



Leading the Way 2025 Tour

GREENSBORO REPORT

HIGHLIGHTING WHAT WORKS

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LETTER FROM CITIES UNITED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: **AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Dear Greensboro Leaders, Partners, Leaders and Friends:

On behalf of Cities United, I want to applaud the City of Greensboro and its partners for the leadership, commitment, and resolve demonstrated as your community advances implementation of its Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030). The Leading the Way (LTW) Tour stop in Greensboro made clear that this work is rooted in both ambition and accountability; an understanding that meaningful change requires not only vision, but the discipline to translate that vision into coordinated action.

Greensboro stands out as a jurisdiction that has taken the critical step of naming a shared direction for community safety. Through its comprehensive plan, the city has articulated a framework grounded in prevention, intervention, interruption, and coordination across systems. The tour occurred at a moment when that framework had begun to move from paper to practice, revealing both the promise of early implementation and the real challenges that accompany system-level change.

Across three days of dialogue, reflection, and analysis, the LTW Tour engaged city leadership, public safety officials, community-based organizations, young leaders, and system partners in meaningful conversation about how Greensboro's public safety ecosystem is evolving.

These discussions affirmed several foundational strengths, including the city's established prevention infrastructure, deep and trusted community relationships, and strong convening capacity through the Community Safety Department and collaborative bodies such as GSOCAN. Participants also highlighted growing momentum around shared ownership of outcomes, increasing engagement of young leaders, and a collective commitment to strengthening alignment and coordination across sectors.

Building on this strong foundation, the tour also identified opportunities to further support the next phase of implementation. Participants noted that continued work to deepen shared understanding of the plan, broaden ownership beyond a core group of leaders, and strengthen coordination across intervention and interruption strategies will enhance scalability and long-term impact. Conversations surfaced opportunities to address capacity strain, improve data integration, and clarify accountability structures so that progress can be sustained systemwide and not rely solely on individual champions or short-term conditions.

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Importantly, the tour reinforced that Greensboro's recent reductions in violence are a meaningful and encouraging signal of progress, one that partners are eager to stabilize and strengthen through a more fully integrated public safety ecosystem. Stakeholders consistently emphasized the opportunity to further reinforce the connective tissue across prevention, intervention, and interruption efforts, while more intentionally integrating economic opportunity, family supports, and other structural drivers into the broader public safety strategy.

This post-report reflects what was heard and learned during the Leading the Way Tour. It offers both a snapshot of current conditions and a forward-looking perspective on how Greensboro can continue to deepen alignment, strengthen implementation, and sustain impact over time. The recommendations are organized to support immediate priorities as well as longer-term system-building, with an emphasis on clarity, shared accountability, and continuous learning.

Cities United is honored to walk alongside Greensboro in this next chapter; as a partner committed to peer learning, technical assistance, and ecosystem alignment. The work underway in Greensboro reflects a broader truth seen across our network: when communities build on strengths, center shared responsibility, and remain grounded in lived experience, durable progress becomes achievable.

The path ahead will call for continued leadership, trust, and discipline, qualities Greensboro has already demonstrated throughout this process. We look forward to supporting the city and its partners as they continue to build on this momentum and advance a safer, more equitable future for all.

In solidarity,

Anthony D. Smith

Executive Director, Cities United



INTRODUCTION

Greensboro is at a point where ambition has shaped direction and the work centers on execution. With a Comprehensive Community Safety Plan in place—articulating a clear vision for community safety—new investments committed, and a growing network of partners engaged, the jurisdiction has entered the more complex phase of translating vision into coordinated action. This stage is defined less by clarifying what Greensboro aims to do and more by determining how that work takes hold across systems, partners, and neighborhoods.

It was within this context that the Cities United Leading the Way (LTW) Tour came to Greensboro to listen, to learn, and to support the city's continued progress.

THE LEADING THE WAY TOUR SEEKS TO:

- Highlight effective, comprehensive public safety practices and models.
- Foster cross-sector collaboration.
- Amplify community-led solutions.
- Enhance local capacity.
- Evaluate progress and impact using the Cities United Roadmap Framework.
- Assess and foster meaningful young leader engagement.

In Greensboro, these aims closely mirrored local priorities as the city began implementing its Comprehensive Community Safety Plan—a framework intended to anchor prevention, intervention, interruption, and coordination across government agencies, departments, and community partners. Over the course of the three-day LTW Tour, participants representing local government, public safety, education, health systems, community-based organizations, young leaders, and grassroots partners engaged in facilitated discussions, strategy sessions, and reflection activities. Together, these engagements offered a window into how Greensboro’s public safety ecosystem is currently functioning, where coordination is taking hold, and where additional structure and support may be needed to sustain progress.

The insights gathered through the tour reflect that Greensboro is currently in Phase 3 of the Cities United Roadmap: Implementing a Multi-Year Plan of Action. As such, this report serves not only as a summary of the Leading the Way Tour stop, but as an assessment of current conditions within the jurisdiction. It examines how the city’s vision is being operationalized, identifies strengths and points of friction within the ecosystem, and outlines strategic considerations for strengthening implementation and deepening partnership between Greensboro and Cities United in the period ahead.

UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Greensboro's public safety ecosystem is currently shaped by a strong emphasis on prevention and a growing commitment to community-centered approaches to safety. With the adoption of the City of Greensboro's Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030), the jurisdiction has articulated a shared vision for public safety grounded in prevention, intervention, interruption, and coordination across systems. Early implementation of the plan is underway; however, much of the work to date remains concentrated in prevention-focused strategies, while other core elements of a fully integrated ecosystem—particularly coordinated interruption work—are still developing.

The Leading the Way Tour brought together current and emerging partners through the City of Greensboro's Community Safety Department, creating space for city agencies, community-based organizations, young leaders, and system partners to learn together about how the work is taking shape. As part of the tour, participants engaged in a SWOT-based reflection activity to surface insights from shared discussions and experiences, including how partners are engaging with the plan's core pillars and goals, where coordination is beginning to take hold, and where additional clarity and structure will be needed as implementation continues.

The subsections that follow reflect Greensboro's current public safety landscape and are organized around four interrelated themes: grounded strengths within the ecosystem; persistent challenges that limit coordination and execution; emerging momentum that points to opportunities for deeper alignment; and strategic considerations for strengthening the ecosystem as the city advances implementation.

Grounded Strengths: Foundational Conditions Supporting Early Implementation

Greensboro's early implementation phase is supported by several foundational strengths that reflect readiness for deeper coordination, even as the public safety ecosystem continues to take shape. Across sessions and the SWOT-based reflection activity, participants consistently named conditions that enable progress—shared direction, relational depth, and a growing willingness to align across sectors.

A central strength surfaced during the tour was **the presence of a shared framework for community safety**: the City of Greensboro's Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030). While participants did not consistently reference the plan by name or demonstrate detailed familiarity with its pillars, goals, or action items, there was broad recognition that Greensboro now has a common point of reference guiding the work. On SWOT posters and in discussion, partners referred to *“having a plan,” “clear goals,” “direction,”* and *“something to build from.”* As one participant noted, *“At least now we’re not all guessing what the goal is,”* reflecting a shift away from fragmented efforts toward a more unified sense of purpose. Another participant captured the implementation challenge succinctly: *“We know what we’re working toward—the challenge is how we get there together”* (Community partner, SWOT reflection).

This appetite for alignment is reinforced by Greensboro's **existing convening capacity and cross-sector participation**. Participants pointed to the role of the Community Safety Department and collaborative structures such as GSO CAN (Greensboro Collaborative Action Network) in bringing partners together around prevention and safety efforts. Several participants emphasized the value of these cross-sector spaces, noting that *“we don’t usually get to sit at the same table like this.”* The act of convening, particularly across government, community-based organizations, and system partners, was viewed as evidence that greater alignment is possible, even as structures to sustain and operationalize that alignment continue to emerge.

At the community level, participants emphasized the **depth of trusted relationships** as a core strength. Organizations with longstanding presence in neighborhoods most impacted by violence, particularly youth-serving and grassroots groups were repeatedly referenced across sessions and SWOT posters as consistent points of support for young people and families. These relationships were described as foundational to Greensboro's prevention efforts and essential for expanding into more coordinated intervention and interruption work over time. As one youth-serving partner shared, *“The trust part is already here. That’s something you can’t rush”* (Community-based organization representative).

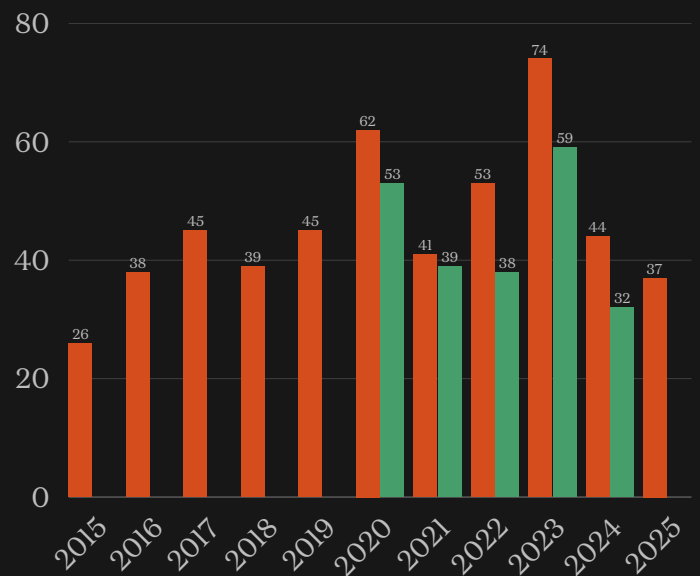


MOMENT THAT MATTERED

During a session focused on community experience and youth leadership, a young leader reframed the conversation about safety by describing how consistency and relationship—not a single program—shaped their path forward. They spoke about navigating instability and loss, and how adults and organizations that continued to show up created a sense of belonging and possibility: *“It wasn’t about one program fixing everything—it was knowing someone was still there when things got hard.”* -Young leader, facilitated discussion

GUN VIOLENCE TRENDS IN GREENSBORO (2015–2025)

● Total Homicide Victims
● Black Homicide Victims



Note: Data related to racial breakdown became available in 2020

The reflection grounded broader conversations about systems and strategy in lived experience, reinforcing why trust, presence, and shared responsibility remain essential strengths as Greensboro strengthens its public safety ecosystem.

Local data further contextualizes why these relational and coordination-focused strengths matter. Following a record high of 74 homicides in 2023, Greensboro experienced a significant decline in lethal violence, with homicides decreasing to 45 in 2024, a reduction of approximately 42 percent, and continued declines reported into early 2025. Violent crime overall also declined during this period. While participants did not attribute these trends to any single strategy or intervention, they viewed the reductions as fragile gains that underscore the importance of sustaining prevention efforts while strengthening coordination, intervention, and interruption capacity across the ecosystem.

The tour also revealed a willingness among partners to reflect candidly and learn together—an important strength in an ecosystem still taking shape. Participants openly named misalignment, acknowledged gaps across prevention, intervention, and interruption, and engaged across roles and sectors without defaulting to defensiveness. This learning posture—visible across multiple sessions and in the SWOT exercise—creates space for shared problem-solving and course correction as implementation advances.

Additional strengths surfaced during the tour included:

- Established collaborative infrastructure through bodies such as GSO CAN
- Cross-sector participation from city agencies, education, health systems, and community-based organizations
- Meaningful engagement of young leaders beyond symbolic participation
- Willingness among partners to name gaps and misalignment openly
- Interest in data and evaluation as tools for learning and improvement



PERSISTENT CHALLENGES: STRUCTURAL AND OPERATIONAL GAPS CONSTRAINING EARLY IMPLEMENTATION

As Greensboro moves deeper into early implementation of its Comprehensive Community Safety Plan, several persistent challenges surfaced across sessions and the SWOT-based reflection activity. These challenges are not the result of insufficient commitment or effort; rather, they reflect structural and operational gaps that complicate coordination, slow execution, and limit shared ownership across the public safety ecosystem.

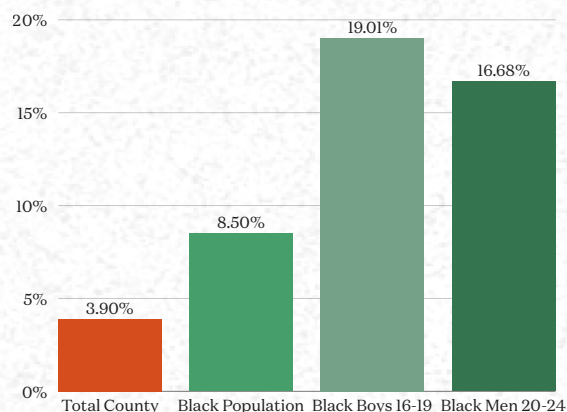
A recurring theme was **uneven understanding of the Community Safety Plan** and what it requires of different partners. While participants broadly expressed appreciation for having a plan and shared direction, many acknowledged limited familiarity with its pillars, goals, and action items, specifically how those elements translate into concrete roles and expectations. During SWOT discussions, this gap surfaced through expressions of uncertainty and misalignment. As one participant shared, *“I know there’s a plan, but I’m not always sure what part I’m supposed to be playing in it”* (*Community partner, SWOT reflection*). Without clearer pathways connecting the plan to day-to-day work, shared intent often stops short of coordinated execution.

Participants also described a **concentration of responsibility within a relatively small number of actors**, particularly within city government and a handful of community partners. While the Community Safety Department plays an essential convening and coordinating role, many participants noted that responsibility for advancing implementation has not yet been broadly distributed across departments, agencies, and organizations. This dynamic was frequently linked to capacity strain and sustainability concerns. As one participant noted during discussion, “It feels like the same few people are always carrying the load.” The concentration of responsibility limits the ecosystem’s ability to scale and creates vulnerability as implementation demands increase.

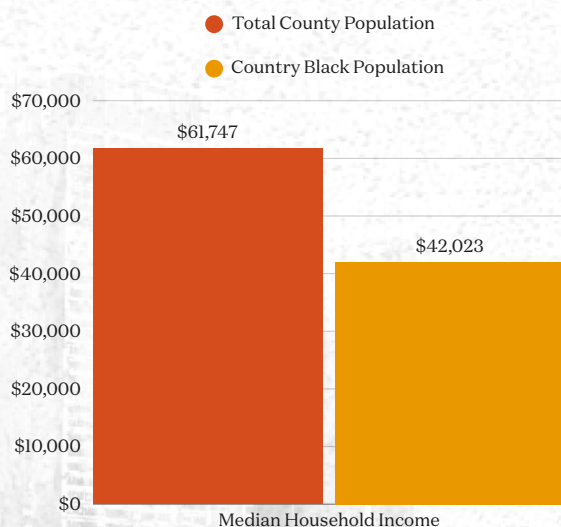
Another persistent challenge is the **imbalance across the core components of a comprehensive public safety ecosystem**. Greensboro's investments and activity remain heavily concentrated in prevention, supported by strong community relationships and programming. However, participants consistently noted that coordinated intervention and interruption strategies are less developed, inconsistently resourced, or not clearly integrated into the broader plan. This gap was framed as a risk rather than a critique—particularly in moments of heightened violence or crisis, when prevention alone is insufficient to meet immediate needs.

While Greensboro has experienced a notable decline in homicides following a record high in 2023, participants emphasized that these gains remain fragile if the public safety ecosystem is not fully developed and inclusive of strategies that address the root causes of violence. Discussions highlighted that sustaining progress will require stronger coordination across prevention, intervention, and interruption, alongside deeper alignment with efforts that influence long-term safety conditions beyond immediate response.

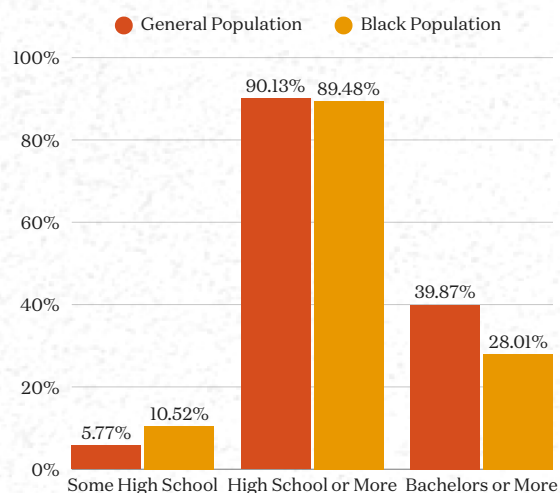
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



EDUCATION LEVEL



Challenges related to coordination and communication across partners also surfaced repeatedly. Despite the presence of collaborative structures such as GSOCAN, participants described **ongoing fragmentation in information-sharing, decision-making, and role clarity**. Several partners noted that they are often unaware of parallel initiatives, funding streams, or changes in strategy occurring elsewhere in the ecosystem. As one community-based organization representative reflected, “We’re all doing work, but sometimes it feels disconnected.” This fragmentation not only limits efficiency but can also create confusion for community members navigating services and supports.

The reflection resonated across the room, capturing a central tension raised throughout the tour, that commitment and relationships alone are not enough to carry implementation forward. Without clearer roles, shared protocols, and stronger coordination across systems, the ecosystem struggles most in moments when stakes are highest.

Finally, participants raised challenges related to **data access, alignment, and use for shared accountability**. While there is strong interest in evaluation and learning, data systems are often siloed across departments and organizations, limiting their usefulness for collective decision-making. Several participants noted that without shared measures of progress and clearer data-sharing mechanisms, it is difficult to assess whether implementation is advancing as intended or to make timely course corrections.

Additional challenges surfaced during the tour included:

- Limited clarity around decision-making authority across departments and partners
- Capacity constraints within community-based organizations expected to scale quickly
- Inconsistent communication about funding timelines and expectations
- Lack of shared protocols for escalation, referral, and follow-up
- Tension between short-term funding cycles and long-term implementation goals

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

During a strategy-focused session, a participant described responding to a situation involving a young person at immediate risk, only to encounter uncertainty about who should take the lead and how support should be coordinated. Despite goodwill and urgency, the lack of clear pathways slowed the response: *“Everyone wanted to help, but nobody knew who was supposed to take the lead.”* – Participant, strategy session

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EMERGING MOMENTUM: OPPORTUNITIES TO DEEPEN ALIGNMENT AND SHARED OWNERSHIP

Even amid the challenges surfaced during the Tour, participants identified clear areas of momentum that reflect opportunity; Greensboro's growing shift toward **collective framing of community safety and shared ownership of outcomes**. Across sessions and the SWOT-based reflection activity, partners increasingly spoke not only about individual programs or responsibilities, but about how success should be defined, measured, and sustained across the ecosystem.

Rather than centering conversations on who is responsible for specific activities, many participants emphasized the importance of **shared outcomes and clearer success factors that cut across organizational and sector lines**. This shift was evident in how partners described both progress and gaps, moving away from isolated efforts toward questions of collective impact. As one participant noted, "If we're all working toward the same goals, then we should also be measuring success the same way." This framing reflects an emerging opportunity to move from coordination as convening toward coordination as co-ownership, where agencies, organizations, and community partners are aligned not just around activities, but around shared definitions of progress.

This momentum was reinforced by discussions about accountability and follow-through. Participants expressed interest in greater clarity around how decisions are made, how priorities are set, and how partners remain connected over time. Rather than resistance to structure, there was growing recognition that **clearer governance, shared milestones, and agreed-upon indicators** could strengthen trust and reduce fragmentation. As one partner reflected, "We don't need more meetings, we need clearer ways to know we're moving the same direction." The desire for alignment surfaced as an opportunity to formalize shared responsibility without undermining flexibility or community leadership.

Young leader engagement emerged as one of the strongest and most tangible opportunities to deepen this collective approach. During the tour, young leaders were not positioned as symbolic participants, but as contributors to discussions about safety, prevention, and accountability. Their perspectives sharpened conversations about relevance, urgency, and impact, often reframing abstract strategy into lived reality. Participants noted that young leaders' involvement challenged assumptions and clarified what safety looks like beyond institutional definitions.

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

During a youth-centered session, a young leader reflected on what it meant to be invited into conversations about safety in a meaningful way. They described the difference between being asked to share a story and being asked to help shape solutions, noting, *“This is the first time it feels like what we’re saying might actually change something.”* Young leader, facilitated discussion

The moment signaled a subtle but important shift—from engagement as participation to engagement as partnership—and highlighted the potential for deeper integration of young leader voice as implementation moves forward.

Local data discussed during the tour reinforced why this moment matters. Patterns related to the concentration of violence and repeated exposure in specific neighborhoods underscored the limitations of program-by-program approaches and the need for coordinated strategies that operate across systems. Participants viewed these data as reinforcing the opportunity to align efforts around shared outcomes—particularly those that connect immediate safety strategies with longer-term conditions influencing risk.

Additional opportunities surfaced during the tour included:

- Clarifying shared success metrics across agencies and community partners
- Formalizing roles and decision-making processes to support co-ownership
- Strengthening pathways for young leader input into implementation decisions
- Using data as a shared learning tool rather than a compliance mechanism
- Aligning funding and timelines to support coordinated, multi-year strategies

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS: RISKS THAT COULD UNDERMINE PROGRESS WITHOUT INTENTIONAL ALIGNMENT

As Greensboro advances implementation of its Comprehensive Community Safety Plan, participants identified several strategic considerations that, if left unaddressed, could constrain progress or undermine momentum over time. These considerations surfaced most clearly during discussions of risk, sustainability, and long-term execution, reflecting concerns about forces both inside and outside the public safety ecosystem.

One recurring consideration was the vulnerability of the work to **shifts in political leadership, priorities, or public attention**. Participants noted that while current alignment and investment have created momentum, changes in administration, budget cycles, or public narrative could quickly disrupt implementation. Several emphasized the importance of embedding the plan and its core strategies into durable systems rather than relying on individual champions. As one participant reflected, “We’ve seen good ideas lose steam when leadership changes.” This concern underscored the need to institutionalize coordination, accountability, and shared ownership beyond any single moment of alignment.

Participants also raised concerns about **competition for limited resources** and the potential for **fragmentation as funding opportunities expand**. While increased investment was viewed as a positive development, partners noted that without clear alignment and shared priorities, new funding could unintentionally reinforce silos or create incentives for duplication. As one community-based organization representative shared, “*When money comes fast, everyone scrambles—and that’s when coordination can break down.*” This dynamic was identified as a strategic risk that could weaken trust and dilute impact if not proactively managed.

Another strategic consideration centered on the strain placed on frontline organizations and staff operating in high-need environments. Participants highlighted the **emotional and operational toll of sustained crisis response**, particularly for community-based organizations and credible messengers working closest to violence. Without sufficient stabilization, support, and pathways for sustainability, partners expressed concern about burnout and turnover eroding relational capital over time. This risk was framed not only as a workforce issue, but as a threat to continuity and effectiveness across the ecosystem.

Participants also surfaced concerns about the **level of investment and capacity dedicated to integrating economic opportunity, family support, and other structural drivers into the public safety ecosystem**. While these elements are recognized as critical within the Community Safety Plan and the Cities United Public Safety Ecosystem Framework, participants noted that efforts addressing these areas often compete with more immediate safety demands for attention and resources.

As one community partner shared, *“We’re constantly responding to what’s urgent, and the longer-term pieces don’t always get the attention or resources they need.”* Another participant echoed this tension, noting that *“it’s hard to build upstream when so much of the work is focused on responding in the moment.”* Without sustained investment and clearer mechanisms to operationalize these components alongside prevention, intervention, and interruption, participants cautioned that the ecosystem may struggle to fully address the conditions that influence long-term safety and stability.

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

During a reflection session, a participant described feeling both hopeful and concerned about the pace of change. They noted that while momentum was building, the demands placed on a small group of leaders and organizations felt unsustainable without deeper structural support: *“I worry that if we don’t slow down enough to build the right systems, we’ll burn out the people holding this together.”* Community partner, facilitated reflection

The reflection highlighted a key strategic tension—balancing urgency with durability—and reinforced the importance of pacing implementation in ways that protect both people and progress.

Finally, participants emphasized the risk of **misalignment between data, narrative, and community experience**. Several noted that when data is used primarily for reporting or compliance, rather than shared learning and accountability, it can feel disconnected from lived realities and erode trust. As one community partner reflected, “Data doesn’t mean much if it doesn’t match what people are actually experiencing.” Another participant added that “too often data feels like something we report up, not something we use together.” Participants viewed this as a strategic consideration tied directly to credibility and legitimacy, particularly as implementation decisions increasingly rely on evidence and evaluation.

Additional strategic considerations surfaced during the tour included:

- The risk of initiative fatigue as multiple strategies launch simultaneously
- Limited capacity for sustained coordination across departments and partners
- Potential erosion of trust if communication and follow-through lag
- Tension between short-term outcomes and long-term system building
- The need to align public narrative with on-the-ground experience

GREENSBORO: SAFETY & EQUITY SNAPSHOT

Greensboro is a city of approximately 300,000 residents, shaped by racial and economic diversity, strong community networks, and a growing focus on community-centered approaches to public safety. As the city advances implementation of its Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030), Greensboro continues to navigate structural inequities that influence exposure to violence, access to opportunity, and long-term safety outcomes. The indicators below provide context for Greensboro’s current safety and equity landscape and underscore the importance of coordinated, ecosystem-level strategies.

- **Population:** ~302,000 residents
- **Black Population:** ~44%
- **Poverty Rate:** ~18–20% of residents live below the federal poverty line
- **Median Household Income:** ~\$53,000 vs. ~\$60,000 statewide (VERIFY)
- **Education:** High school graduation rate $\geq 90\%$ Overall, with disparities by race, income, and neighborhood (VERIFY)
- **Homicide Trend:** Record high in 2023 (74 homicides) followed by a significant decline in 2024 (43 homicides), with continued decreases reported into early 2025
- **Violent Crime:** Overall violent crime declined in 2024–2025, though exposure remains uneven across neighborhoods
- **Geographic Concentration:** Violence and safety concerns remain concentrated in specific neighborhoods experiencing historical disinvestment, with repeated exposure affecting young people and families in those areas
- **Economic Context:** A substantial share of households earn below \$50,000 annually, with economic instability closely intersecting with safety, housing, and workforce access (VERIFY)
- **Governance & Coordination:** Greensboro’s public safety coordination is led through the City of Greensboro’s Community Safety Department, which convenes city agencies and community partners around prevention-focused strategies and implementation of the Community Safety Plan. Collaborative bodies such as GSO CAN (Greensboro Collaborative Action Network) provide additional cross-sector alignment and partnership infrastructure.
- **Young Leader Engagement:** Young leaders are increasingly present in engagement spaces related to safety, prevention, and community wellbeing. During the LTW Tour, young leaders participated as contributors rather than observers, signaling growing interest in more formalized roles within the city’s public safety ecosystem.
- **Community Assets:** Community-based organizations and grassroots partners with deep neighborhood presence; youth-serving organizations; faith-based institutions; education and health system partners; prevention-focused nonprofits; emerging violence interruption and outreach efforts; reentry and workforce-alignment partners; and city-led coordination structures.
- **Data & Equity Considerations:** Local data shared during the tour highlighted persistent disparities by place, race, and income that shape exposure to violence and access to supports. These patterns reinforce the need for coordinated strategies that integrate prevention, intervention, interruption, and structural supports to advance equitable safety outcomes.

Sources: City of Greensboro Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030); Greensboro Police Department; U.S. Census Bureau (ACS); Greensboro LTW Tour materials.

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

The Leading the Way Tour surfaced a clear set of priorities to support Greensboro as it advances iThe Leading the Way Tour surfaced a clear set of priorities to support Greensboro as it advances implementation of its Comprehensive Community Safety Plan.

These recommendations are intentionally prioritized based on urgency, feasibility, and the risks identified during the tour. They are organized across two implementation horizons: immediate action steps (3–6 months) and longer-term priorities (12+ months) to support sequencing, focus, and accountability. As noted by Cities United team members throughout the tour, the work ahead is less about introducing new initiatives and more about strengthening how the system functions together in practice. The recommendations below reflect that orientation.

IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS (3–6 MONTH PRIORITIES)

1. CLARIFY PLAN OWNERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND DECISION-MAKING.

Establish clear goal owners for each pillar and priority area of the Community Safety Plan, with defined roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority. This includes aligning individual and interdepartmental work plans within the Jurisdiction, to the Community Safety Plan and its implementation timeline. Clear ownership is essential to move from shared intent to shared execution.

2. TRANSLATE THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN INTO ACCESSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS.

Develop companion materials: such as slide decks, one- and two-page summaries, and role-specific briefs that make the plan easier to understand and apply across city departments, community partners, elected officials, and funders. These materials should emphasize priorities, timelines, and how partners plug into implementation.

3. MAP THE PUBLIC SAFETY ECOSYSTEM AND CLARIFY PARTNER ROLES, WITH EMPHASIS ON INTERVENTION AND INTERRUPTION.

Conduct a focused ecosystem mapping process to clarify how prevention, intervention, and interruption efforts currently operate across city departments, community partners, the county, and other system actors. This process should identify gaps, clarify roles, and strengthen pathways—particularly where intervention and interruption capacity is still emerging.

4. ESTABLISH REGULAR HIGH-RISK IDENTIFICATION AND REVIEW PROCESSES.

Create or strengthen structured spaces for reviewing shootings, incidents, and high-risk situations to improve coordination across programs such as CVI, Project Safe Neighborhoods, co-response, and homelessness services. These processes should support shared learning and coordinated response rather than siloed action.

5. STRENGTHEN INTERNAL ALIGNMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS ACROSS CITY DEPARTMENTS.

Improve internal alignment through shared messaging, regular briefings, and clearer communication pathways across departments. Clarify the role of GSO CAN as a messenger and coordination platform, and ensure intentional inclusion of community partners within that network.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. BUILD A PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION APPROACH.

Develop an assessment and evaluation framework that emphasizes learning, adaptation, and accountability, and that meaningfully incorporates community voice. Engaging a broader and more diverse set of researchers; including participatory and community-based evaluators, can strengthen credibility and relevance over time.

2. STRENGTHEN AND INSTITUTIONALIZE INTERVENTION AND INTERRUPTION CAPACITY.

Build out clearly defined intervention and interruption pathways, including referral, escalation, and follow-up processes supported by sustainable funding and cross-sector coordination. This work is essential to completing the public safety ecosystem and sustaining progress.

3. DEEPEN COUNTY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE PUBLIC SAFETY ECOSYSTEM.

More fully integrate the county into public safety planning, implementation, and coordination, particularly where services, funding, and authority intersect with city-led efforts. Clear alignment can reduce fragmentation and strengthen shared outcomes.

4. ENGAGE FAITH-BASED LEADERS AS ECOSYSTEM PARTNERS.

Intentionally engage interfaith leaders who play critical roles in prevention, healing, and community trust, but are not yet fully integrated into public safety coordination and implementation efforts.

5. ADVANCE COORDINATED FUNDER AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

Develop a coordinated strategy to engage philanthropy and the business community in supporting the public safety ecosystem. Prioritize flexible, non-reimbursable funding, gap funding, and rapid-response pools that support both immediate needs and long-term system building.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIES UNITED SUPPORT

Cities United is well positioned to support Greensboro as it advances implementation of its Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030) through targeted technical assistance, resource sharing, individual or team coaching, peer learning, and strategic facilitation. The opportunities below are examples of where Cities United can add value in strengthening coordination, accountability, and long-term sustainability across the public safety ecosystem.

1. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY SUPPORT

Provide implementation coaching to help clarify goal ownership, timelines, and accountability structures tied to the Community Safety Plan, including practical tools that

2. PLAN TRANSLATION AND PRACTICAL TOOLS

Share planning templates, visual summaries, and role-specific examples that help city staff, community partners, elected officials, and funders understand how the Community Safety Plan translates into action.

3. PUBLIC SAFETY ECOSYSTEM MAPPING AND ROLE CLARIFICATION

Facilitate an ecosystem mapping process that documents roles, responsibilities, and connections across prevention, intervention, and interruption, and helps identify gaps, overlaps, and priority areas for coordination.

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4. INTERVENTION AND INTERRUPTION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Curate peer learning examples and offer technical guidance on building coordinated intervention and interruption pathways, including referral, escalation, and follow-up models that connect community-based violence intervention efforts, co-response models, and law-enforcement-adjacent strategies where appropriate.

5. PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION DESIGN

Convene learning sessions and share evaluation frameworks that emphasize participatory approaches, community-informed learning, and practical use of data, without prescribing a single evaluation model.

6. COUNTY ENGAGEMENT AND SYSTEM ALIGNMENT

Facilitate peer learning and ecosystem mapping conversations that help clarify how county services, programs, and funding intersect with city-led community safety efforts. This support can focus on identifying alignment opportunities, shared touchpoints, and coordination gaps rather than formal governance or restructuring.

7. HEALTH SYSTEM AND HOSPITAL INTEGRATION

Provide examples and facilitate discussions on how hospitals and health systems can be integrated into community safety ecosystems, particularly around intervention, healing, and post-incident coordination.

Conclusion:

A Call for Aligned Action

Greensboro enters the next phase of its community safety work with a **clear sense of direction**, a **growing network of committed partners**, and an honest understanding of what it will take to **translate vision into sustained impact**. The Leading the Way Tour affirmed that the jurisdiction is not starting from scratch; rather, it is navigating the complex and necessary work of strengthening coordination, clarifying roles, and building the connective tissue required for long-term success.

Across sessions, reflections, and shared analysis, partners demonstrated **a readiness to move beyond individual efforts toward deeper alignment**, anchored by the Comprehensive Community Safety Plan and informed by lived experience, data, and community voice. At the same time, the tour surfaced where **implementation remains vulnerable**: uneven understanding of the plan, imbalances across prevention, intervention, and interruption, capacity strain on key actors, and the **need for clearer accountability and shared learning structures**.

Taken together, these insights point to a central opportunity. **Greensboro is at a moment where intentional alignment, across systems, partners, and strategies, can help lock in progress and reduce reliance on individual champions or short-term conditions**. Doing so will require continued investment in coordination, clarity, and trust, alongside a commitment to building a public safety ecosystem that is both comprehensive and durable.

Cities United's role moving forward is to walk alongside Greensboro as a thought partner and capacity builder; supporting implementation discipline, peer learning, ecosystem alignment, and shared accountability. The recommendations and support opportunities outlined in this report are offered as a **starting point for that partnership, grounded in what was heard, learned, and observed during the tour**.

Ultimately, Greensboro's progress will depend not on any single program or intervention, but on **the strength of its collective action**. The Leading the Way Tour reaffirmed that the foundation is present. The work ahead is to align it, strengthen it, and carry it forward together.

APPENDIX

REFERENCED QUOTES & ATTRIBUTION

- “We know what we’re working toward—the challenge is how we get there together.” — *Community partner, SWOT reflection*
- “I know there’s a plan, but I’m not always sure what part I’m supposed to be playing in it.” — *Community partner, SWOT reflection*
- “Everyone wanted to help, but nobody knew who was supposed to take the lead.” — *Participant, strategy session*
- “The trust part is already here. That’s something you can’t rush.” — *Community-based organization representative*
- “This is the first time it feels like what we’re saying might actually change something.” — *Young leader, facilitated discussion*
- “It wasn’t about one program fixing everything—it was knowing someone was still there when things got hard.” — *Young leader, facilitated discussion*
- “I worry that if we don’t slow down enough to build the right systems, we’ll burn out the people holding this together.” — *Community partner, facilitated reflection*
- “Data doesn’t mean much if it doesn’t match what people are actually experiencing.” — *Community partner, strategy discussion*
- “Too often data feels like something we report up, not something we use together.” — *Participant, strategy discussion*

KEY DATA POINTS REFERENCED IN REPORT

- **Gun-related homicides:** 2024: ~43–45 homicides (~42% year-over-year reduction)
- **Population:** ~302,000 (Greensboro-Fayette County)
- **Black population:** ~44%
- **Unemployment rate (overall):** ~3.9%
- **Black Unemployment** ~8.5%
- **Median Household Income:** ~53,000 (compared to ~\$60,000 statewide)
- **Graduation rate (2023–24):** >=80%
- **CU investment during stop:** \$40,000 in grants to Greensboro organizations

APPENDIX

KEY DATA POINTS REFERENCED IN REPORT

- Education: Guilford County Schools graduation rate exceeds 90% overall, with persistent disparities by race, income, and geography
- Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; Guilford County Schools data summaries
- Homicide Trend:
- 2023: 74 homicides (record high)
- 2024: ~43–45 homicides (~42% year-over-year reduction)
- Early 2025: Continued declines reported
- Source: Greensboro Police Department crime statistics; City of Greensboro public safety briefings; WFAE reporting (2025)
- Violent Crime: Overall violent crime declined in 2024–2025, with uneven impacts across neighborhoods
- Source: Greensboro Police Department crime reports; Greensboro Data presentation (LTW Tour materials)
- Geographic Concentration: Violence remains concentrated in neighborhoods experiencing historic disinvestment, disproportionately impacting young people and families
- Source: Greensboro Police Department hotspot analyses; Greensboro Data presentation; LTW Tour session discussions
- Economic Context: A significant share of households earn under \$50,000 annually, intersecting with housing stability, workforce access, and safety outcomes
- Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2023; LTW Narrative Scan & Political Landscape Analysis
- Public Safety Infrastructure: Implementation of the City of Greensboro’s Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030), structured around prevention, intervention, interruption, and coordination
- Source: City of Greensboro Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030)
- Young Leader Engagement: Young leaders engaged through LTW sessions, youth leadership discussions, and community-based programming; growing interest in structured advisory and leadership roles
- Source: LTW Greensboro session transcripts (Youth Leadership Experience; Youth Engagement & Collaboration); CU field notes

APPENDIX

SOURCES OF CU TEAM & LTW JURISDICTION MEMBER FEEDBACK

- CU Team Daily Reflections (Greensboro LTW Daily Reflections Form responses)
- Greensboro Leading the Way Tour session recordings and transcripts
- SWOT reflection posters completed by participants
- Sign-in sheets from tour convenings
- Facilitated session notes and working documents
- Daily reflection forms completed by Cities United team members
- Greensboro Leading the Way internal debrief transcript
- Greensboro Leading the Way Mini Evaluation Report (January 13–15, 2026)
- City of Greensboro Comprehensive Community Safety Plan (2025–2030)
- Greensboro Police Department public safety data
- Greensboro Data presentation shared during the tour
- Narrative Scan & Political Landscape Analysis





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