



**Tier 2 Pilot Grant Letter of Intent: Establishing Proof-of-Concept
Winter 2023**

Project Information

Proposed Project Title	Strategic Development for Healthier Cities: Building a Foundation to Explore the Street-level Effects of Physical Property Investment on Public Safety
Approximate Budget Request	\$70,000 Total \$50,000 PHI; \$10,000 CSDE Match; \$5,000 HIPRC Match; \$5,000 Real Estate Department Match

Applicant Information

Lead Co-Investigator:

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Co-Investigator:

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Co-Investigator:

Arthur Acolin, PhD, Bob Filley Endowed Associate Professor

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Co-Investigator:

Megan Moore, PhD, MSW², Sidney Miller Endowed Associate Professor

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Senior Project Advisor:

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¹ The percent effort for Dr. Tillyer is covered by her home institution for her contribution to this grant. Since Dr. Tillyer’s home institution is not UW, we are not providing her time as in-kind match to the grant. If we are invited to submit a full proposal, we will request advice on how to properly account for Dr. Tillyer’s involvement in this project.

² The percent effort for Dr. Moore is covered by her appointment at HIPRC for her contribution to this grant and is being provided as an in-kind match to the grant.

Overview of Proposed Research Plan

Please provide a description of how you intend to develop preliminary data or proof-of-concept. Limit your description to no more than 500 words.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 created a new tax incentive program to encourage private investment in under-resourced communities known as Opportunity Zones. The process through which governors designate Opportunity Zones creates a quasi-experimental framework for a national study to investigate the street-level effects of physical property investment on public safety. The funds from this grant will be used to establish a detailed written protocol for generating a multi-municipal longitudinal administrative dataset to answer questions that inform policy to improve population health (human health and social and economic equity) through place-based investments.

Research conducted by this team and other scholars demonstrate improvements to the built environment in the form of new construction and building renovation are associated with a decline in crime over time.³ Yet, there have been few opportunities to: 1) evaluate this relationship through a large-scale intervention; 2)) incorporate investment metrics that consider the precise dollar amount and specific type of investment instead of whether or not investment has taken place; and 3) explore measures of public safety in addition to crime incidents such as emergency medical services data.

Using Seattle as a pilot, we will develop a written protocol for the dataset which will include data collection (e.g., building permits, crime incidents, land use, business data) and processing methods, identification and standardization of variables with a data dictionary, and data quality and validation guidelines. By the completion of the grant period, we will have created a complete dataset for Seattle, replicated the protocol for at least two other large cities and modified it based on the two-city replication, and developed a list of cities that meet the inclusion criteria in Washington State and nationwide with projected completion dates for each city. Furthermore, we plan to establish an external grant funding plan which includes research objectives, funding agencies, and timelines with at least one external grant application submitted before the project deadline.

Funding is crucial due to the time-consuming nature of collecting and processing administrative data from various municipal departments at the street segment and establishing proof-of-concept for the project to be supported through external funding. The project team possesses the necessary expertise and experience to successfully accomplish all deliverables within the designated timeframe. Our multidisciplinary has expertise in spatial microscale data, crime and place research, population health, and policy analysis. We have collaboratively built datasets of similar scope and magnitude, secured federal grant funding, and published academic articles that span a range of disciplines.

³ Tillyer, M., Acolin, A., & Walter, R.J. (2022). Place-Based Improvements for Public Safety: Private Investment, Public Code Enforcement, and Changes in Crime at Micro-places Across 6 U.S. Cities. *Justice Quarterly*, 40(5), 694-724. DOI: 10.1080/07418825.2022.2127843; South, E. C., MacDonald, J., & Reina, V. (2021). Association between structural housing repairs for low-income homeowners and neighborhood crime. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(7), e2117067; Walter, R.J., Acolin, A., and Tillyer, M. (2023). Association Between Property Investments and Crime on Commercial and Residential Streets: Implications for Maximizing Public Safety Benefits. *SSM – Population Health*. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssmph.2023.101537.