

Dear Neighbors,

It seems everyone is talking about safety these days. That's a good thing; the three most common calls I get as an alder are petty crime, rundown properties and traffic safety, so I'm glad we're having a larger community conversation about these issues. As you may know, the Council has taken a few actions lately on this front, including passing the Chronic Nuisance Abatement Ordinance and seriously looking at police resources as part of our 2008 budget discussion. I encourage you to do what you can as well: Join your neighborhood association and/or Neighborhood Watch; call the police (911 for emergencies, 266-4275 for non-emergencies) if you are a victim of a crime or see something suspicious; and call Building Inspection at 266-4551 if a property has broken windows, trash, unmowed grass, etc. Building Inspection enforcement is largely complaint driven, so your call really helps! And please let me know where the problems are in terms of pedestrian/bike safety. We're in the middle of a Northside discussion about traffic safety, and your input is important. I'm eager to work with neighborhoods on traffic calming as one essential part of that effort.

In the bigger picture, I think it's important to look at all facets of neighborhood safety. The recent focus on enforcement is important and needed, but we also need to think about prevention. I was pleased to hear many of you talk about this at the Northside public safety forum. I agree that keeping our neighborhoods strong, via neighborhood associations and the Planning Council, is critical. I agree that providing after-school and summer programming for young people – providing positive environments and alternatives to trouble – is critical. I agree that connecting people, especially young people, to jobs and job training is critical. And, I agree that education and parental involvement is critical. All these things are priorities that I will continue to work on. I hope you will join me.

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