MAIN TAKEAWAYS

This document summarizes the main takeaways heard at the last two community-wide focus groups where community members shared what their priorities are for the Police Bureau. The blue text represents the additional comments and major takeaways shared at the community meeting on 11/2.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & INCLUSION

Community members want engagement and inclusion that feels more authentic.

Police and community do not have enough trust, which is both barrier and opportunity.

Community wants to be heard, and the Police Bureau needs to be willing to listen. Similarly, the community wants to hear from the Police Bureau. Listening and information sessions can provide meaningful engagement and dialogue to create a foundation of trust and transparency. Workshops to educate the community on what the Police Bureau does as well as topics relevant to law enforcement/crime prevention can help shift perspectives.

Community members want to know the officers that are in their neighborhood.

Community members feel like there is a lack of trust between officers and the community. To build trust and encourage engagement, personal relationships need to be built. This means having space within neighborhoods or communities to positively engage with police and communicating with officers face-to-face outside of emergency situations. Foot patrols, formal opportunities for dialogue between the community and the Bureau, and officers "showing up" consistently at community events particularly resonated as strategies to help community members and officers to build relationships.

Appearance and space are important for fostering relationships.

Police officers' appearance and facilities are intimidating. Police facilities should be accessible and welcoming spaces that foster positive interactions, support community needs, and hold regular meetings. Police officers should look approachable ("de-militarize"); this includes providing clarification around the different functions/needs around uniforms to better communicate purpose. This will make it easier for community members to organically engage with the Police Bureau and its officers.

Community members want stronger, more effective communication with the Bureau.

Community members want to work with and engage with the Police Bureau but don't know how. Better communication means using multiple, community-specific methods to communicate, sharing information about how the bureau works, letting community members know how they can be

involved, and participating in two-way communication. Cultural-competency is also a large factor in being able to communicate with community, as well as marketing events through community partners to improve connection with traditionally underrepresented communities.

CRIME REDUCTION & PREVENTION

Community needs and policing have changed – the Police Bureau needs to adapt to that.

Police selectively enforce laws, which leads to community cynicism and mistrust.

Community members see police ignoring some crimes and enforcing others, particularly around the issue of houselessness. Similarly, specific communities feel more targeted for specific crimes (or ignored by police) than other communities. It is difficult to find information on what is being enforced, if enforcement is targeted, and why. The community wants to know what resources are available to them from the Police Bureau and which laws will be enforced. Enforcement should be applied through an equity lens.

Violent crimes should be highest priority, but livability crimes and traffic-related issues are affecting Portlanders' quality of life.

Community members view violent crimes as a top enforcement priority. At the same time, however, they have noticed an increase in livability crimes in their neighborhoods and communities, which is affecting quality of life in Portland. There is a broad spectrum of opinion on if police should more strongly enforce livability crimes or if they should take a hands-off approach, particularly with more vulnerable communities. Overall, community members want a balanced approach that benefits all, but recognize that is difficult to achieve.

Police should form partnerships to address root problems and improve services.

Police treat the symptoms of systemic issues, they don't resolve root problems. Resources and partnerships need to be used to address the root and 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/mental health specialists, the District Attorney's office, 911-Call Center (BOEC), and other agencies that have an impact on public safety. These partnerships will strengthen community bonds and resiliency to some of those issues.

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 officers' cultural competency to increase communication and limit biases, and creating a police force that understands and/or reflects the community. Also, the Police Bureau needs to help the community understand what they do and why. This education is essential for effective involvement.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Community members want to see a culture of service, rather than enforcement.

To do this, the Police Bureau needs to look at its organizational structure, trainings, policies, and messaging. Common themes on how to create that culture were:

- Look at institutions other than police departments for examples of organizational excellence.
- Include important soft skills in training such as open communication, empathy, reflection, trauma-informed practices, and individual ethics. Keep that training ongoing throughout an officer's career.
- Create a culture that supports recognizing mistakes, apologizing and improving.
  - Understand the difference between a misstep, misjudgment, and misconduct and recognize the different pressures officers face when admitting to mistakes.
  - Build systems to get input from officers, establish mediation programs, celebrate and incentivize the performance we want to see, and create spaces for officers to feel safe sharing.
- Use community for support, particularly for officer wellness and self-care. That includes destigmatizing wellness and providing the resources for officers.
- Have leadership lead cultural change. Messaging needs to come from the top, and that messaging needs to stay the same over time. Constant turnover in leadership is detrimental to the organization's ability to change.