For Immediate Release
April 11, 2018

Statement from Mayor Tom Butt regarding the recent homicides in Richmond:

After attracting media attention for going nearly five months without a single homicide, this past week -- Saturday afternoon and again Monday night -- Richmond suffered the tragic loss of two young men to gun violence. The homicide victims, Javoni Foster, a resident of Antioch, and Mark Henderson, a Richmond resident, were both killed by gunshots in the Park View neighborhood and Crescent Park.

There were two more non-fatal shootings over the weekend, leaving four people wounded between the ages of 16 to 20 years old. Two teenagers and a young adult were shot on Saturday in their car a few blocks from City Hall and are suffering non-life threatening injuries. The next day, a 20-year old victim was shot near the Monterey Pines Apartments and is in critical condition.

The four shootings were in a small geographical area of Richmond and happened over the course of just three days. After months of relative peace, this resurgence of gun violence has parts of Richmond on edge.

We cannot afford to be complacent.

The Police Department is responding in multiple ways to disrupt the pattern of shootings and investigate those that have occurred. Detectives from various investigative units, with assistance from BRAVO foot patrol officers, are working with witnesses and following up on leads. The community has a key role to play in both preventing gun violence and bringing to justice those who participate. The Department’s ability to collaborate with community members is essential to providing protection from additional shootings and preventing further escalation of violence.

Just as we honor our recent successes and the immense support of our residents, we must make every effort to foster an environment where tensions are resolved without violence. A combination of community based efforts by the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS), Operation Ceasefire, the RYSE Center and others are underway to meet individual needs and promote safety. I understand that ONS change agents are working directly with the victim’s families and giving close attention to the specific conflicts that are surfacing around these shootings.

Supportive rapid response services for the victims are being provided by Ceasefire as well as intervention with individuals who are at risk of becoming a victim or possibly a perpetrator of gun violence. The RYSE Center also has close ties to many youth and young adults impacted by this violence,
and their staff has had a hands-on approach, providing counseling, assisting with neighborhood organizing and representing victims to direct services and resources where they are needed.

Sam Vaughn, ONS Program Coordinator, was featured Friday night on HBO’s news magazine series VICE and stated: “We truly believe that we can live in a city where there are zero homicides from gun violence.” I agree completely, and we have every reason to work together as a community to bring an end to these killings.

Every loss of life is significant and weighs heavily on us all. I ask for continued support for the victims, their families, our law enforcement, and the Crescent Park and Park View communities as they work through this very stressful and challenging time.

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