

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP TAKEAWAYS

SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2018 –MATT DISHMAN COMMUNITY CENTER

MAJOR THEMES

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

Crime Reduction and Prevention

Community needs and policing have changed a lot, and the Police Bureau needs to ensure that it is meeting current community needs. To better reduce and prevent crime, the bureau needs to change what crimes we prioritize, how we include community, and who we work with.

- It is important to focus on violent crimes rather than property crimes. At the same time, however, quality of life crimes are negatively impacting community members' lives and sense of safety.
- More community involvement can help reduce and prevent crime. Honest communication, consistent follow-up, and personal relationships will create safer communities for both community members and officers. A large part of this is recognizing which communities are not calling 911 and reaching out to them, increasing officer's cultural competency to limit biases, and creating a police force that reflects the community.
- Peer support is an effective tool and an important perspective to help officers handle or solve human life problems (homelessness, mental health, addiction). Community members would like to see increased partnerships between the Police Bureau and peer support specialists.

Community Engagement and Inclusion

The community would like to see the Police Bureau prioritize meaningful and authentic engagement with the community. This means increasing the person-to-person relationships between community members and officers and improving communication between the Bureau and the community.

- Community members want to know the officers that are in their neighborhoods. This means having space within their neighborhood or community to positively engage with police and communicating with officers face-to-face outside of emergency situations.
- Community members want stronger, more effective communication with the Bureau. This means using multiple methods to communicate, sharing the organization's efforts to meet goals, and letting community members know how they can be involved with the Police Bureau's efforts. Cultural-
- Appearance and space are important for fostering relationships. Police officers' appearance and facilities are intimidating. Police facilities should be welcoming spaces that foster positive interactions and support community needs, and police officers should look approachable. This will make it easier for community members to organically engage with the Police Bureau and its officers.

Organizational Excellence

Community members would like to see the Police Bureau embrace a culture of service, rather than enforcement. To do this, the Police Bureau needs to look at its organizational structure, trainings, policies, and messaging.

- For examples of organizational excellence, look beyond police institutions. Public Health organizations were commonly mentioned as institutions that have made service-oriented improvements.
- Use data to make policy decisions. It's important to assess current practices and determine whether they are effective and if they use resources wisely.
- Compartmentalization is harmful to the transparency and integrity of the Bureau. Removing siloes can help units work together, improve communication, and help employees feel more connected to the mission of the bureau.
- Training needs to include important soft skills such as non-violent communication, empathy, and reflection. These trainings should be based on the most recent research available and should occur outside of police institutions, when possible.
- Apologizing is an important part of transparency and accountability. A culture and policy that supports officers in recognizing mistakes, apologizing, and improving is essential. It is particularly important that officers involved in a critical incident have a way to recognize how their actions impact community, even if those actions are legally justified.
- The community would like to advocate for officer wellness and self-care, but they don't know how.

IMPROVEMENTS FOR FOCUS GROUP FORMAT

- Have more note takers to make it easier on the table moderators.
- Make sure the consultants are a part of the Portland community, and are not from out-of-state.