

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP TAKEAWAYS

AUGUST 26TH, 2018 – EAST PORTLAND COMMUNITY CENTER

MAJOR THEMES

Below is a summary of the major themes that appeared across the small group discussions.

Crime Reduction and Prevention

Criminal homeless (a segment of the total homeless population), livability crimes (littering, street-level drug dealing, theft), and traffic-related issues were the most mentioned crimes impacting community members that they would like to see more enforcement for. Below are some of the tactics recommended to help address those issues and prevent and reduce other crimes.

Crime Prevention

Ways to improve crime prevention include:

- Increase trust and improve relationship between PPB and community
- Improve communication between PPB and community
- Increase mental health resources and support for police and community
- Address the disparities experienced by communities of color
- Increase visible presence

Crime Reduction

Ways to improve crime reduction and address those issues are:

- Use a balanced, equitable, and adaptable approach
- Address underlying/root causes (e.g. addiction, houselessness) in addition to the symptoms (e.g. drug-use, theft)
- Increase communication and understanding of available resources
- Improve ties with communities
- Increase training for officers
- Establish more partnerships and resources

Community Engagement and Inclusion

Communication was the most common theme across discussions on improving community engagement and inclusion. The community shared that the Bureau needs to improve on the frequency, method, and content of what is shared to better allow community members to engage with and be included in Police Bureau efforts.

Other major themes include:

- Demilitarize police, particularly how officers and riot officer looks, 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.
- Recognize that the Neighborhood Association model is important to include, but it does not represent all communities within Portland.

Organizational Excellence

This table topic shared major themes across all discussion groups and centered on the areas listed below:

- 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 screening process.

Values

Accountability, Equity, Respect, Trust, Honesty, and Empathy were common values listed across discussions. Additionally, Community as both a value and partner was mentioned often. While most participants were unaware of the values held by PPB (per the Directives Manual), there was consistent overlap. Community members shared that it is critical for the Bureau to demonstrate its values through its interactions with the community and ensure they are applied and upheld.

Other major themes include:

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

Other Topics

This table discussion was a “catch all” for things not mentioned or not asked at other tables. The most common themes across the small groups were:

- 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.

IMPROVEMENTS FOR FOCUS GROUP FORMAT

- Give better directions when people enter the room.
- Allow more time at the tables for discussion.
- Have note-takers and facilitators that are non-Police Bureau employees.
- Have more note takers.
- Have ways for people to share input when they weren't or aren't able to speak at a table.
- Have a way for note takers to demonstrate how weighted concerns are.
- Provide information (phone numbers, programs, etc.) for participants that come to the meeting with specific problems that they'd like addressed.
- Try to get more diversity in the room.