging of some 7,300 people from the injunction lists in 2017. Most recently, a federal judge prohibited the LAPD from enforcing existing injunctions against anyone who did not have the opportunity to challenge the “gang member” designation in court before being subject to the injunction, (Winter & Queally, 2018).

## **METHODS**

Two primary research questions are addressed with this report. This report examines primarily post-injunction data since January 2014 through June 2020. The research questions addressed are:

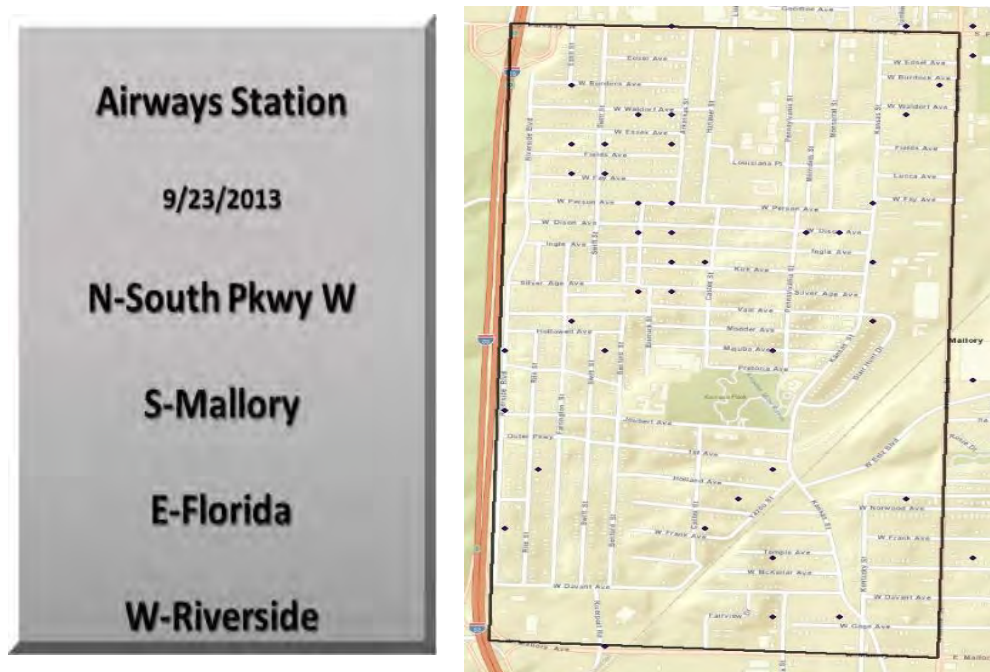
- 1) Do injunctions reduce the number of violent offenses in injunction areas? (Is there a general deterrent effect?)
- 2) Do gang injunctions reduce arrests of individuals subject to injunctions? (Is there a specific deterrent effect?)

Data required to answer these questions include: the number of violent offenses within safety zones since issuance of injunctions, the number of injunction violations, and/or number of arrests of gang members since enjoined. Violent offenses include murders, aggravated assaults, robberies and rapes. Although violent offenses are the focus, the research also considers non-violent offenses involving guns, such as misdemeanor and felony weapons violations.

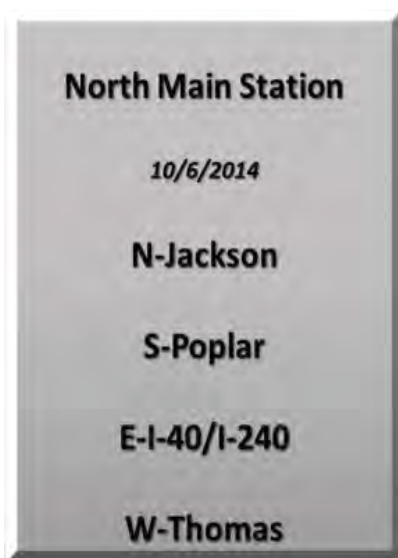
A third question is addressed because of its implications for law enforcement actions in the safety zones. Do officers working in precincts that have safety zones know about the injunctions and the prohibited behaviors? If officers are unaware of safety zones and prohibited behaviors, they cannot enforce those injunctions, and any observed changes in violent offenses or arrests cannot necessarily be attributed to the injunctions. Data required to answer this question included the percentages of correct responses to a questionnaire about safety zones and prohibited behaviors that were distributed to officers in all MPD precincts and completed during roll calls.

### ***Measuring Violent Offenses***

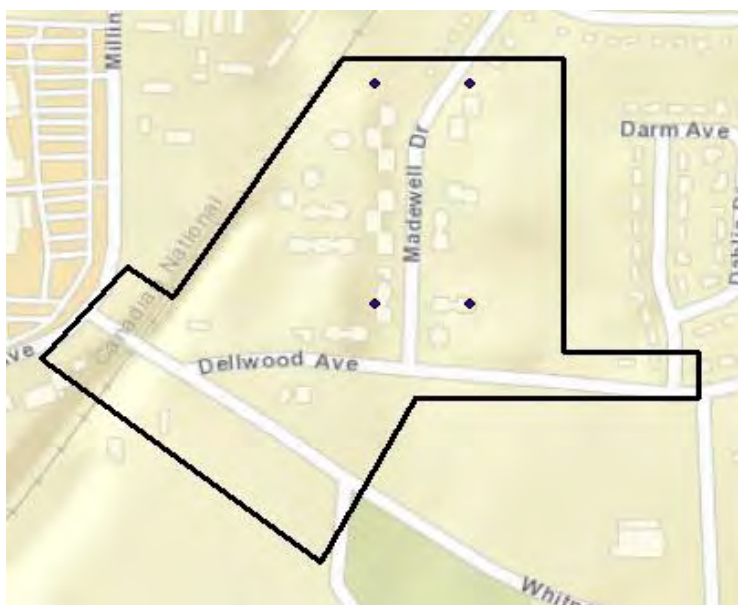
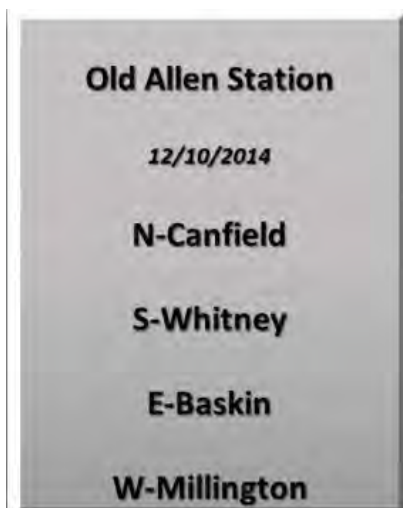
To determine the number of violent offenses within safety zones, those zones had to be defined within a “Geographic Information Systems” (GIS) mapping program (i.e., ArcGIS). The MGU provided the PSI with the safety zone boundaries that were used to create “shape files” of the zones. These shape files were overlaid on city maps to circumscribe the boundaries for subsequent data inquiry. Once the geographic boundaries of the safety zones were plotted on maps of the city, the locations of violent offenses from July 2018 through June 2020 were plotted on those maps using MPD offense data. Figures 1–5 provide examples with plots of violent offenses within each safety zone from January–June 2020 only.



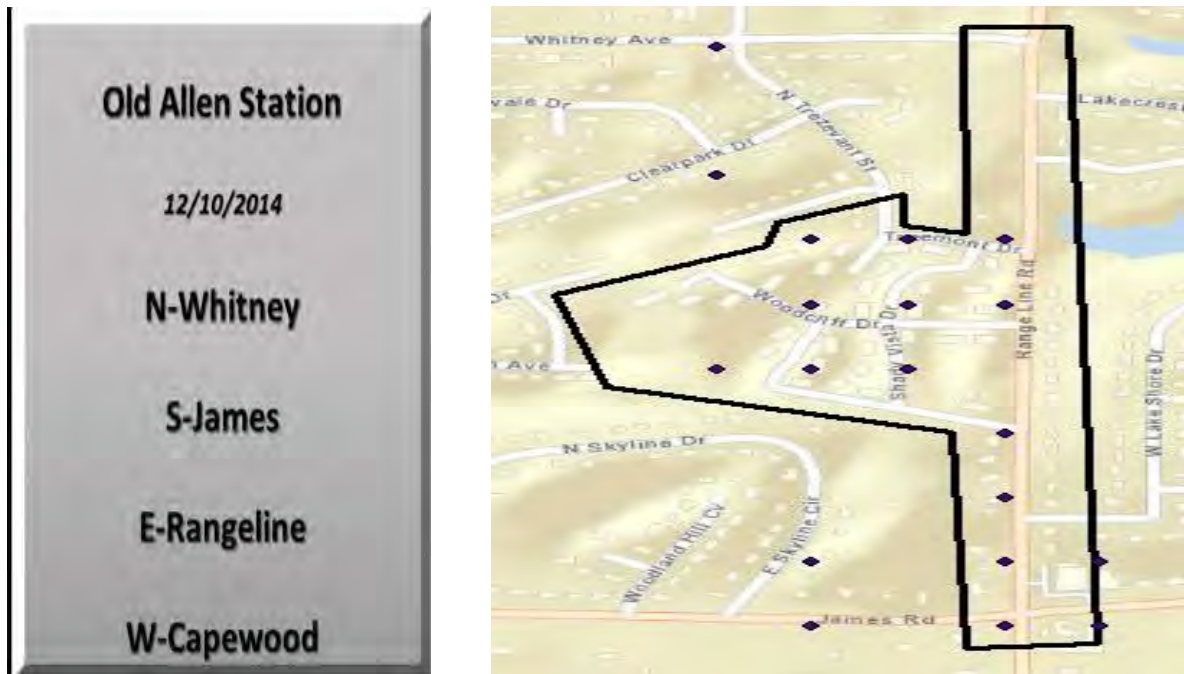
***Figure 1:*** Airways Station (Rollin' 90s) Safety Zone Violent Offenses (January – June 2020)



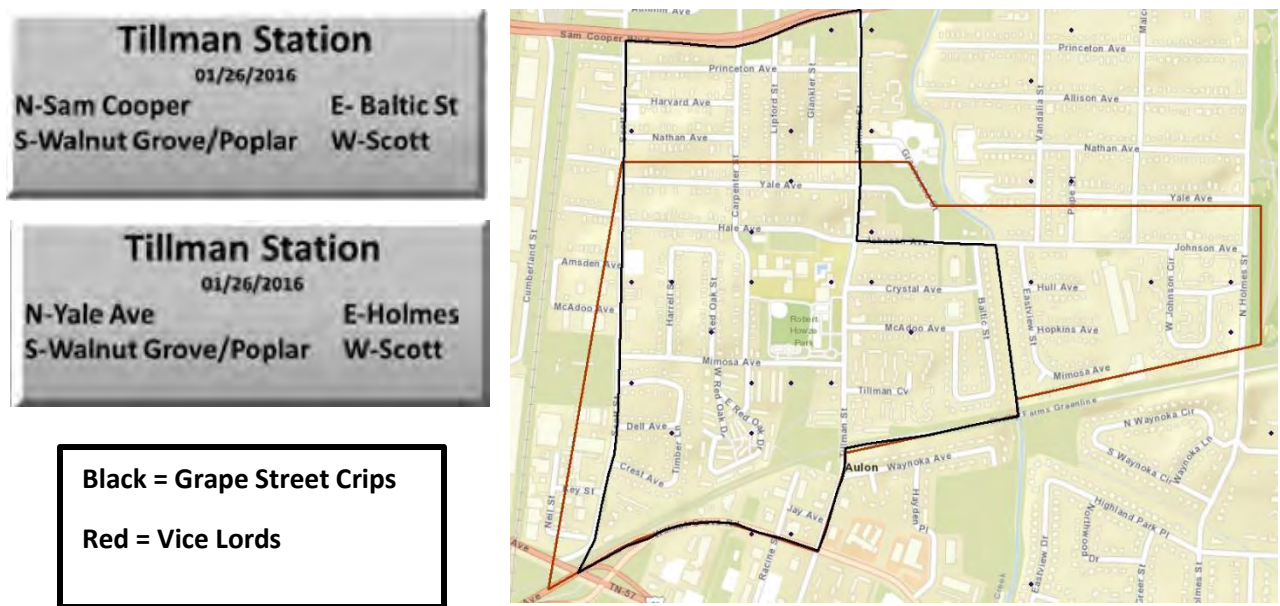
**Figure 2:** North Main Station (DHMG/47NHC) Safety Zone Violent Offenses (January – June 2020)



**Figure 3:** Old Allen Station Safety Zone (Greenbriar – FAM Mob) Violent Offenses (January – June 2020)



**Figure 4:** Old Allen Station Safety Zone (Ridgecrest – FAM Mob) Violent Offenses (January – June 2020)



**Figure 5:** Tillman Station Safety Zones Violent Offenses January – June 2020

In addition to maps, line graphs depicting six-month totals of violent offenses from Jan. 1, 2014, through June 30, 2020, in all the zones, as well as by zone, were produced. Although it is desirable to plot data over more points in time (i.e.,

monthly), the number of violent offenses each month in some of the zones would have been too low to make the graphs meaningful. Trends over time with respect to injunction dates in each zone were observed and any changes noted.

### ***Measuring Arrests of Enjoined Individuals***

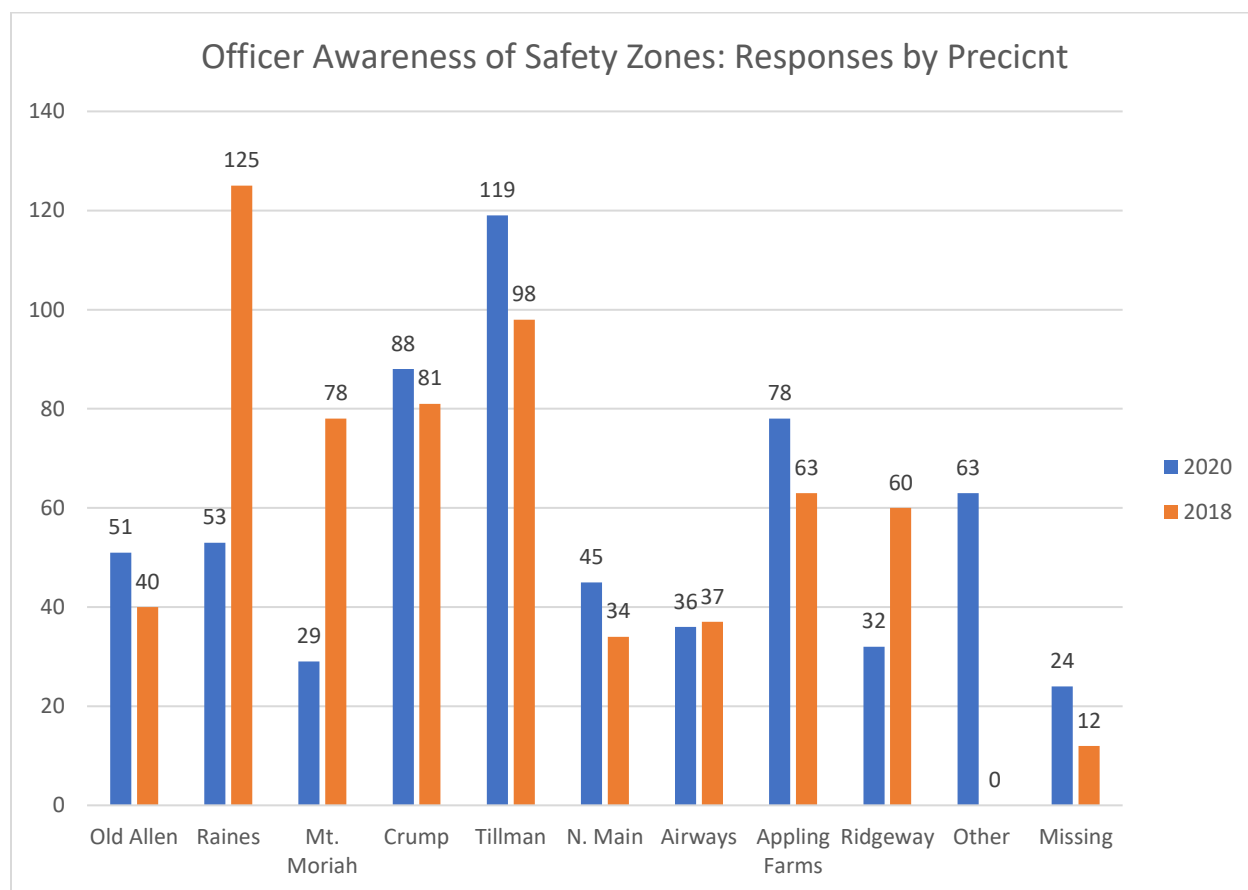
A total of 132 individuals currently are covered under the injunctions: 26 in Rollin' 90's, 34 in DHMG/47NHC, 39 in FAM Mob, 13 in Grape Street Crips and 20 in Vice Lords. The Shelby County gang injunctions were designed to impact the gang behavior of those 132 people in six well-defined small areas. That gang behavior could be simply associating with another gang member, or it could be committing an aggravated assault. In addition to examining arrests related to the safety zones, it was also important to collect and analyze data about arrests of those individuals outside the safety zones. If gang injunctions reduce arrests beyond the safety zones, they have a more significant impact on crime than originally intended. Therefore, determining the extent to which enjoined individuals were arrested required the collection and analysis of data from several different sources, including the DA (arrests and prosecutions for injunction violations), the MGU (monthly reports of gang members arrested for gun crime) and the MPD (citywide arrests for violent crime and gun crime).

The DA and City Attorney's Office compiled and provided the PSI data on enjoined individuals and those arrested and charged since September 2013 under T.C.A. 29-3-111, the statute that proscribes the penalty for violating an order to abate. This provides a measure of injunction violations. In addition, the MGU provided the PSI with monthly lists of gang members arrested for gun crime since April 2018, when they started keeping that data. Finally, the PSI maintains a database of citywide arrests for violent crime, violent gun crime and any gun crime (including misdemeanor and felony weapons violations).

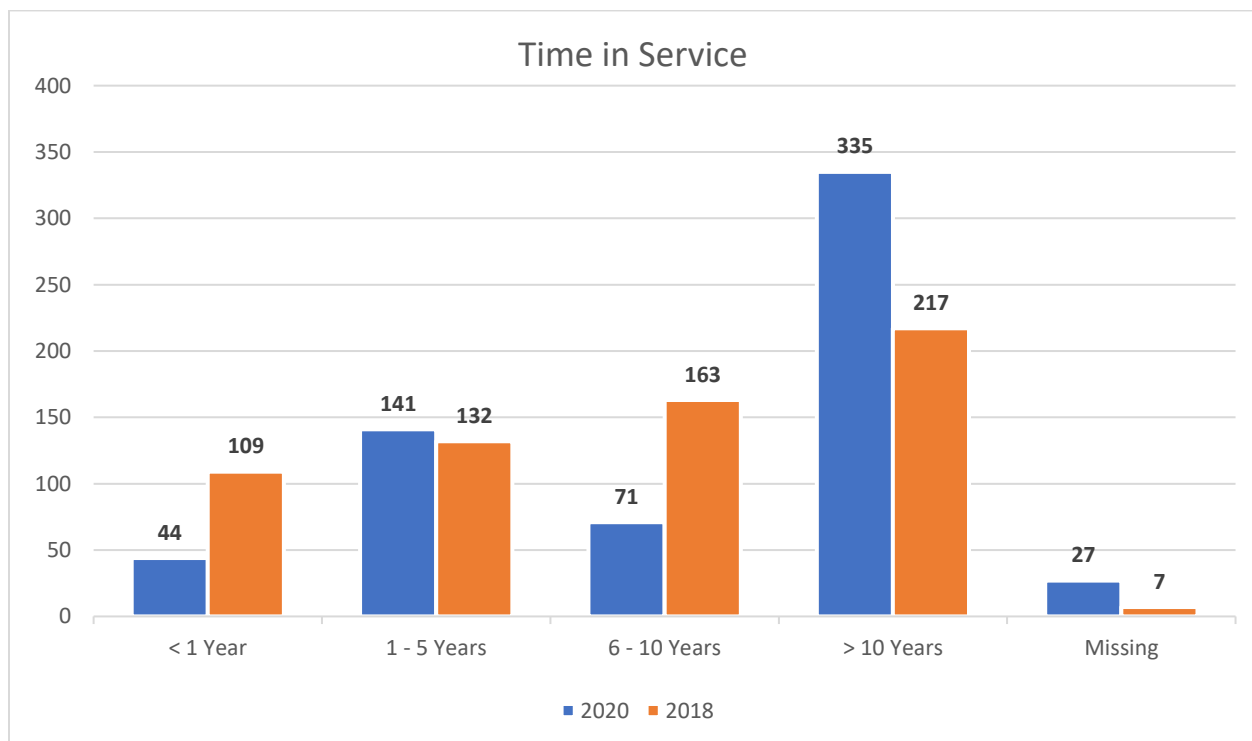
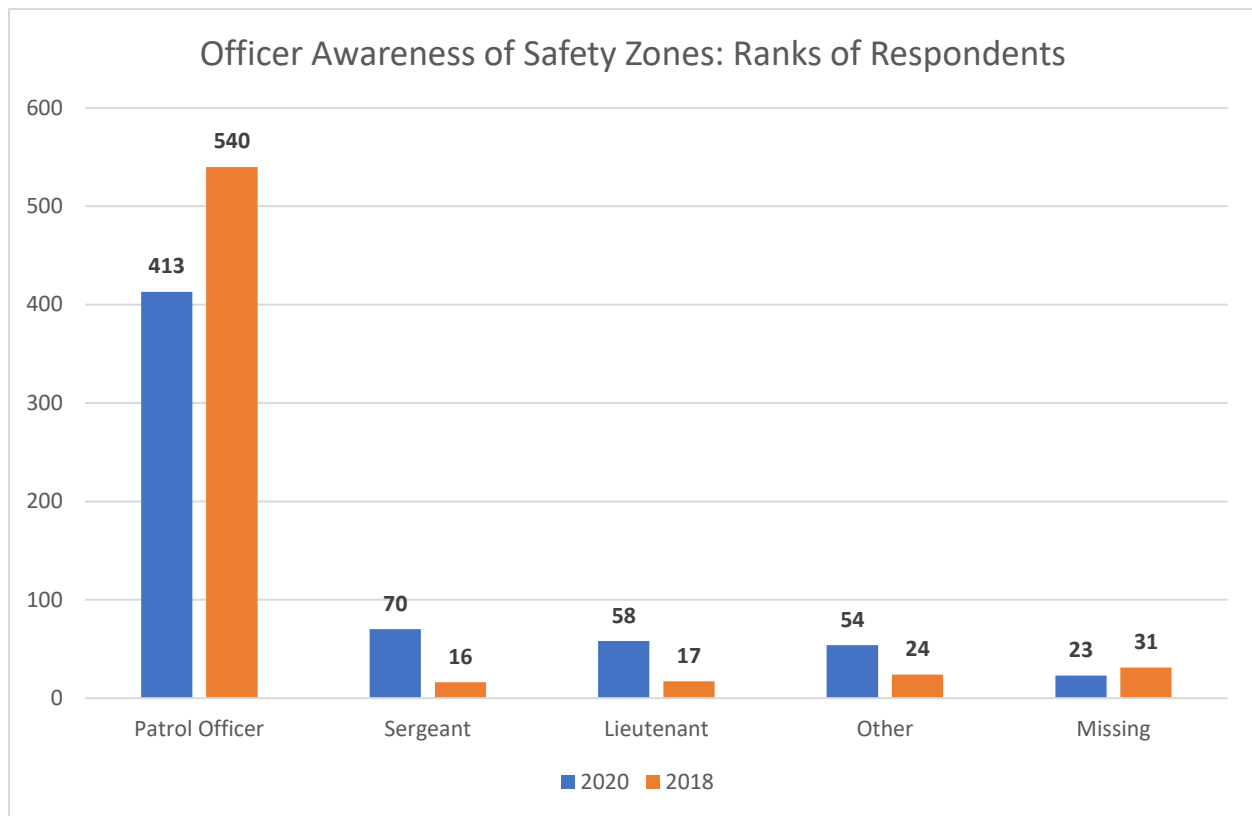
### ***Measuring Officer Awareness***

MPD officers and command staff at all nine precincts were surveyed with an online questionnaire through Qualtrics. The questionnaire, developed by the PSI and reviewed and approved by the MPD, consists of an introductory paragraph that explains the purpose and provides instructions for responding followed by

nine questions to measure awareness and understanding and two demographic questions. A total of 618 completed questionnaires, representing about one-third of sworn MPD personnel, were returned to the PSI with the responding precinct noted. (See Figure 6 for a breakdown by precinct plus an indication of responses to a similar survey conducted in 2018 as part of the interim assessment issued in 2019.) PSI staff scored each response and entered the data into an Excel spreadsheet which was subsequently transformed for analysis using IBM-Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Most respondents were patrol officers, and those with more than 10 years of service comprised the largest group of respondents. (See Figure 7 again with a comparison to 2018 survey responses.)



***Figure 6: Officer Awareness of Safety Zones: Responses by Precinct***



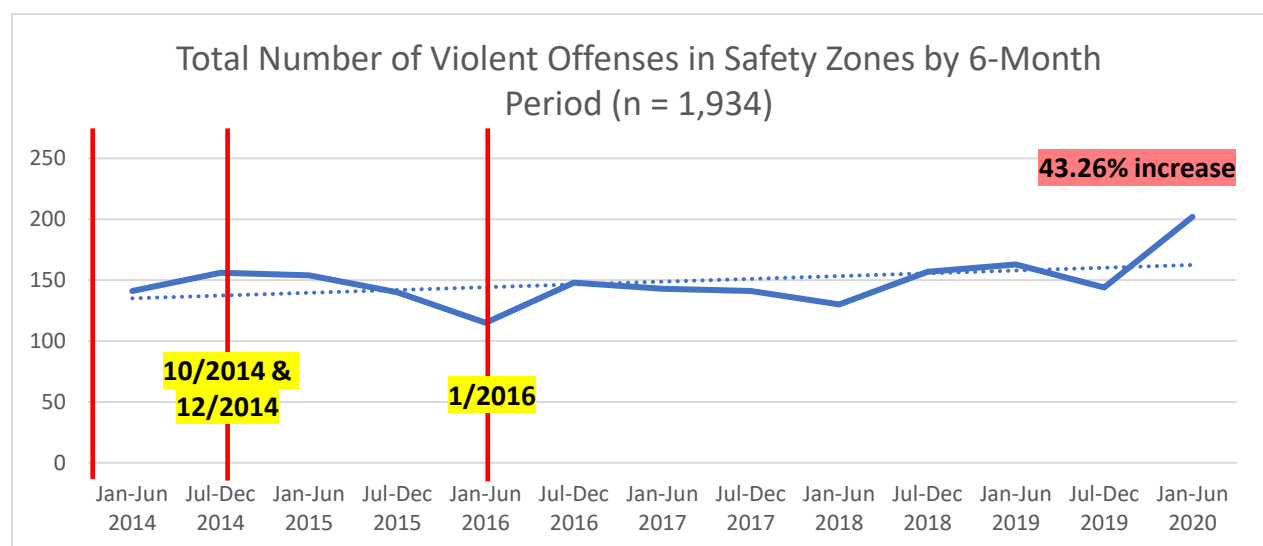
***Figure 7:*** Officer Awareness of Safety Zones: Rank of Respondents (top) and Time In Service (bottom)

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Violent Offenses

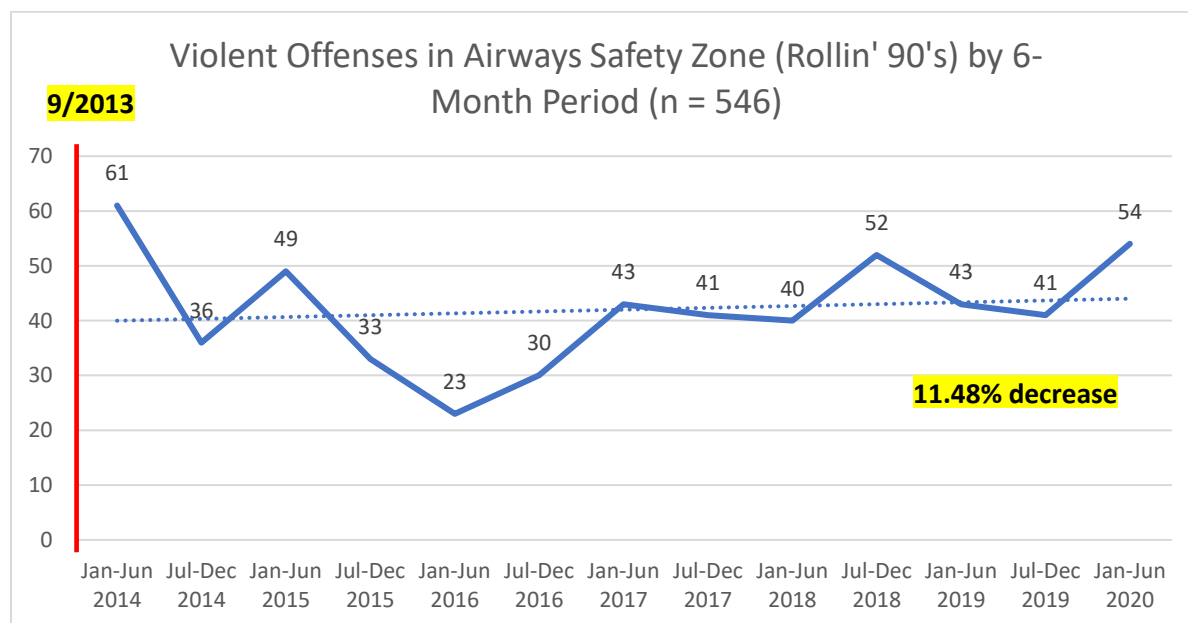
Measuring the general deterrent effect of the injunctions requires analyzing violent offenses in the safety zones. If all violent offenses decrease and not just violent offenses by enjoined gang members, the injunctions may have a general deterrent effect. During January 2014 – June 2020, a total of 1,934 violent offenses were reported in the six safety zones around the city, an average of about one per week per zone. In the initial assessment, there was a 7.8 percent decrease between January 1, 2014 and June 30, 2018. From January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2020, however, reports have increased 43.26 percent, from 141 in the first 6 months of 2014 to 202 in the first six months of 2020. (See Figure 8.) Since the last assessment there has been a 55.38 percent increase in violent offenses within these zones. After an increase of more than 10 percent in the latter half of 2014, numbers were steadily decreasing until July – December 2018, when these numbers started to steadily increase as indicated by the dotted blue trendline.

The red vertical lines indicate the six-month periods within which injunctions were issued. Violent offenses originally peaked during the quarter two injunctions were issued and then began to generally decrease. Starting in the second half of 2018, though, over two years after the last injunction was issued, we start to see an increase in these offenses. The lowest number was in the first half of 2016, during which two injunctions were issued against gangs in the Tillman Precinct.



**Figure 8:** Total Violent Offenses in Safety Zones by 6-Month Period

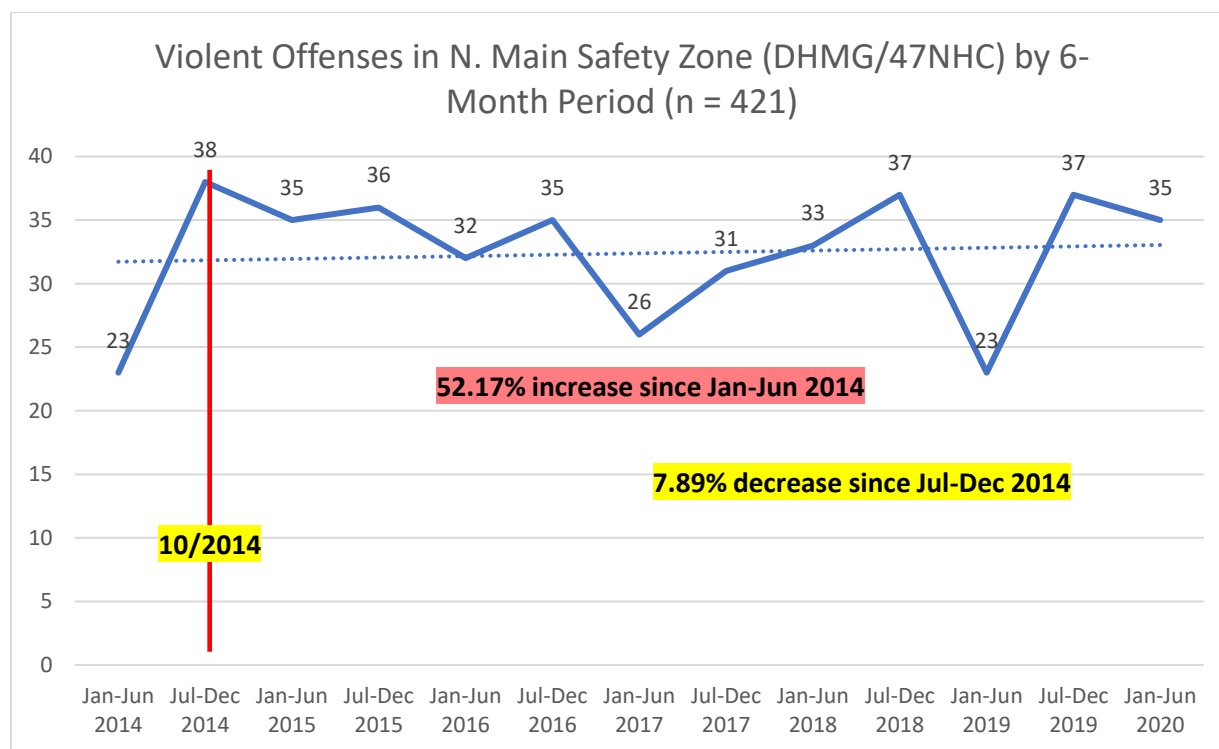
Airways Precinct: Created by the first injunction in September 2013, the Airways safety zone had the highest total number of offenses of any single safety zone and averaged more than 1.6 violent offenses per week for the entire time period between January 1, 2014 and June 30, 2020. (See Figure 9.) However, this zone also experienced the most dramatic decrease in violent offenses, from 61 in the initial six-month period of January–June 2014 (an average of about 2.3 per week) to 54 in the last six-month period of January–June 2020 (an average of about 2.1 per week), a 11.48 percent decrease in violent offenses, one of only two injunction zones that have had an overall decrease. After a steep decline throughout June 2016, numbers increased until beginning a slight decline in July–December 2017. Despite the significant decrease since January 2014, the number of violent offenses in Airways safety zone remains the highest of any zone.



**Figure 9:** Violent Offenses in Airways Safety Zone by 6-Month Period

North Main Precinct: The pattern of violent offenses in the North Main safety zone is interesting and illustrates the importance of context. (See Figure 10.) If the starting point for measuring change is the period January–June 2014, the number of violent offenses increased 52.17 percent (from 23 to 35). If the starting point is the period July–December 2014, during which the injunction was issued, the number of violent offenses decreased 7.89 percent (from 38 to 35). It is likely that the startling 65 percent increase in violent offenses in this area from the first half of 2014 (n=23) to the next half (n=38) supported the need for an injunction,

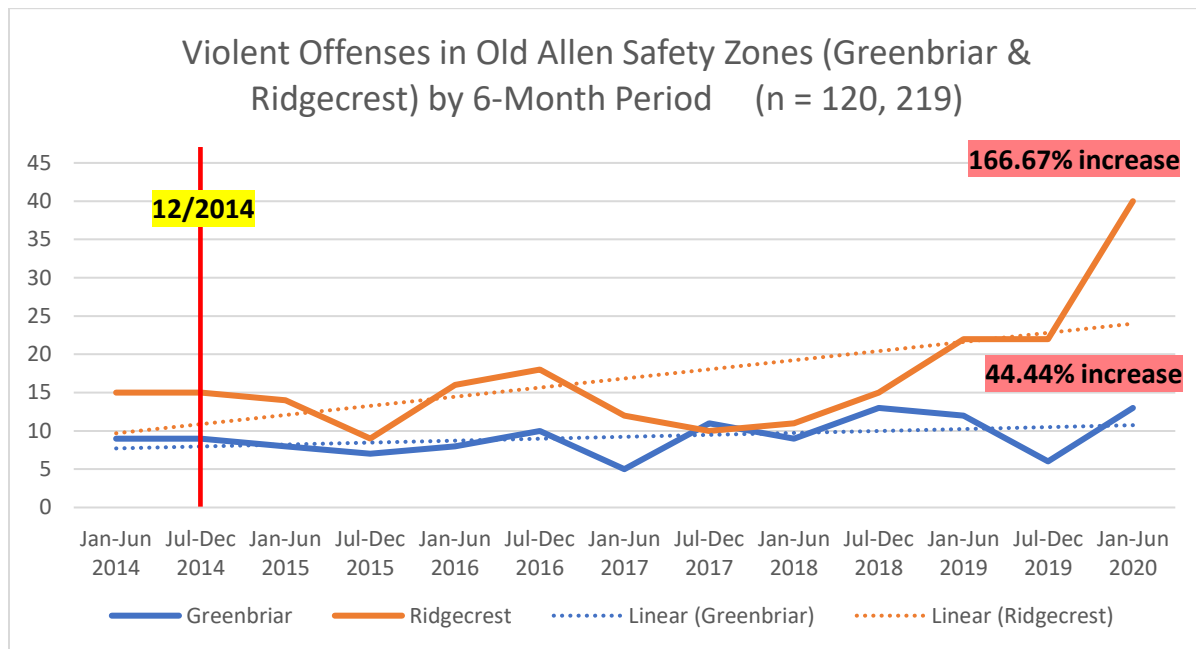
especially if the 38 offenses during July–December occurred primarily during July, August and September. (The injunction was issued in October 2014.) Although North Main is the smallest precinct, its safety zone had the third highest number of violent offenses during January–June 2020 and averaged more than 1.25 violent offenses per week during the entire period.



**Figure 10:** Violent Offenses in North Main Safety Zone by 6-Month Period

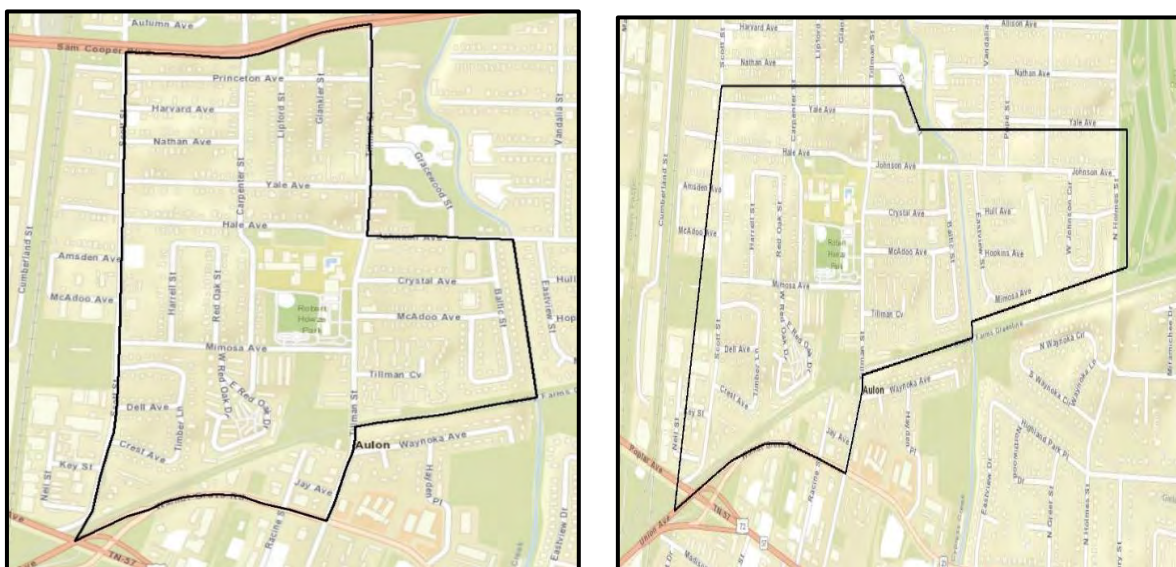
Old Allen (Austin Peay) Precinct: Safety zones established in December 2014 in the Old Allen (Austin Peay) precinct concentrate on areas surrounding two apartment complexes, Greenbriar and Ridgecrest. (See Figure 11.) Violent offenses in both zones combined (n=339) was still lower than any other single zone and averaged just one violent offenses per week. As single zones, Ridgecrest averaged .65 violent offenses per week, and Greenbriar averaged .36.

At the beginning of the period, the number of violent offenses in Ridgecrest was nearly 67 percent higher than the number in Greenbriar. However, with recent increases in Ridgecrest, it is now 207.69 percent higher than the number in Greenbriar. Ridgecrest had a steady increase in violent offenses since the start of 2018, averaging a 23.26 percent increase each 6-month period. It had a massive increase of 81.82 percent in the first half of 2020.



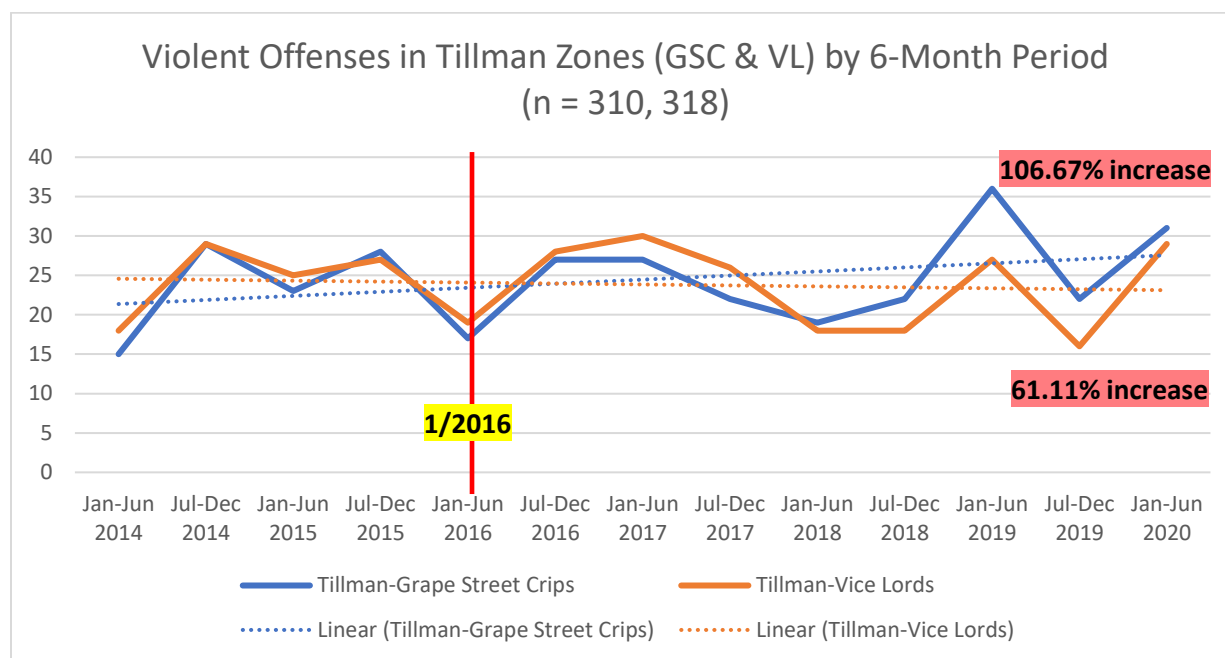
**Figure 11:** Violent Offenses in Old Allen Safety Zones by 6-Month Period

Tillman Precinct: Established in January 2016, the Tillman safety zones present a challenge because they significantly overlap due to two gangs operating in the same area. (See Figure 12.) Therefore, discussing these two zones as one whole is misleading since offenses in the overlapping areas were double-counted (i.e., counted in the total for each zone, which inflates the total number and the number in each zone).



**Figure 12:** Tillman Safety Zones: Grape Street Crips (left) and Vice Lords (right)

Taking into account the overlap, the number of offenses in the Vice Lords zone increased 61.11 percent, while the number in the Grape Street Crips zone increased by 106.67 percent. (See Figure 13.) An increasing trend from the beginning of 2014 through the end of 2015 was seemingly stymied with the injunction in January 2016 when violent offenses in the area dropped significantly. That decrease was short-lived, however, as numbers increased until they began declining again in July 2017. Despite having nearly identical increases and decreases starting in July 2018, the Grape Street Crips zone seems to have the higher number of violent offenses.



**Figure 13:** Violent Offences in Tillman Safety Zones by 6-Month Period

### Arrests of Enjoined Individuals

According to the Shelby County District Attorney's Office, as of June 2, 2018, 67 actions were filed against 47 individuals for behaviors that violated the provisions of the gang injunctions. Of those 67 violations, 54 (80.6 percent) were dismissed or a nolle prosequi entered, five entered General Sessions Court guilty pleas, two were "held to state" (prepared for Criminal Court/Grand Jury indictment) and six had dispositions of "Null." The most common reason for disposition was "completed community service" (n=22), followed by time in jail (n=9) for between one and 44 days. Nine cases involved offenses that were disposed because of a more serious charge at the state or federal level.

For cases with dispositions, the average number of days between the individual involved receiving notice of the injunction and the date the court received the case was 493.64 days with a median of 449 days. This means that it took about 15–16 months for the average individual to be brought before the court for prohibited behavior. The average number of days between the date the court received the case and the disposition was 106.32 days with a median of 83 days. This means that the average case was disposed in around three months.

Since June of 2018, it appears that only three actions have been filed against individuals for behaviors violating the provisions of the gang injunctions.

In the interim assessment, to determine the extent to which enjoined individuals had been committing violent offenses, MPD data on citywide arrests for violent offenses between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2018 (three years) were examined for the initial interim assessment and cross-referenced with enjoined individuals. During this period, 15 arrests of enjoined individuals for violent offenses were made (four in 2016, seven in 2017, four in 2018). As a follow-up in this assessment, between the dates of January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2020 (two years) there were 15 arrests of enjoined individuals for violent offenses (eleven in 2019, and four in 2020).

This same process was followed to determine the extent to which enjoined individuals had been committing violent gun offenses except the time period for examination under the interim assessment was nine years, from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2018. During this time, 35 enjoined individuals were arrested 37 times for violent gun offenses. Between the dates of January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2020 (two years) there were eight arrests of enjoined individuals for violent gun offenses (four in 2019, and four in 2020).

Finally, it is important to get a sense of the magnitude of criminal offenses by all individuals identified as gang members. Data from the MGU indicate that, during the eight months between April 1 and November 31, 2018, 308 individuals identified by the MGU as gang members had 327 arrests for gun crimes. Nineteen individuals were arrested twice. This is an average of more than 40 per month. This includes seven arrests of six enjoined individuals, although these arrests could have occurred anywhere in the city and were not necessarily connected to their status as subject to injunction. Between December 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019,

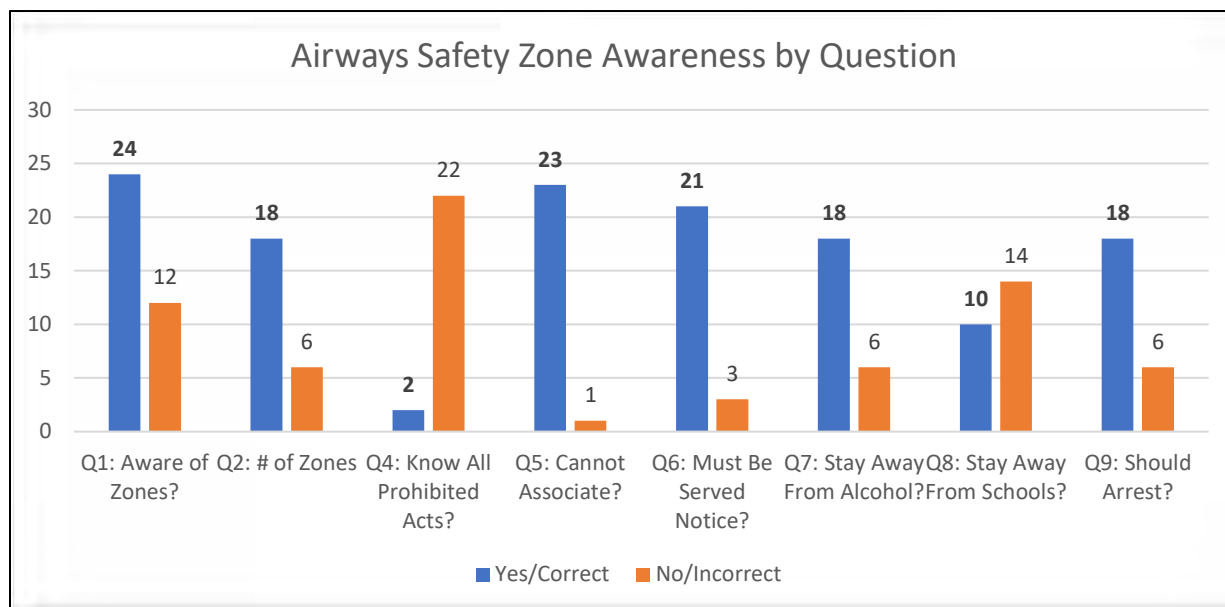
321 individuals identified by the MGU as gang members had 342 arrests for gun crimes. Nineteen individuals were arrested twice and one was arrested three times. Meaning this is an average of 26.3 per month. This includes three arrests of three enjoined individuals.

### *Officer Awareness*

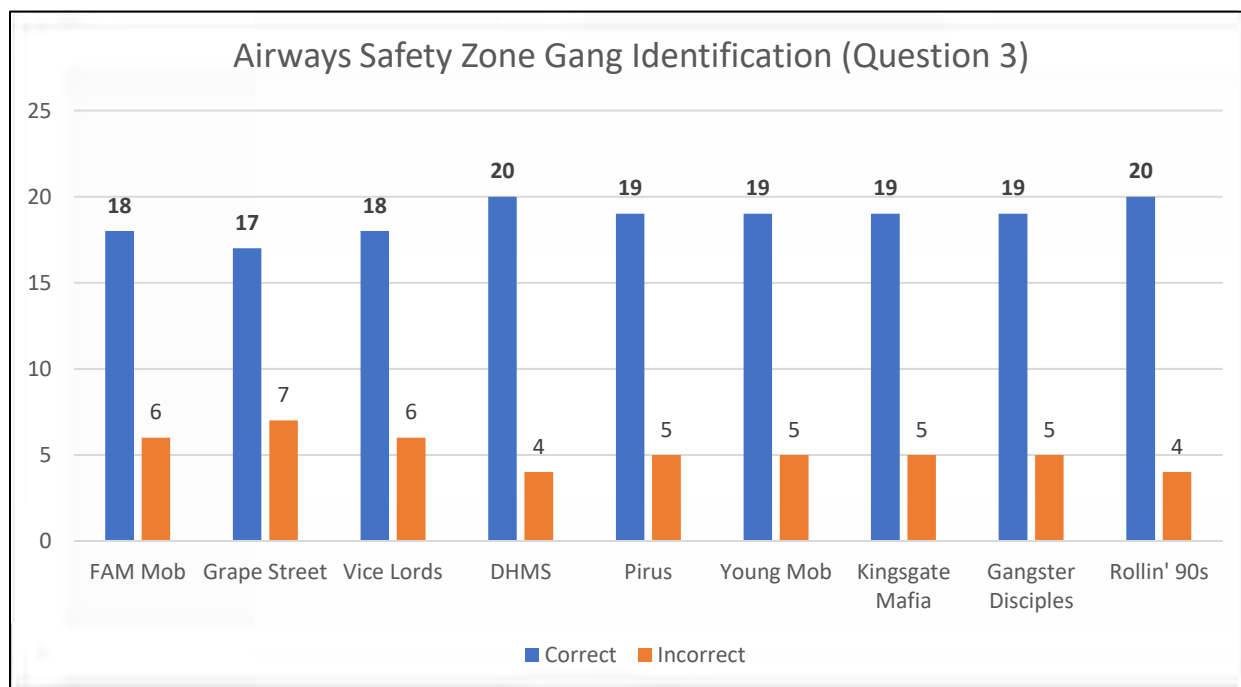
Officers both in injunction precincts (n=4) and in non-injunction precincts (n=5) were asked about their awareness and understanding of the injunction zones. Officers in the injunction precincts should have indicated awareness of the safety zones and of the behaviors prohibited by the gang injunctions. Blue bars in the following figures indicate correct responses whereas red bars indicate incorrect responses. Figures illustrate responses for each precinct, beginning with the injunction precincts (Airways, Old Allen, North Main and Tillman). Question 1 on the questionnaire filtered out respondents who were unaware of any safety zones in their precinct. If a respondent said “No” to Question 1, that respondent skipped all the other questions and only answered the last two questions (“time in service” and “rank”).

Airways Precinct: A majority (67 percent) of Airways precinct respondents indicated awareness of safety zones in the precinct, compared to 65 percent in the 2019 interim assessment. Of those who were aware (n=24), three fourths correctly knew how many zones are in the precinct, but 92 percent did not know all 11 of the prohibited acts, the same as in the 2019 interim assessment. (See Figure 14.) In 2019, just over half (54 percent) did not know how many zones were in the precinct. Most aware respondents correctly indicated that gang members cannot associate with each other in the zones, must be served notice, and must stay away from alcohol. This is an improvement from 2019 when only 54 percent knew they must be served notice, and 42 percent knew they had to stay away from alcohol. Coming within 1,000 feet of a school in the safety zone is not a prohibited behavior, but this question was included as a distractor. Just under half (42 percent) correctly answered that question, compared to 2019 when only 12.5 percent correctly answered. Finally, three fourths of respondents (75 percent) did know that they should arrest a gang member they witness violating any of the 11 prohibitions. This is an improvement from 2019 when only 54 percent knew they should arrest them.

The only gang covered by the Airways safety zone is Rollin' 90s, which 75 percent got correct. 17 respondents (71 percent) correctly stated only Rollin' 90s in their response. Airways respondents who selected any other gang name were "incorrect." The only four who did not name Rollin' 90s were the same individuals who marked "I Don't Know." (See Figure 15.)

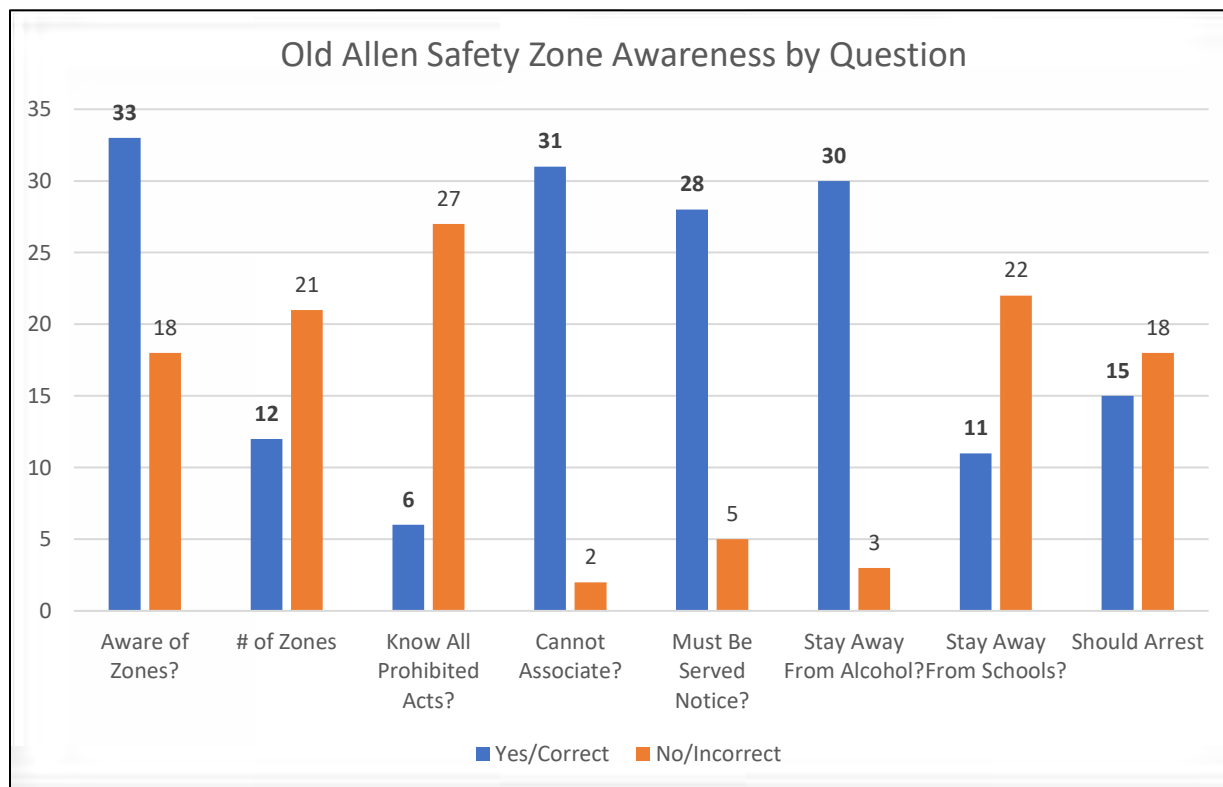


**Figure 14:** Airways Safety Zone Awareness by Question



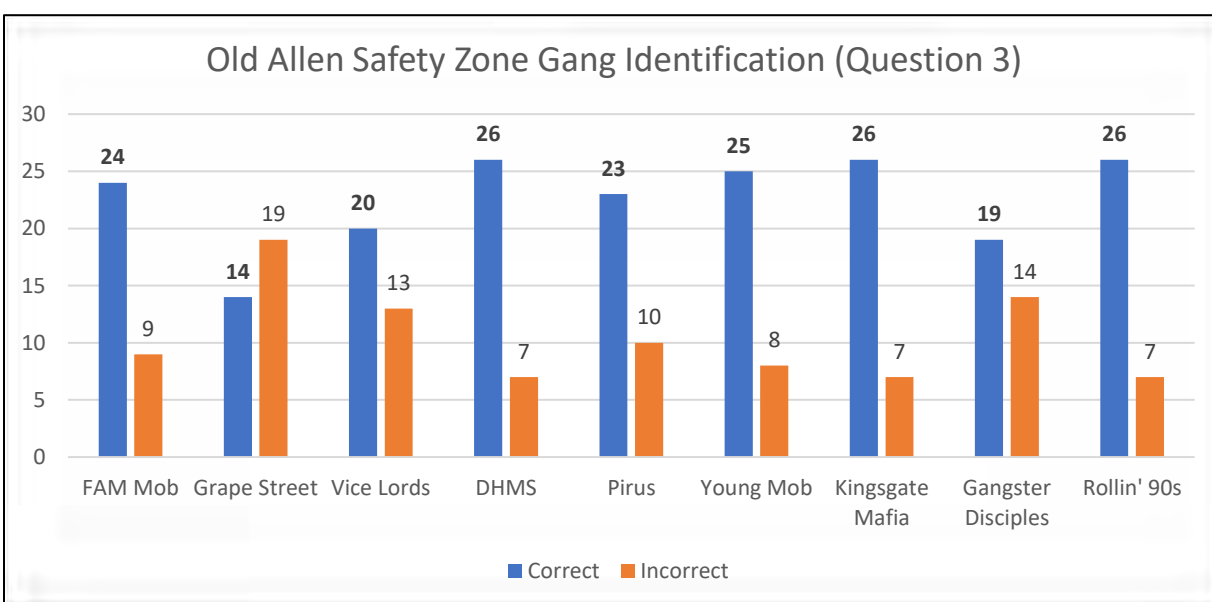
**Figure 15:** Airways Safety Zone by Gang Identification

Old Allen (Austin Peay) Precinct: A majority (65 percent) of Old Allen (Austin Peay) respondents indicated awareness of safety zones in the precinct, which was the same percent as in the 2019 assessment. (See Figure 16.) However, most (63 percent) who indicated awareness did not know how many zones are in the precinct, which is higher than in 2019 (54 percent), and 82 percent did not know all 11 of the prohibited acts, whereas 85 percent did not know all 11 in 2019. Nearly all respondents correctly indicated that gang members cannot associate with each other in the zones (94 percent). Fewer (85 percent) knew that gang members must be served notice of being subject to the injunction before they can be arrested for violations, and nearly all aware respondents knew that gang members must avoid alcohol in public (91 percent). Coming within 1,000 feet of a school in the safety zone is not a prohibited behavior, but this question was included as a distractor. Only one third of the respondents (33 percent) correctly answered that question. Finally, less than half (45 percent) knew they should arrest a gang member for violating any of the 11 prohibitions, which was a decrease from the 2019 assessment (65 percent).



**Figure 16:** Old Allen Safety Zone Awareness by Question

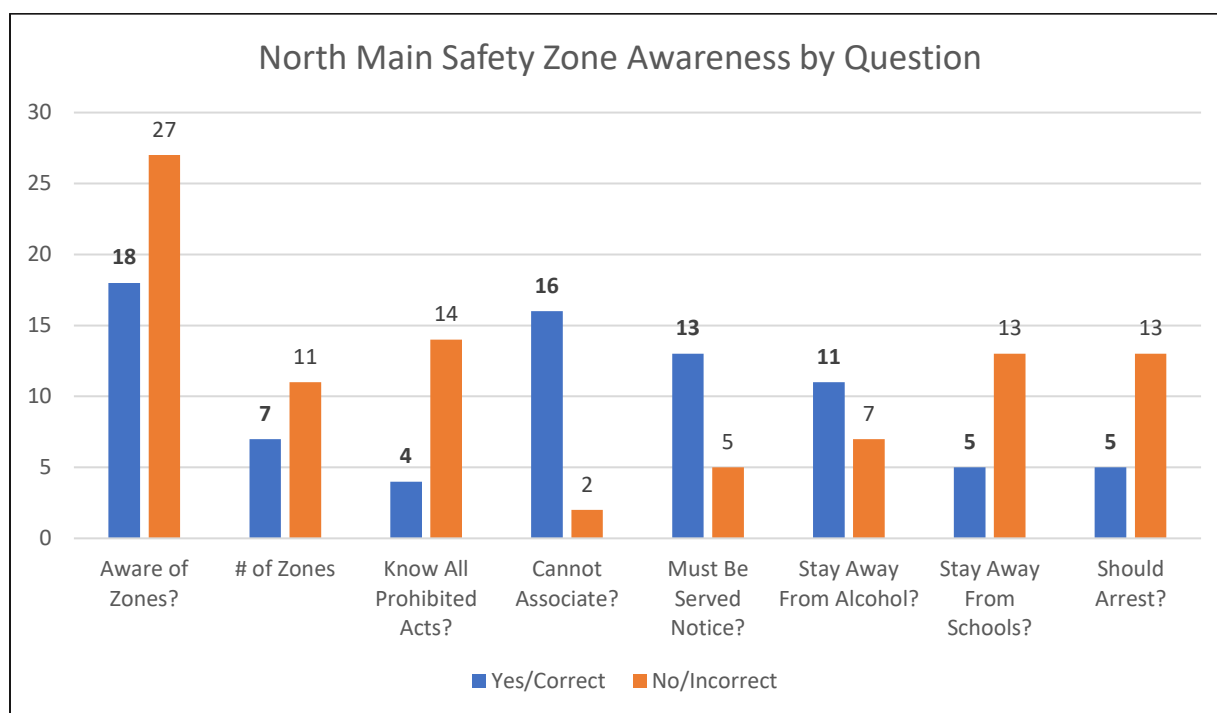
Respondents who indicated awareness (n=33) were asked to identify all the gangs affected by Old Allen safety zones. (See Figure 17.) The only gang covered by the two Old Allen safety zones is FAM Mob. If respondents indicated any other gang, they were “incorrect.” If respondents did not indicate any other gang, they were “correct.” Nearly three fourths of the respondents correctly identified FAM Mob (73 percent). Most (79 percent) knew that the DHMS, Kingsgate Mafia, and Rollin’ 90s are not covered, as well. However, almost half of the respondents incorrectly identified Vice Lords (39 percent), and Gangster Disciples (42 percent) as being covered in the Old Allen safety zones. Most respondents (58 percent) believed that the Grape Street Crips are covered in the Old Allen zones.



**Figure 17:** Old Allen Safety Zone by Gang Identification

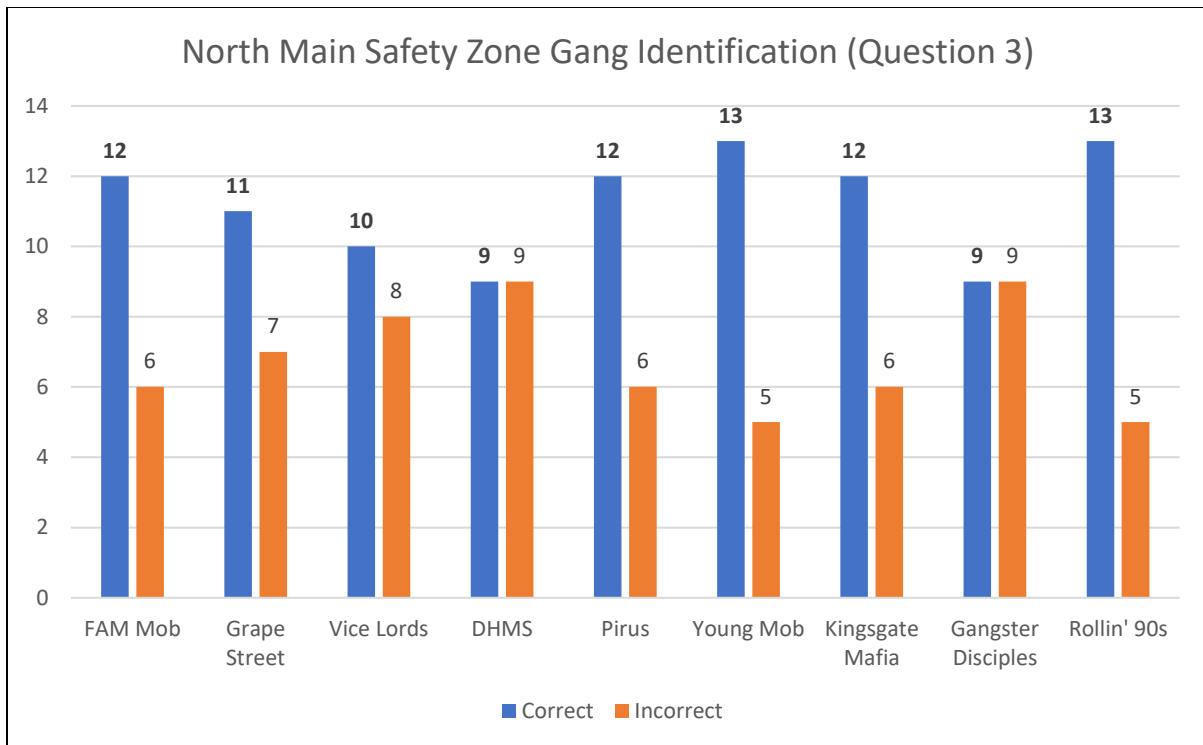
North Main Precinct: A majority (60 percent) of North Main respondents did not indicate awareness of safety zones in the precinct. (See Figure 18.) This is of some improvement from 2019 when 76.5 percent did not indicate awareness. Of those who were aware (n=18), over a third (39 percent) knew how many zones are in the precinct, and 78 percent did not know all 11 of the prohibited acts. Compared to 2019, a higher percentage (50 percent) knew how many zones were in the precinct, but more (87.5 percent) answered that they did not know all the prohibited acts. Nearly all aware respondents correctly indicated that gang members cannot associate with each other in the zones (89 percent). The majority (72 percent) knew that they must be served notice, and 61 percent knew they

must avoid alcohol in public in the zones. In 2019 a higher percentage (87.5 percent) knew they must avoid alcohol in public in the zones, and 75 percent knew they must be served notice before they can be arrested. Coming within 1,000 feet of a school in the safety zone is not a prohibited behavior, but this question was included as a distractor. 28 percent of the respondents correctly answered that question, compared to 12.5 percent in the 2019 assessment. Finally, most respondents (72 percent) did not know that they should arrest a gang member for violating any of the 11 prohibitions compared to 75 percent in 2019.



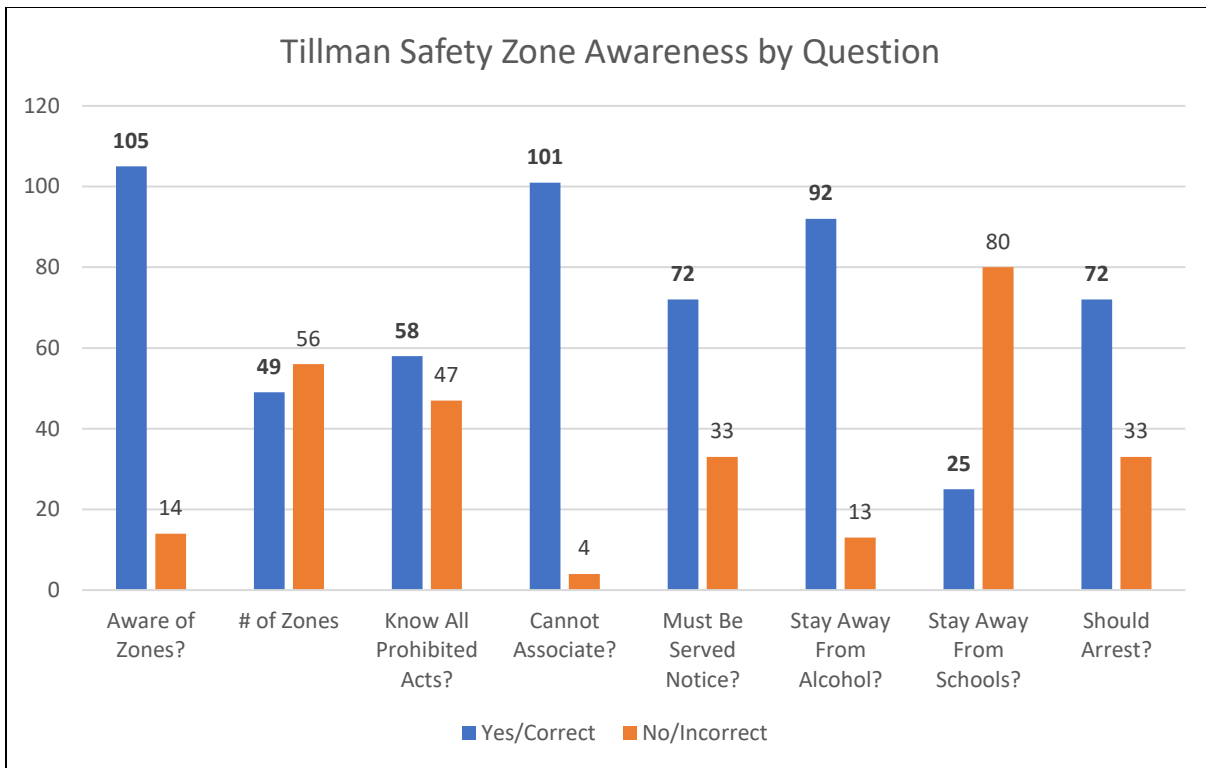
**Figure 18:** North Main Safety Zone Awareness by Question

Respondents who indicated awareness (n=18) were asked to identify all the gangs affected by North Main safety zones. (See Figure 19.) The only gang listed in the options covered by the North Main safety zone is Dixie Homes Murda Squad (DHMS). If respondents indicated any other gang, they were “incorrect.” If respondents did not indicate any other gang, they were “correct.” Only half of the respondents correctly identified DHMS. Most (72 percent) knew that Young Mob and Rollin’ 90s were not covered, and 67 percent also correctly did not identify FAM Mob, Pirus, and Kingsgate Mafia. In the 2019 assessment, almost all (87.5 percent) were able to identify DHMS as the covered gang.



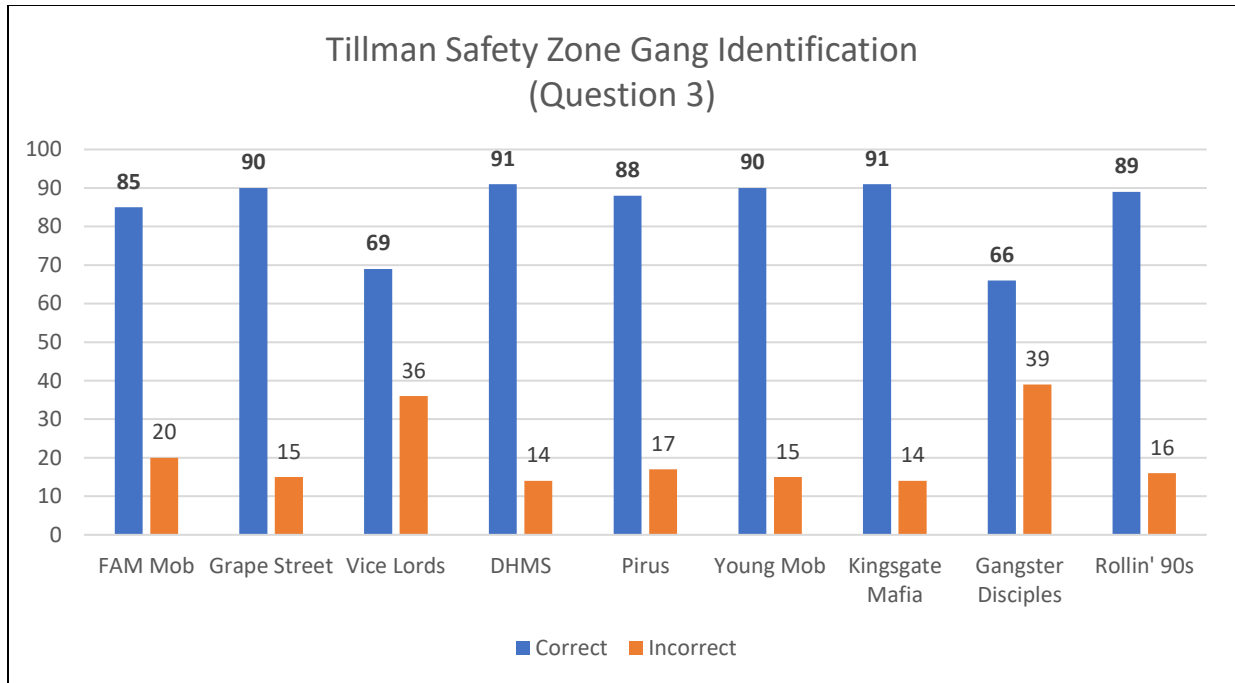
**Figure 19:** North Main Safety Zone by Gang Identification

Tillman Precinct: A majority (88 percent) of Tillman respondents indicated awareness of safety zones in the precinct. Of those who were aware (n=105), just over half (53 percent) did not know how many zones are in the precinct, while just over half (55 percent) did know all 11 of the prohibited acts. (See Figure 20.) Most aware respondents correctly indicated that gang members cannot associate with each other in the zones (96 percent), but fewer (68.5 percent) knew that gang members must be served notice of being subject to the injunction before they can be arrested for violations while (88 percent) indicated awareness that they must stay away from alcohol in public in the zone. Coming within 1,000 feet of a school in the safety zone is not a prohibited behavior, but this question was included as a distractor. Only a fourth of the respondents (24 percent) correctly answered that question. Finally, just over two thirds of respondents (68.5 percent) knew that they should arrest a gang member they witness violating any of the 11 prohibitions.



***Figure 20: Tillman Safety Zone Awareness by Question***

Respondents who indicated awareness (n=105) were asked to identify all the gangs affected by Tillman safety zones. (See Figure 21.) The two gangs covered by the two Tillman safety zones are Grape Street Crips and Vice Lords. If respondents indicated any other gang, they were “incorrect.” If respondents did not indicate any other gang, they were “correct.” Most respondents correctly identified Grape Street Crips (86 percent) but less correctly identified Vice Lords (66 percent). Most knew that FAM Mob (81 percent), DHMS (87 percent), Pirus (84 percent), Young Mob (86 percent), Kingsgate Mafia (87 percent) and Rollin’ 90s (84 percent) were not covered, as well. However, fewer respondents (63 percent) correctly stated that Gangster Disciples were not covered in the OAS safety zones.



***Figure 21: Tillman Safety Zone by Gang Identification***

Precincts Without Safety Zones | The Raines, Mt. Moriah, Crump, Appling Farms and Ridgeway precincts have no safety zones. Therefore, officers in the precincts should have said “no” to Question 1 and skipped to the last two questions.

Raines | Raines had 53 respondents, with 83 percent not aware of any safety zones. Those who responded included 35 patrol officers, six detectives, nine sergeants, and three lieutenants. The largest proportion of respondents (58 percent) had been with MPD for ten or more years, followed by those with six to ten years (25 percent).

Mt. Moriah | Mt. Moriah had 29 respondents, with 86 percent correctly indicating that they were not aware of any safety zones in their precinct. Of the respondents, 19 were patrol officers, one was a detective, four were sergeants, four were lieutenants, and one was a major or higher. The largest proportion of respondents (48 percent) had been with the MPD for one to five years followed by those with ten or more years of service (45 percent).

Crump | Of the 88 respondents, 77 (87.5 percent) were not aware of any safety zones. The largest proportion of respondents (56 percent) had been with the MPD for ten or more years, followed by those with one to five years (26 percent). Of

respondents who indicated rank, 63 were patrol officers, eight were detectives, five were sergeants, and 12 were lieutenants.

Appling Farms | Appling Farms had 78 respondents (88 percent) who correctly indicated that they were not aware of any safety zones in their precinct. The largest proportion of respondents (58 percent) had been with the MPD for ten or more years followed by one to five years (18 percent). Of those who responded, their ranks were 63 patrol officers, two detectives, five sergeants, six lieutenants, and two majors or above.

Ridgeway | Of 32 respondents, 25 (78 percent) were not aware of any safety zones in the precinct. The largest proportion of respondents (50 percent) had been with MPD for ten or more years followed by 31 percent having served between one to five years. Among the 32 respondents, their ranks were 21 patrol officers, three detectives, five sergeants, and three lieutenants.

## CONCLUSIONS

The assessment provides some interesting insight into the effectiveness of gang injunctions.

Three research questions guided the inquiry:

- 1) Do injunctions reduce the number of violent offenses in injunction areas? (Is there a general deterrent effect?)
- 2) Do gang injunctions reduce arrests of individuals subject to injunctions? (Is there a specific deterrent effect?)
- 3) Do officers working in precincts that have safety zones know about the injunctions and the prohibited behaviors?

*Do injunctions reduce the number of violent offenses in injunction areas?  
(Is there a general deterrent effect?)*

With the caveat that this analysis only considers post-injunction data and no control variables (i.e., trends from other parts of the city), it appears that gang

injunctions and the establishment of six safety zones in four precincts had an impact on the number of violent offenses in the beginning. However, that impact seems to be less effective at this time considering that violent offenses have risen in those zones.

From January 2014 through June 2018, violent offenses in the zones dropped nearly 8 percent, and the average number of offenses dropped from .90 per week per zone to .83. The number of violent offenses decreased in four of the six zones. These decreases ranged from about 13 percent in North Main to more than 34 percent in Airways. The number of violent offenses in two zones (Old Allen/Austin Peay-Greenbriar and Tillman-Grape Street Crips) did not change. Although a decrease is preferable, no change is still a positive result (i.e., violent offenses did not increase).

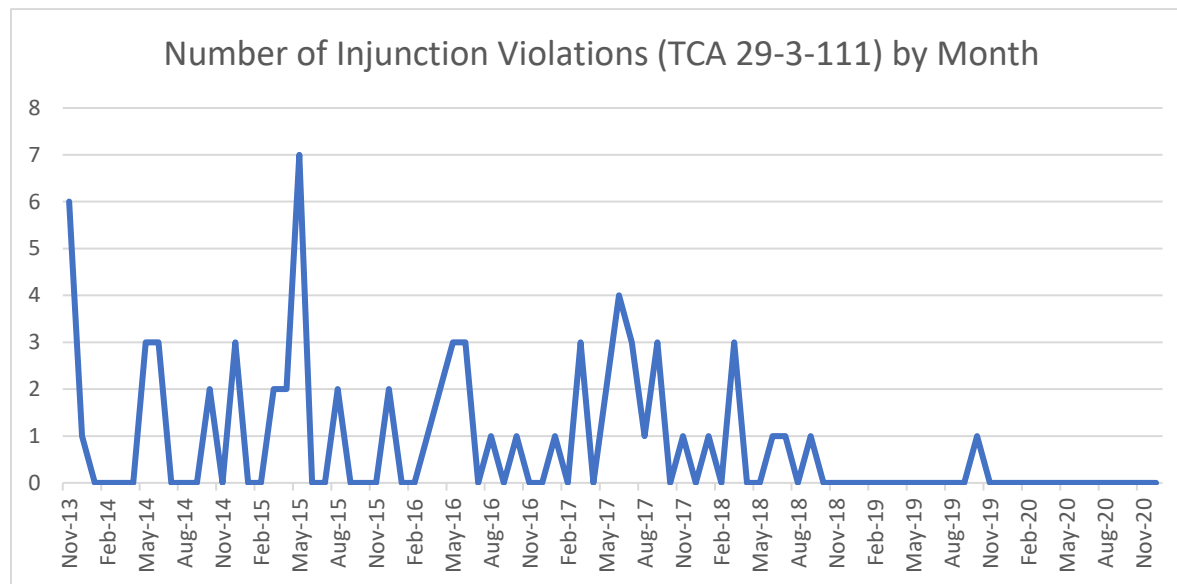
However, after adding in the data through June 30, 2020, there was a 43 percent increase of violent offenses throughout all the safety zones. For the entire time period covered by both assessments (January 2014 – June 2020), the average number of offenses increased from .90 per week to 1.29 per week. Throughout the time of this assessment only two safety zones have had an overall decrease of violent offenses, Airways (11.48 percent) and North Main (7.89 percent). Both safety zones in Old Allen/Austin Peay and the two in Tillman have seen an increase.

*Do gang injunctions reduce arrests of individuals subject to injunctions?  
(Is there a specific deterrent effect?)*

Injunction violations: Since the first injunction in September 2013, 47 enjoined individuals have been arrested for 67 injunction violations. More than 80 percent of those violations were dismissed or a nolle prosequi entered (most often occurring after completion of community service or some time in jail). Figure 22 below illustrates the number of violations brought before the court by month. It is not surprising to see peaks after injunctions, but violations should taper off over time if they have a specific deterrent effect.

However, since the last gang injunction assessment, only three additional individuals have been arrested for injunction violations. In the previous assessment, on average, about one individual per month was being arrested on injunction violations. However, under this new assessment, that average is 0.1.

Without a further investigation of the drop of these numbers, it is unclear if the decline of these arrests is the result of the gang injunctions working or a shift of priorities within the Memphis Police Department.



**Figure 22:** Injunction Violations by Month (source: DA's Office)

Arrests of enjoined individuals were occurring between January 2014 and June 2018 for violent, violent gun, and other gun offenses. 15 were arrested for violent offenses during a three-year period (average of five per year); 35 were arrested for violent gun offenses during a nine-year period (average of 3.9 per year) and 27 were arrested for other gun crimes during a five-year period (average of 5.4 per year). MGU data also indicated that six enjoined individuals were arrested for gun crimes in only eight months.

Between the dates of June 2018 and December 2020, for violent, violent gun, and other gun offenses, enjoined individuals were getting arrested for each type of offense: 24 individuals were arrested, and some were arrested more than once. In total, 18 were arrested for violent crimes, 2 were arrested for violent gun crimes, and 6 were arrested for other gun crimes. On average almost ten enjoined individuals were being arrested per year.

A post-injunction only investigation cannot determine whether injunctions have reduced arrests. It can only examine whether enjoined individuals have been arrested during the specified period and whether they were arrested in the safety zones.

*Do officers working in precincts that have safety zones know about the injunctions and the prohibited behaviors?*

The preliminary answer to this question is no. While most officers in precincts without safety zones knew their precincts did not have safety zones, a significant proportion of officers in safety zone precincts were unaware of the zone(s). Among the four safety zone precincts, awareness among officers ranged from 40 percent to 88 percent. This means that between 12 percent and 60 percent were unaware. While these ranges are an improvement from the 2019 assessment (24 percent to 65 percent) the same percentage of officers overall correctly answered that they were aware of the safety zones in their precincts. For this year out of the 251 respondents 180 (72 percent) responded that they were aware of the zones; whereas in 2019 with 209 respondents 151 (72 percent) stated they were aware. Moreover, if officers were aware of the zone(s), fewer were aware of the conditions of the injunctions or even the gang(s) covered under the injunction(s). If officers in a safety-zone precinct do not know about the safety zone(s), they will not be arresting individuals for injunction violations. Moreover, officers who do not know all the prohibited behaviors will under-enforce injunctions, and officers who believe something is prohibited when it is not may attempt to enforce something that is not prohibited. The former has potential implications for public safety, and the latter has potential implications for community relations.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Approximately one third of sworn MPD officers surveyed responded to the questionnaire, so it is a fair representation of the awareness of the department. However, it is not a perfect representation because respondents were not randomly selected. Some precincts were overrepresented, and some precincts were underrepresented.

Most agency data suffers from mistakes that need to be addressed. For example, no standard convention guides how officers enter names and/or addresses (e.g., “Jr.” versus “Junior,” “St.” versus “Street”). Dates are incorrectly entered. Names are misspelled. One entry includes the person’s middle initial while another one does not. This makes it extremely challenging to try to cross-reference individuals with other individuals across various databases. Although data was meticulously cleaned for this effort (i.e., approximately 40 hours to manually review and clean multiple databases), errors still are likely.

Mapping offenses in Tillman was complicated by the fact that the two safety zones overlap. This resulted in offenses committed within the overlapping areas being double counted, once in the Grape Street Crips zone and once in the Vice Lords zone.

Data from the MGU related to gang members arrested for gun crime also have limitations. MGU personnel expressed concerns about their accuracy, specifically that all gun arrests are not being captured. One senior MGU official described several situations in which gun arrests in Shelby County may not be accurately captured. As this official noted, “Two examples are gun arrests in Bartlett and Germantown. Neither are using [our records management system] as their reporting system, so we only capture their gun arrests if there was a federal trigger.” Gang members arrested for gun crimes in Collierville and Millington also may not be captured. The official also explained that in situations such as aggravated assault with a gun where the arrest is made later and no gun is recovered, that arrest “would not be captured.” This means that gun crime committed by gang members likely is being underreported.

Another limitation was that the Rollin’ 90s gang was inadvertently omitted from the 2019 questionnaire. While this only directly impacted the Airways Precinct, it affected the validity of the results. This has since been remedied, and any subsequent surveys will include that gang as an option.

A further limitation is that most of the data collected during the calendar year of 2020 may have been impacted due to the ongoing pandemic of Coronavirus-19. Certain data sets such as the gang members arrested, provided by the MGU, seems to have not been updated during 2020. However, it is impossible to know to what extent the data may have been affected during this time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

At least one recommendation is apparent at this point. If gang injunctions are to be an effective tool in crime prevention and reduction, police officers with injunctions in effect must (1) know about the injunctions and the individuals covered, (2) know the conditions of the injunctions, and (3) enforce them.

Awareness of zones was spotty at best and dismal at worst. Lack of awareness could impact public safety and community relations. Officers should be continuously provided information about which gangs and gang members are subject to the injunction(s), as well as the prohibitions under the injunctions. Ongoing training would sensitize the officers and make arrests for violations more likely.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Gang Injunction and Safety Zone Questionnaire**

**Instructions:** *Operation Safe Community-3*, a 5-year plan to reduce crime in Memphis & Shelby County, has an objective that relates to law enforcement awareness of “injunctions,” legal actions taken against gangs in some Precincts. Injunctions create “safety zones” and identify gang members subject to arrest if they engage in certain behaviors while in those zones. We are asking sworn officers in your Precinct to participate in this survey because your Precinct may have a safety zone. Your responses are anonymous and none of your responses will be used to identify you. **If you do not know an answer, please circle “don’t know” rather than guessing.** This will help MPD improve training related to this subject. Thank you, in advance, for your participation.

**PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE:**

1. Are you aware of any safety zones in your Precinct?	YES      NO (If NO, skip to #10)
2. How many safety zones are in your Precinct?	1    2    3    4 or more    Don't know
3. What gangs are affected by those safety zones? (You may circle more than one)	FAM Mob                      Don't know Grape Street Crips Vice Lords Dixie Homes Murda Squad/47NHC Pirus Young Mob Kingsgate Mafia Gangster Disciples Rollin' 90's
4. Do you know <b>all</b> the 11 gang-member behaviors that are prohibited in the safety zones?	YES      NO
5. Gang members subject to the safety zone prohibitions cannot associate with each other in public in the safety zone.	TRUE      FALSE      Don't know
6. A gang member must have been served notice before he/she can be arrested for violating the injunction.	TRUE      FALSE      Don't know
7. Gang members subject to the safety zone prohibitions must stay away from alcohol in public in the safety zone.	TRUE      FALSE      Don't know
8. Gang members subject to the safety zone prohibitions must not come within 1000 feet of a school in the safety zone.	TRUE      FALSE      Don't know
9. If you witness a gang member subject to the safety zone prohibitions violating one of the 11 prohibitions, what should you do? (Circle <b>ONLY one</b> )	Issue a citation                      Don't know Arrest them Call the MGU Call the District Attorney's Office Nothing. A citizen must report them.
10. What is your time in service with MPD?	Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years More than 10 years
11. What is your rank (write in)?	



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