

SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES: Community Engagement and Inclusion

Community Focus Group

Moderator: Elle Weatheroy, Portland Police Bureau

East Portland Community Center, August 26, 2018

Common themes across small groups:

- Communication should improve, in terms of frequency, method (different methods for different communities/ages), and what is shared.
- Demilitarize police, particularly how officers and riot officers look, to help community members feel safe engaging with police.
- Build more partnerships with crime prevention specialists, peer support specialists, Fire Bureau, Park Rangers, hospitals, mental health community, schools, PTAs.
- Neighborhood association model is important to include, but it does not represent all communities within Portland.

What does community engagement and inclusion meant to you?

Neighbors knowing neighbors; every voice is valued, can contribute, and is not overlooked; the Police looks at who is represented and outreaches to groups that are excluded; we include new community members as they move to the Portland area; older generations are included; Police take community-specific trauma/fear into consideration when engaging with communities.

Police show up in a community, research the problems, and implement solutions.

Community members have a way to engage with and help the Police Bureau.

Relationships are built prior to incidents. Police can be seen in light other than disciplinary. Neighborhoods and communities know the officer who is patrolling their neighborhood.

What are your priorities as a community member for Community Engagement and Inclusion?

Communication – inform community what is going on and get the word out. Use targeted outreach. Have a communication strategy. Be aware of generational differences when reaching out. Acknowledge potential areas of improvement (e.g. understanding impact of gentrification on police relationships community bias).

De-militarize police – riot gear dehumanizes police and escalates the situation. AR-15s and flash grenades are unnecessary. Outfits and weapons make it look like officers are reach to combat Portland residents.

Build partnerships – with crime prevention specialists, peer support specialists, Fire Bureau, Park Rangers, Hospitals, mental health community, schools, PTAs.

What do you consider to be meaningful engagement? Inclusion?

Officers get out of their car; officers make eye contact; they don't run red lights; officers interact with people in non-emergency situations

People know what is going on and are provided opportunities to have input and shared responsibility in addressing issues with PPB.

What makes it effective?

Applying Restorative Justice – acknowledging that healing is required

Acknowledging those who do show up and engage.

Officers attend Neighborhood Association meetings; communities/neighborhoods know the officer that patrols in their neighborhood.

Have youth specific advisories; start a ride-along program.

Have communities create safe havens or “rest stops” for officers.

Have Police live in Portland.

Have a community calendar; outreach via the news, public radio, NextDoor, libraries, grocery stores

Proper facilitators for community events

SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES: Crime Reduction and Prevention

Community Focus Group

Moderator: Lt. Tina Jones, Portland Police Bureau

East Portland Community Center, August 26, 2018

Common themes across small groups:

What are your priorities as a community member for Crime Reduction and Prevention?

Reduction

- Property and mail theft
- Burglaries/break-ins
- Violence and violent crimes
- Drug dealing
- Human trafficking

Prevention

- Increased trust and improved relationship between PPB and community
- Better communication between PPB and community
- Increased mental health resources and support for police and community
- Addressing disparities for communities of color
- Increased training for officers
- Increased street patrols/visible presence
- Partnerships with mental health providers/peer support specialists

What are some of the crime issues your community is facing?

- Theft (property, vehicle, mail/package)
- Break-ins (vehicles, homes)
- Drug addictions
- Illegal camping
- Unsafe streets

How would you like to see PPB respond to those issues?

- Balanced, equitable, and adaptable approach
- Addressing underlying/root causes (e.g. addiction, houselessness) in addition to the symptoms (e.g. drug use, theft)
- Increased communication and understanding of available resources
- Increased visible presence
- Improved ties with communities
- Increased training for officers

SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES: Organizational Excellence

Community Focus Group

Moderator: Michael Kosmala, Coraggio Group

East Portland Community Center, August 26, 2018

Common themes across small groups:

- Training: Officers should be able to respond appropriately to people experiencing mental health crises, and be aware of bias in law enforcement.
- Values: The Bureau needs to align its values with its actions. Many felt that values should come across both in Bureau interactions with the community and within its ranks.
- Community Engagement: How the community can inform and participate in Bureau work. There is a desire to participate and provide input, but need more avenues as well as awareness.
- Communication: Community members want to know about how PPB allocates resources, the types of resources available for them, and would like more general awareness of PPB work.
- Recruitment, Hiring and Staffing: Need for more applicants as well as improvements in the training and deployment of officer resources.

What are your priorities as a community member to see the Police Bureau become more effective internally (the goal of Organizational Excellence)?

- Accountability: Police Bureau employees are held accountable for their actions both internal and external.
- Culture, Values, and Mission: Fostering a culture of respect and accountability that upholds community values, rejects prejudice, and is reflected in hiring, training, and practice.
- Partnerships: Improved partnerships with government and community organizations to coordinate resource deployment and approach to issues.
- Improved transparency as an organization.
- Incorporating restorative justice to the Bureau's approach to law enforcement.
- Systemic changes to the existing Bureau culture and structure.

What do you consider important aspects of a high-performing professional organization? What makes it successful to your community?

They understand the context and values of the community and share an understanding of the issues specific to different areas. Transparent and results-driven, using training and hiring to provide service effectively. Uses relevant information in its decision-making process (e.g. social indicators).

What is your understanding of how the Police Bureau works internally? Is your understanding sufficient?

Community members want transparency and improved communication to better understand what, how, and why the organization does what it does. It's difficult to assess currently because there is little understanding and the Bureau is opaque in its communication. The community is unaware of how the Bureau makes decisions, particularly in the allocation of limited resources. The perception is that it is inequitably responding to community issues.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES: Values

Community Focus Group

Moderator: Gabriela Bermudez, Portland Police Bureau

East Portland Community Center, August 26, 2018

Common themes across small groups:

What are your priorities as a community member for Values? What values do you and your community hold?

- Accountability: PPB needs to be transparent and accountable both internally (within organization, city) and externally (public interactions).
- Equity: Understanding how issues impact different communities depending on context/values/culture; applying equity lens to policing to best fit the needs of that community.
- Trust: Critical to maintaining meaningful relationship with community. Needs to go both ways.
- Honesty and Transparency are part of improving trust and accountability. Important value to and for the community.
- Respect: Community wants to feel respected in their interactions with police officers. Desire for respect and mutual understanding of culture/values/perspectives regardless of whether they are shared.
- Empathy: PPB approach to policing should be empathetic, particularly when interacting with vulnerable populations.

Additional values discussed by small groups were:

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Community
- Compassion
- Inclusivity
- Integrity
- Relationship-building
- Humanization

How should they be incorporated into the Strategic Plan?

- Need to be applicable: values cannot be solely aspirational.
- Clear direction and training on what it means to hold those values as an officer.
- Should be integrated into the policies and practices of the Police Bureau.
- Incorporating community perspectives will provide understanding on values important to community.
- Creating opportunities for community to engage in planning process
- Shifting to 21st century policing approach would establish some of the values discussed into practice.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES: Kitchen Sink

Community Focus Group

Moderator: Jordan Rooklyn, Portland Police Bureau

East Portland Community Center, August 26, 2018

Common themes across small groups:

- Police selectively enforce laws, which leads to community cynicism and mistrust. The Police Bureau should better communicate to the public what they are allowed to enforce and what they are not allowed to enforce.
- Police treat symptoms of systemic issues, they don't fix root problems. Resources should be used on fixing the roots of issues.
- Portlanders want to help but don't know how. The Police Bureau should use better processes to draw community in and communicate with them on how they can help.

Selective enforcement

The community sees officers not enforcing specific crimes like speeding, scooters, illegally parked vehicles, etc. This erodes community trust.

City Council has limited the regulations/laws that PPB responds to. The community isn't clear on what City Council has asked Police to ignore, what Police have chosen to not pursue, and other reasons why some visual crimes are not enforced by police.

Specific crimes are enforced on specific communities. PPB needs to readdress (and report to the public) how resources are divided across City communities and neighborhoods, using an equity lens.

Homeless community has more enforcement upon them than other communities.

Role of Police

Where do police fit in solving systemic issues? Allow communities to gauge what role police should play in solving systemic issues.

Police are not the tool to fix homelessness, we need new policies, not police.

To fix our social services, drugs need to be decriminalized. // Oregon uses addiction profits (gambling, weed, alcohol, etc.) for funding, which adds to the proliferation of addiction.

How can we communicate to the public what the police does and not do? i.e. How can we make clear the delineated roles of agencies within the criminal justice system (Police, District Attorney, County, etc.)?

Are the Police the right tool for specific calls? Fire employees/EMTs may be more appropriate to respond to medical calls. Peer support specialists (perhaps better than mental health workers) should be pair more often with officers.

Engaging with Community

Officers should be out of their cars, walking around.

The Bureau needs to set into their directives how officers engage with the community. For example, the directive needs to state that officers need to have a non-enforcement interaction with a community member at least three times per shift.

How can we have people/police engage with people without a uniform on? Peer support specialists? Seniors with life skills?

Communities should get to know a person (officer) or a face that is consistently in their community.

Militarization of police leads to a lack of trust and increased fear for community members. Police need to demilitarize, both in equipment and in the "us vs them" mindset

- PPB needs more non-lethal weapons, less AK-15s and projectiles/flash grenades.

Police training should include multicultural training at the same level as mental health training.

Communicating with Community

One of the largest barriers for community members is knowing how to get involved. How can PPB involve people who are interested in participating and connecting with PPB?

- Steps to engage: Ask public to step in and help us. Compensate community members. Emphasize neighbors helping neighbors. Make coming to events attractive with food, for example.
- Don't keep having the same group of community members involved in everything.
- Community needs a more interpersonal and less bureaucratic Wall (Mayberry from Andy Griffith show)
- Ask for specific help from community for getting information out. For example, PBEM's emergency management model. They have communication pathways.
- Continue coffee with a cop and other opportunities for dialogue so that cops have opportunity to be seen as real people.

Better ways to communicate with the community/let them know about events: City newsletter, citywide event calendar, Oregonian advertisement for events, Portland Tribune, Observer, Skanner, Library, blurb on the news.