

# Uptown Columbus Curfew Proposal 2026

Over the past year, Uptown Columbus has experienced a significant increase in late-evening and nighttime gatherings of unsupervised minors (8 to 17 years old), resulting in growing public safety concerns, operational disruptions, business impacts, and increased demands on law enforcement and Uptown resources. These challenges have affected visitors, residents, merchants, property owners, public spaces, and the overall visitor experience within the district.

In response, Uptown Columbus has worked proactively and collaboratively to address these concerns through a variety of measures in coordination with the Columbus Police Department, Crime Prevention, Juvenile Court Judge, District Attorney, W.C. Bradley Co., merchants, property owners, and community partners. These efforts have included **increasing off-duty police coverage, expanding Ambassador and Safety Team hours, implementing parking deck restrictions, coordinating temporary street closures, increasing merchant outreach, enhancing communication with public safety officials, and participating in ongoing discussions focused on identifying solutions.** Despite these substantial investments of time, resources, and funding, challenges have continued to escalate. In many cases, large groups of unsupervised minors are now gathering earlier in the evening, often before existing mitigation measures, such as the 11:00pm Bay Avenue closure, can effectively address the situation. Businesses have reported operational disruptions, visitors have expressed concerns about their comfort and safety, and Uptown has incurred significant additional costs to maintain a safe and welcoming environment.

The proposed curfew ordinance is intended to serve as one tool within a broader public safety and community strategy. Uptown Columbus recognizes that **enforcement alone is not the solution.** We fully support continued efforts focused on youth engagement, expanded recreational opportunities, community partnerships, parental accountability, mentorship programs, and coordinated public safety initiatives. After nearly a year of meetings, operational adjustments, increased staffing, and collaborative efforts, additional tools are needed to help address the growing challenges associated with large groups of unsupervised minors in Uptown. The goal of the proposed curfew is to **proactively support a safe, welcoming, and family-friendly environment while reducing operational strain on businesses, visitors, residents, staff, and law enforcement, and protecting the positive momentum** Uptown Columbus has worked hard to build.

## Timeline of Escalation & Response

Concerns related to late-night gatherings of unsupervised minors, operational disruptions, and public safety activity within Uptown Columbus have developed over an extended period of time. The following timeline reflects ongoing coordination efforts (primarily via emails and phone calls), operational adjustments, public safety responses, and requests for support prior to the proposed ordinance discussion.

### July 2025

- July 7, 2025 — Following July 4th incidents involving shots fired, fireworks being shot at bystanders/families, and fires at Bay Ave Parking garage within Uptown

Columbus, requests for additional support and public safety coordination were initiated.

- July 7, 2025 — Additional public safety resources were added within the Uptown district.
- July 21, 2025 — Operational updates and concerns regarding unsupervised activity of minors were communicated to stakeholders.

### **September 2025**

- September 6, 2025 — A fatal incident occurred on Bay Avenue which increased concerns related to unsupervised late-night activity by minors.
- September 7, 2025 — Additional requests for operational support and public safety coordination were submitted.
- September 7, 2025 — Additional public safety resources were added within the Uptown district.
- September 11, 2025 — Uptown Columbus formally requested a temporary street closure of Bay Avenue from Front Avenue to 11th Street between 10:00pm and 3:00am to assist with crowd management and operational safety concerns.
- September 26, 2025 — A reported sexual assault occurred within the Front Avenue parking garage area.

### **October 2025**

- October 15, 2025 — An Uptown town hall meeting was conducted with residents, merchants, and business stakeholders regarding ongoing operational and safety concerns.
- October 16, 2025 — Follow-up requests for support related to increasing gathering of minors' activity were submitted.

### **November 2025**

- November 14, 2025 — Uptown leadership and board members discussed growing operational concerns and necessary funding associated with unsupervised activity of minors.
- November 25, 2025 — Additional support from city leaders was requested in response to repeated disturbances and large gatherings of minors on Bay Avenue.

### **December 2025**

- December 1, 2025 — Coordination with merchants resulted in adjusted operating hours of Banks Food Hall due to ongoing late-night operational/safety concerns.
- December 1, 2025 — Playground and splash pad operating hours were adjusted to close at 8:00pm
- December 17, 2025 — Operational and public safety updates were provided to Uptown leadership and board members.
- December 22, 2025 — Support was requested regarding operational concerns and gathering activity occurring within the Bay Avenue parking garage.
- December 30, 2025 — Additional requests for guidance and public safety support were submitted to city officials.

### **January 2026**

- January 12, 2026 — Follow-up discussions were conducted with city officials regarding operational concerns and public safety coordination.

- January 16, 2026 — Additional public safety resources (officers) were added, bringing projected operational safety expenditures to approximately \$253,165.
- January 23, 2026 — Meetings were conducted involving Juvenile Court representatives, the District Attorney’s Office, Columbus Police Department, W.C. Bradley Co., and Uptown Columbus regarding ongoing activity of minors and operational concerns.

**February 2026**

- February 19, 2026 — Additional discussions regarding continued unsupervised activity of minors and consideration of a minor curfew measure.
- February 25, 2026 — Second meeting was conducted with Juvenile Court representatives, the District Attorney’s Office, Columbus Police Department, W.C. Bradley Co., and Uptown Columbus regarding ongoing activity of minors and operational concerns.

**March 2026**

- March 13, 2026 — Banks Food Hall resumed revised operating hours following ongoing operational adjustments and safety coordination efforts.

**April 2026**

- April 3, 2026 — Additional security measures were implemented at Banks Food Hall.
- April 16, 2026 — Discussions regarding public safety announcements and coordinated communication efforts were conducted.
- April 24, 2026 — The first draft of the proposed Uptown curfew ordinance was prepared for review.
- April 26, 2026 — A formal request for a draft curfew ordinance was submitted.

**May 2026**

- May 8, 2026 — The Mayor’s Office coordinated meetings regarding curfew discussions and operational concerns.
- May 11, 2026 — Follow-up meetings regarding the proposed curfew ordinance were conducted.
- May 18, 2026 — Additional follow-up communications regarding the proposed curfew ordinance were submitted.
- May 18, 2026 — Meetings were conducted to review and discuss the draft curfew ordinance.
- May 21, 2026 — The draft ordinance was submitted for first reading consideration.
- May 21, 2026 — Email sent to council outlining concerns and requesting support.
- May 26, 2026 — The proposed ordinance was presented to Council for first reading.

**Current Operational & Public Safety Concerns**

Over the past year, unsupervised minor activity has regularly shifted between Bay Avenue, Broadway, three city parking garages, Woodruff Riverfront Park, Banks Food Hall, the playground, and surrounding public spaces. These gatherings required additional police response, crowd dispersal efforts, traffic adjustments, street closures, and operational coordination. Businesses, visitors, families, and residents have reported concerns regarding

crowd behavior, visitor comfort, loitering, verbal disturbances, and late-night disruptions in high-traffic pedestrian areas.

Public safety incidents associated with these gatherings have included **disorderly conduct, fights, reports involving firearms or replica firearms, drug and alcohol-related activity, foot pursuits, repeated parent notifications for minor release, and other operational disruptions** requiring law enforcement intervention. Several incidents have also occurred within parking garages and pedestrian connection areas between venues, creating ongoing concerns regarding visitor circulation, accessibility, and public perception of safety within the district.

**Please click this [link](#) to view documented photos, videos, and incident examples involving unsupervised minors in Uptown Columbus.**

### **Proactive Measures Already Implemented**

Prior to requesting consideration of a curfew ordinance, Uptown Columbus implemented multiple operational and public safety measures in coordination with community partners and law enforcement.

- Uptown Columbus and W.C. Bradley Co. coordinated the closure of Levels 3–5 of the Synovus Parking Deck in response to ongoing late-night gathering activity and vehicle related disruptions.
- Additional off-duty Columbus Police Department officers were assigned throughout the district, including increased monitoring around Banks Food Hall and adjacent gathering locations.
- Bay Avenue closures between 10th Street and 11th Street were implemented beginning at 11:00pm in coordination with the Columbus Police Department to reduce late-night congestion and improve crowd management.
- Met with Public Safety and Juvenile Court representatives, the District Attorney’s Office, Columbus Police Department, W.C. Bradley Co., and Uptown Columbus regarding ongoing activity of minors and operational concerns for solutions.
- Uptown Columbus expanded ambassador staffing and increased overtime coverage during weekends and peak evening periods.
- Merchant coordination meetings, public safety discussions, operational planning sessions, lighting evaluations, and communication efforts have continued throughout the past year.

Despite these efforts, many operational concerns are now occurring prior to the existing 11:00pm street closure timeframe, reducing the effectiveness of current mitigation strategies.

### **Operational Cost Breakdown**

Off-Duty CPD Officers	\$168,000
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Additional Roaming Patrols	+ \$170,000
Ambassador Overtime	+ \$89,000
Additional Staffing	+ \$90,000
Special Events Adjustments	+ \$25,000

Uptown Columbus has invested substantially in proactive operational and public safety measures prior to requesting additional ordinance tools or policy changes.

## Visitor & Economic Impact

Several Uptown businesses have adjusted operating hours, reduced evening operations, or expressed concerns regarding late-night disruptions and customer comfort. Visitor perception directly impacts restaurant traffic, tourism activity, conventions, family attendance, and overall confidence in the Uptown district. Several businesses have reported concerns regarding customer retention, evening foot traffic, and operational sustainability during peak weekend hours. Uptown merchants have reported lost revenue which directly impacts tax income to the city and overall economic development.

This is a list of current businesses that have reduced their hours:

- Banks Food Hall
  - Jeremiah’s Italian Ice
  - The Maltitude Bar at Banks
  - Poke Sun
  - El Primo Taqueria
  - Filberto’s Authentic Filipino Cuisine
  - Angry Wings & Things Korean Fried Chicken & Street Food
  - Niaz Persian Kitchen
- 11<sup>th</sup> and Bay Southern Table
- Momma Goldberg’s Deli
- The Pizza Place
- Freeze Frame Yogurt Shoppe
- Kilwins Ice Cream & Fudge
- Whitewater Express (Night Zipline activities)

As Uptown Columbus continues to experience growth in tourism, residential development, events, and entertainment activity, operational planning and proactive public safety coordination have become increasingly important and more complex.

## Community Feedback

“They aren’t doing these “teen” takeovers because there’s nothing to do. They’ve been doing this because there haven’t been any serious consequences for it, from either the parents \*or\* law enforcement. They’ve been doing it because they get away with it.

It is not the city’s responsibility to keep kids from ever feeling bored for more than 3 seconds. It \*is\* the city’s responsibility to maintain public safety. It \*is\* the city’s responsibility to hold parents accountable for their own children.

The “boredom” excuse is pure cope. As if the people doing this were all just one more day at the park away from starting to act right.”

- Facebook User

“I’m hoping the authorities can find a solution to this problem that works for everyone involved, including local businesses and families. I definitely support the idea of a curfew. As we know, college students will have a student ID. However, youth under the age of 18 most likely will not have a valid identification. Enforcing a curfew will allow the authorities to identify youth who are not being supervised past curfew. Push some of the responsibility back to the parents. Know your youth whereabouts.”

- Maria Archie-Mostella

**Read more comments from the community using this [link](#).**

## **Youth Engagement & Community Partnership Opportunities**

Columbus already maintains a wide range of recreational facilities, youth programs, mentorship organizations, and community-based initiatives intended to support youth engagement, supervision, education, and recreation. **Click this [link](#) to see examples of resources available to youth which highlights the curfew times and supervision requirements of minors.** In addition to city-operated recreation centers and parks, numerous nonprofit and community organizations currently receive funding for youth mentorship, after-school programming, academic support, delinquency prevention, and family services. For example, in August 2024, the Columbus Council approved a total of [\\$1 million in grants to 42 local organizations](#) recommended by the Columbus Office of Crime Prevention. **Click this [link](#) to read about the programs.**

Uptown Columbus recognizes that **enforcement alone is not the solution** to addressing ongoing activity of minors and late-night operational concerns. Long-term improvement will require collaboration between public safety agencies, schools, parents, community organizations, faith leaders, youth programs, and local partners. By acknowledging the limitations of existing resources and extending collaboration with these funded programs, Uptown Columbus supports continued discussion regarding youth mentorship opportunities, structured evening programming, parent accountability initiatives, and community-based engagement efforts. The proposed ordinance is intended to function as one operational tool within a broader collaborative strategy focused on safety, prevention, and positive community outcomes.

## **Curfew Examples Across the Country**

Cities throughout the United States have recently implemented or strengthened curfew on minors policies in response to increasing late-night gathering activity, public safety concerns, operational disruptions, and youth-related incidents within entertainment and downtown districts. CNN published an article highlighting incidents in major cities and the consequences of these occurrences: <https://www.cnn.com/2026/05/09/us/teen-takeovers-explainer>

These policies are being used in a variety of ways, including citywide curfews, **entertainment district restrictions, and designated high-activity zones**. In 2025–2026, at least 6 major U.S. cities have taken confirmed curfew action in direct response to “teen takeover” incidents, with several additional cities actively debating new legislation. Of those 6 cities:

- **5 out of 6** enacted their curfew measures **reactively** — meaning the policy was implemented in direct response to a specific incident that had already occurred, rather than established in advance.
- **4 out of 6** applied curfews to **specific entertainment districts, downtown corridors, or designated zones only**, rather than imposing a citywide restriction. Only Washington, D.C. and Long Branch, NJ applied measures with broader geographic reach, and even D.C.'s model relies on targeted zone declarations rather than a blanket citywide rule.
- **At least 2 cities** — Chicago and Detroit — specifically limited their proposed curfew scope to **downtown and riverfront entertainment districts**, with no intent to extend restrictions to residential neighborhoods.
- In Washington, D.C., the zone-based curfew model resulted in 14 curfew zones declared between February and April 2026, producing only **7 total violations** — a figure the city cited as evidence the targeted approach was working.

Municipal codes related to curfew provisions have existed in **at least 25 of the most populous U.S. cities**, and curfew laws are currently on the books in **over 400 towns, cities, and counties** nationwide where it is illegal for minors to be outside without supervision during certain hours: <https://www.findlaw.com/criminal/criminal-charges/juvenile-curfew-laws-in-the-25-most-populous-us-cities.html>. Additionally, juvenile curfews are not uncommon in Georgia. Multiple cities and counties throughout the state, including Atlanta, Centerville, Swainsboro, Trion, Americus, and Rockdale County, have adopted curfew ordinances as tools to support public safety, youth welfare, and the management of late-night unsupervised activity of minors.

**Read more on curfews across the country using this [link](#).**

## **Desired Outcomes & Long-Term Goals**

The goal of the proposed ordinance is to support a safe, welcoming, and family-friendly environment throughout Uptown Columbus while reducing operational strain on businesses, visitors, public spaces, and public safety resources.

Desired outcomes include:

- Reduced large late-night gatherings of unsupervised minors in high-traffic areas
- Improved visitor comfort and pedestrian accessibility
- Fewer operational disruptions impacting businesses and events
- Reduced strain on law enforcement and Uptown staffing resources
- Improved crowd management and public space coordination

- Enhanced perception of safety within the district

The intent of the proposed ordinance is to provide one operational tool within a broader collaborative approach focused on safety, prevention, accountability, and long-term community sustainability. Uptown Columbus appreciates the continued partnership and collaboration of Council, city leadership, public safety agencies, merchants, residents, and community stakeholders in working toward balanced and effective solutions for the district.