

January 4, 2022

Mr. Michael O. Freeman
Hennepin County Attorney
C-2000 Government Center
300 South 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55487

Dear Mr. Freeman:

For nearly two years, communities across Hennepin County have experienced a meaningful increase in serious property crimes and accompanying violence. The residents of our communities, and we as their local elected officials, are deeply concerned with how this crime trend has impacted both the victims of these crimes and our populations in general. Residents of our cities have experienced a reduced sense of safety and well-being. Suburban communities across the county have experienced increases in homicides, shootings, auto theft, burglaries, theft-from-vehicles, street racing, and vehicles fleeing from the police. Our police chiefs have expressed their concerns with a lack of involvement or partnership with the Hennepin County Attorney's Office in addressing the rise in crime and the need to reconsider failed criminal justice reforms.

There is a sense of lawlessness and lack of accountability that is stemming from criminals who commit crimes and then are being turned back to the street in short order -- with little or no consequence -- and that conduct is repeated. We support reform in the criminal justice systems. However, the safety of our communities cannot be jeopardized in the process. Decisions to not prosecute serious crimes sends important messages to both perpetrators and our residents. Public safety is the most basic service cities provide to people who live, work, and attend school in our communities.

We have read the statements by your office to increase prosecution efforts for carjackings. While this recent change in policy is appreciated, we remain very concerned with the reform efforts by your office as illustrated in the letter dated October 7, 2021 (attached) and the effect it is having on the safety of our communities. We specifically request that you review the policy changes your office has taken regarding the posting of bail and the prosecution of crimes in Hennepin County. We further ask that you commit to ensuring that residents and businesses are provided the public safety and justice we are all charged with providing in Hennepin County.

We offer to partner with your office and the Sheriff's Department for Hennepin County to share our experiences and work towards solutions that address both criminal conduct and potential criminal justice system reforms.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet and review these matters with you personally. Please contact Maple Grove City Administrator Heidi Nelson at 763-494-6001 or hnelson@maplegrovern.gov to coordinate such a discussion with our community leaders.

In public service,



Mark Steffenson
City of Maple Grove



Kathi Hemken
City of New Hope



Jim Adams
City of Crystal



Lisa Jacobson
City of Brooklyn Park



Jeffrey Wosje
City of Plymouth



Patrick Hanlon
City of Hopkins



Brad Wiersum
City of Minnetonka