



**8<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
COMMUNITY COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

***8th District 2024 Year in Review:***

Good evening and Welcome Everyone to the District Council 008 End of Year Review Meeting. We want to thank you all for attending and hopefully you will enjoy your evening. This year Chicago mourned as we lost some of our brightest, bravest, and most dedicated public servants. We lost officers in the line of duty who represented the diversity and best of Chicago. As Chicagoans we also mourned the loss of officers and a 911 dispatcher to suicide. We often are stunned when we hear a loss of an officer or another 1st responder because these are someone's family member or friend. We as a district council will support any city council effort to further help & protect officers and other 1st responders while on duty and especially off duty where some may be battling demons we can't see. We want to ask that you join us in a moment of silence as we pay respect to those officers and 1st responders who are no longer with us. Thank you!

District Council 008 has had a great year of growth along with other District Council Members across the city. We are starting to get a better handle of what is to be expected of us as elected officials. The 8th District Police Council is working to the best of our abilities to serve the 256,000 people that call this district home. My fellow councilmen and I are continuing to learn what it means to be elected officials. The three of us keep what our Deputy Director Damon Smith told us on day one of training which is that we need to keep an open mind now that we are elected officials and are public servants. This rings true almost 18 months into this as each day, event, and experience is unique and requires being open minded.

***Chairman, Nominating Person, and Community Engagement:***

As Chairman, I've made efforts to secure meeting locations, dates, and times. In addition, I've reached out to all local leaders and organizations either via email or phone and have spoken to them regarding the 8th district and if there were needs or issues that we needed to address with 8th District Leadership. Next, as chairman I've made every effort to work with and speak with anyone who is



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interested in learning about the CCPSA and us the District Council. As Chairman some of the biggest things I can say that we have worked on in 2024 that we will discuss in detail later is our Youth Workshops, Community Feedback Survey, and a grassroots petition to keep ShotSpotter in Chicago. In 2025 as Chairman, I will work to further strengthen relationships with community organizations thru meetings and events that fosters improvement in public safety.

Al Cacciottolo is our nominating person; he was consistently busy in 2024. Along with his duties with the district council, Councilman Al, attended several meetings virtually and in person with others DCs to review applications, interview, and submit a list of 7 candidates to help form and create the Commission for the CCPSA. This was a long and tedious process that happened on weekday evenings and on weekends. After all the work that has been done, we currently have new Commissioners (except for 1) in place led by President Anthony Driver.

Mark Hamberlin is our community engagement councilman and he along with his duties with the district council is responsible to attend various events and meetings held by local leaders and organizations to continue growing awareness of the 8th district council and the CCPSA. Councilman Hamberlin attended several CAPS Meetings, civic meeting such as the Clearing and Garfield Ridge Watch Groups meetings. Councilman Hamberlin also attended Taste of Chicago Marquette Park, our Halloween event as well as Senator Preston's football tailgate event. Councilman Hamberlin will continue in 2025 to attend and make residents aware of the 8th District Police Council, time and date of our meetings, and take in concerns of any resident while attending these special events.



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***2024 Accomplishments:***

In 2024, the 8th District Police Council heard from people of all backgrounds through a community feedback survey. A common theme we heard was response times, visibility, and customer service when inside the 8th District. We held a meeting with Sgt. Opoka and other officers to review and discuss the community report. Sgt. Opoka was responsive and gave us feedback and promised to work on any issue that needed attention. Sgt. Opoka followed up with a letter that is currently posted online for all to review.

***Police Ride Along:***

As councilman we wanted to experience what it's like to be an officer. Councilman Huff signed up to do a ride along with an officer from the 8th District. This ride-along gave an opportunity to see what officers deal with daily and having the ability to talk to officers about how they feel. Some feedback and notes we took as a council were...

1. That liability plays a role in how officer's police. The handful of officers that Councilman Huff spoke to indicated that they worry about getting sued or disciplinary action especially since COPA made it easier to file a complaint against an officer.
2. There are often backlogs in the district due to staffing/manpower issues
3. Morale is low due to support from public and local leaders
4. Stress and fatigue are becoming an issue as officers are continually going from call to call without a reprieve.

After this experience, I as Chair can say that all Alders and Mayor should do a shift with an officer. It truly will give a better appreciation for the work they do.



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***Teen Workshops:***

Our youth was the next focus of the 8th District Police Council. We often see a disconnect between youth and officers especially if they are of different genders or ethnic backgrounds. The 8th District Police Council held teen workshops at Bogan, Hubbard, Kennedy and Solario High Schools. We asked the teens numerous questions pertaining from interactions with officers to how social media influences their view on police. The names of students were kept confidential, and answers will be shared with 8th District leadership. Responses were mostly positive and inquisitive. A good portion of the responses indicated that they don't understand why officers respond in big numbers, how use of force is determined, and most alarming that they are becoming numb to the gun violence happening in Chicago. Officers from the community policing section of the 8<sup>th</sup> District attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of these workshops to assist in answering students' questions and give students some insight into what they do daily. Our goal is to help police and youth communicate better to help drive down crime. If you are interested in reviewing this report, we will gladly send you an email with the report attached once it has been submitted to 8th District Leadership and responded to.

***ShotSpotter, Pulaski Rd and the Splitting of 8th District***

Early in 2024 Mayor Johnson announced he was ending the services of ShotSpotter in September. After that announcement the 8th district police council created an online petition asking for signatures in support of keeping ShotSpotter. With the help and support of Ald. Tabares and community leaders we had close to 2000 signatures. We advocated for keeping the technology through interviews with news stations and online organizations. In September 2024, Ald. Tabares at a city council meeting presented these signatures as support for keeping the technology. Our voices and residents' voices unfortunately were not heard as Mayor Johnson decommissioned ShotSpotter on September 22, 2024.

Pulaski Road over the last several years has become a hotbed for car caravans, drag racing, and reckless driving. District Council 008 joined the discussion in trying to find solutions to this problem. We signed off on a letter with other local leaders to IDOT asking for help and their support to address this problem. Chairman Huff attended two meetings. One was held at Curie H.S and the other held by Ald. Tabares with CDOT present in the West Lawn community. Chairman Huff along with Ald. Tabares spoke



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to the audience and answered questions. CDOT is currently working on permanent solutions while implementing temporary bollards along Pulaski to help calm down the traffic issues. We have also started working on with Sen. Porfirio and Sen. Preston a letter to IDOT regarding Cicero Ave as well.

Along with ShotSpotter, response times and visibility were another safety concern with policing in the district. In Feb. 2024 we joined local and state leaders at a press conference pushing for a new police district. The location was secured with the help of local state leaders at a savings to taxpayers. Councilman Huff and Hamberlin attended a rally and news conference led by Ald. Quinn and other political leaders urging Mayor Johnson approve and support the proposed new police district. We are hopeful that the splitting of the district with smaller beats and quicker response times will be finalized soon.

### ***Events:***

As we mentioned earlier, the 8th District Council attended meetings and events of all kinds. We held public meetings at parks, libraires, churches, and an Alderman office. We also attended community meetings held by Ald. Coleman, Ald. Moore, Archer Heights Civic Association, and many others. We were proud to sponsor or partner with Alderman in events such as a self-defense workshop, Touch-A- Truck, Bears Tailgate Event, Taste of Chicago (Marquette Park), Halloween Trick or Trunk and others. We look forward to doing community engagement with Alderman here in the 8th District in 2025

### ***Thank you:***

My fellow Councilmen and I want to thank a few people. Thank you to both our project and community outreach coordinators (Oswaldo Gomez and Rosa Rubio). They work hard to make sure that we have the supplies and other tools needed to hold our meetings and events. Thank you to the residents



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who have attended our meetings and are giving this new council a chance. We promise to be there to help, assist, and be your voice when you need to be heard.

We want to extend a thank you to Commander Spreyne, Sgt. Opoka, and the community policing division of the 8<sup>th</sup> District for working with us. We believe working with and not against our officers will go a long way to helping address the crime here in the 8<sup>th</sup> District. We are eager to continue building on what we have built so far.

Lastly, to Adam, Charles, and Damon we thank you for being patient and willing to listen. We as an elected body have not always agreed on issues, sometimes argued and yelled at meetings and at times have been a dysfunctional group, but you have allowed us to grow into these positions and learn. We appreciate your commitment to allowing us to lead as we seek fit and adjust to the growing pains of this new position. If anyone has questions or comments, please raise your hand. If not thank you everyone for attending our year in review, enjoy your dinner!

Happy Holidays,

***8<sup>th</sup> District Police Council***