A big priority of the Coleman administration is neighborhood safety.

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COLUMBUS – Incidents of crime is steadily ebbing in the City of Columbus and, for Mayor Michael Coleman, it is not by accident.

Rather, in his eyes, it is going down largely because of the safety cameras that is popping up everywhere across the city.

“Crime is down across the board in the City of Columbus, and these neighborhood safety cameras are among the reasons why,” said Coleman. “We’ve seen crime reduced in the neighborhoods that have these safety cameras, and we believe these new cameras will accelerate that trend.”

The new cameras Coleman spoke about involve his plan to expand the installation of these cameras in other parts of the city.

In 2011, 111 cameras were installed in five neighborhoods in the city including Hilltop, Mount Vernon, South Linden, Weinland Park and Livingston Avenue areas. Coleman said that incidents of crime went down in four of the five communities, tobogganing from 49 percent to 14 percent.

But he noted that the biggest impact of these cameras was the drastic decline in incidents of illegal activities such as drug sales, prostitution, and loitering.

With such success, Coleman is expanding the program. Last week, the city began the installation of 33 additional safety cameras. These cameras will be installed at 11 locations scattered throughout communities in the Hilltop, South Linden and Livingston Avenue areas. At the end of this phase of the installation, Columbus will have a total of about 150 neighborhood safety cameras.

The neighborhood camera program was started by Coleman to fight crime. Initially, it started out as a pilot project. Now he is expanding the program with more camera installations.

And Councilmember Michelle M. Mills, chair of the City Council Public Safety and Judiciary Committee, is applauding the effort.

And here’s why.

“These cameras are helping to build strong and safe neighborhoods and are the result of a partnership among the city, community, and Division of Police,” said Mills, who also noted, “Officers are using these cameras as a tool to increase their ability to monitor criminal behavior and provide a new level of safety in our neighborhoods and as a result, adding to the quality of life for Columbus residents.”

A big priority of the Coleman administration is neighborhood safety. His recent budget, which totals $766.1 million, would “reinvest in police and fire to maintain safety forces,” he said. In that budget, public safety gobbled up a Leviathan share of the proposals, adding up to $520 million or 68 percent of the General Operating Fund.

All told, Columbus will have cameras at these locations:

• Cameras in the Hilltop area will be located at West Broad and South Terrace; West Broad and Wayne; and West Broad and Wheatland.

• Cameras in the South Linden community will be located at Cleveland and 13th and Cleveland and 23rd.

• Cameras in the Livingston Avenue area will be mounted at E. Main and Lilley; Whittier and Oakwood; Anne Street (Forest to Columbus); Lockbourne and Smith; Whittier and Wilson; and Bulen and Livingston.

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