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MEMORANDUM

FROM: The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice
TO: The Newark Police Division Consent Decree Planning Unit
RE: Feedback from Community Precinct Meetings
DATE: April 17, 2018

Overview

This memorandum reflects community input gathered from seven community meetings held in February, March, and April 2018, as well as feedback received at a recent citizen/clergy public safety academy meeting. The purpose of these meetings was to gather front-end community feedback to inform the development of the Newark Police Division's (NPD) community policing policy, as well as the Newark-specific portions of the forthcoming bias-free policing training. This community input was gathered through the use of a ten-question (later eleven-question) questionnaire. While the first five meetings were held by police precinct, the sixth meeting was a meeting of the citizen/clergy public safety academy, and the last two meetings were marketed as citywide (although they took place in the fifth and fourth precincts, respectively).

The below reflects each meeting's date, precinct, and location, as well as the number of completed questionnaires received at each meeting:

Date	Precinct	Location	Completed Questionnaires Received
2/14/18	2	1 Lincoln Avenue (Second Police Precinct)	12
2/15/18	4	795 Sanford Avenue (Community Restaurant)	0
2/20/18	5	480 Clinton Avenue (NPD Headquarters)	9
2/21/18	3	55 Prospect Street (Sport Club Português)	33
2/27/18	1	205 Spruce Street (Clubhouse Community Center)	9
3/6/18	Citizen/Clergy	311 Washington Street	16
3/28/18	Citywide (5)	300 Clinton Avenue (Shani Baraka Women's Resource Center)	13

4/4/18	Citywide (4)	505 S 15th Street (Jehovah-Jireh Praise & Worship Church Center)	7
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The below are summaries of the community responses to each of the questionnaire’s questions, broken down by precinct/community meeting. Please note, although the original questionnaire used at the first five precinct meetings was only ten questions long, the questionnaire used at the last three precinct meetings (the citizen/clergy meeting and the two citywide meetings) has an additional question (“Please provide any additional comments or suggestions.”).

Question 1: What does the term “community policing” mean to you? Based on this definition, how do you think the Newark Police could best practice community policing?

Universal Takeaways:

- Community members want more foot patrols and face-to-face engagement with officers.
- Community members want more community meetings.
- Respect and seeing community members as people, rather than potential criminals, is at the forefront of community member views on effective community policing.

First Precinct:

Community policing, for the most part, means police being part of the communities they serve. This type of community engagement includes the following: protecting the community, living and working within the community, providing security during community events, and knowing the members of the community. Community members emphasized that a set group of officers should be assigned to communities (instead of rotating around Newark), and wanted more police officers on patrol in the neighborhood. Overall, community members wanted the police in their area to know them and interact with them as members of the community.

Second Precinct:

Community member definitions varied, but many stated that having police officers walk the streets and have a stake in the community is at the heart of community policing. They said that this was a joint effort, and that community members should help the police out by learning how to “see something, say something,” in partnership. Instead of merely policing the community, community members want to see officers taking time out of their days to get to know local residents and business owners, in addition to continuing the helpful precinct meetings.

Third Precinct:

Community members saw “community policing” as community members and cops working together, as well as more cops patrolling the streets (by foot, not in cars). Officers should be from the community and should be able to speak the language of the communities they patrol. Specific programs that were mentioned as strong examples of community policing include the citizen/clergy academy and the guardian angels program.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Community policing was seen as a way for officers to integrate themselves into the communities they serve. In such a scenario, police would know residents' names and walk through the communities, rather than only patrol by in cars. Rather than pre-judging residents, officers would get to know all residents, from school-age youth to senior citizens, on a personal level.

Citywide (4):

Community members said that community policing involved community members and police working together, with mutual respect and direct contact. In addition, such a scheme included police officers walking on foot in pairs and engaging in block watch meetings.

Citywide (5):

Community policing means that officers are actively engaged with local residents on a daily basis, including by patrolling on foot. It entails seeing community residents as equals and seeing them as partners in bettering their neighborhood. Activities with young people are also an integral component of any community policing model.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Community policing focuses on a synergy between police and the community to keep community members safe (seen, for example, in the partnership between police and New Community Corporation). Through this practice, police officers engage with community members and representative organizations and tailor their policing to the unique needs of the community, as informed by ongoing community meetings.

Question 2: How can Newark Police have better community partnerships/relationships?

Universal Takeaways:

- NPD should host more community meetings.
- Youth engagement should be increased.
- There should be more officers patrolling on foot rather than on car patrol.

First Precinct:

Several community members stated that they want the NPD to host more community meetings, perhaps on a quarterly basis, to provide educational opportunities for community members to understand what the NPD is doing. In addition, community members want NPD to be friendlier and become more involved in community events.

Second Precinct:

Community members said officers should walk door to door and introduce themselves, in addition to hosting precinct meetings. They also thought more Newark residents should become cops, to ensure that officers are actually of the community. Moreover, they would like to see

officers go into schools and work with young people, so that they can develop a positive relationship with the police. Last, community events should continue, and NPD should engage in an open dialogue on the trauma many community members have related to the police.

Third Precinct:

One main improvement the community suggested was for officers to spend more time simply listening to residents. This can include face-to-face engagement and creating and attending more community meetings in general and with youth. They also requested that more officers be bilingual and that there be a general change in the hostile attitude some community members experienced in their interactions with police. Another recommendation was for the police to engage with social services and other agencies to develop key partnerships to better support community members, in addition to visiting local establishments to talk to people face-to-face.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Community members wanted increased officer presence, particularly in the following areas: Goodwin Avenue, Huntington Terrace, Schuyler Avenue, Osborne Terrace, Eckert Street, Peshine Avenue, and Clinton Avenue. In addition, they also wanted police officers to enter the community with a more open (and less negative) attitude, wanted shorter waiting periods, wanted the complaint process to be clearer, and wanted officers to hold more community meetings and increase communication.

Citywide (4):

Community members thought that police should hold more community meetings, engage more with local businesses and organizations, and share more information about what they are doing and available community services. In addition, community members felt that officers could listen more and work on building positive relationships with the community.

Citywide (5):

Treating all community members with respect was a recurring theme throughout all of the comments. Further, increasing interactions with youth—for example, bringing back the PAL program—was strongly recommended. A better attitude, increased transparency, working to restore trust, and having an increased presence in neighborhoods were other factors that community members stated could strengthen community partnerships.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Stronger communication and reaching out to certain civic and tenant associations in the community would go a long way to strengthen partnerships. In addition, youth engagement should be a key focus, as well as engaging with block associations.

Question 3: What has been your most positive experience with a member of the Newark Police? What made it positive?

Universal Takeaways:

- Community members thought the CSOs were extremely helpful.
- Many community members liked when NPD officers simply stopped and engaged with them in a meaningful dialogue.
- Community members enjoyed the opportunity to speak with officers at community meetings.

First Precinct:

While several community members left this question blank, two community members said that Captain Mos (and his staff) was an invaluable community resource. Another community member said that community events were always a positive experience, with another saying that just talking to police officers was a positive experience.

Second Precinct:

Community members generally appreciated their interactions with officers during community meetings and when they took time to speak with and help them. Specifically, one community member was recently mugged, and said that Detective Ana Colon was extremely helpful in assisting them. One community member also praised their community officer for the professional way they handled a recent loitering issue.

Third Precinct:

Generally, community members had positive experiences with the police. Several said that the precinct meetings and the citizen/clergy academy were especially helpful in bringing together police and the community. Community members also specifically commended the following NPD members for their community engagement efforts: CSO Silva, Lieutenant Cruz, and Officer Clegg. The few community members who did not have positive experiences with the police namely cited issues around not feeling heard and being unclear how their issues were/would be resolved (mainly due to a lack of transparency and follow-up).

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Community members had generally positive experiences with police officers, ranging from quick response times to engaging with officers at community meetings. One community member specifically noted that Captain Broner was a very helpful resource.

Citywide (4):

Community members enjoyed the community meetings and wish they would occur with greater frequency. One community member specifically said that Mike Lopez was a wonderful community resource.

Citywide (5):

Community members had a number of positive experiences with officers—ranging from being pleased with the way they engaged with senior citizens and youth to the way they personally handled interactions. One community member also noted their arrest as a positive experience because they said it taught them a valuable lesson.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Community members had several positive experiences with police, including interactions at community meetings, one-on-one interactions on the street, and one officer even driving a community member home from an event.

Question 4: What has been your most challenging experience with a member of the Newark Police? What made it challenging?
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Universal Takeaways:

- Community members felt that NPD officers’ negative attitudes led to unpleasant experiences.
- Many felt that the complaint process was confusing and were unclear who to speak to in order to make a complaint.
- Some felt that there was often no follow-up on reported issues.

First Precinct:

The following issues characterized community members’ most challenging NPD experiences: wrong information and lack of caring, an unreasonable speeding ticket, a lack of available NPD officers, and difficulty in reaching NPD via phone.

Second Precinct:

Several community members critiqued the manner in which officers spoke with them, using words ranging from “mad” to the phrase “screamed at me making me feel undignified.” Others stated that the complaint process was confusing and/or they were unclear how their complaint moved through the process. Others said that it was difficult to reach an officer when they called.

Third Precinct:

Several community members listed the long wait times as one major challenge, while others noted the general negative attitude they experienced. Others mentioned that their complaints never seemed to be followed up on and there appeared to be a general confusion about the complaint process. In addition, at least one community member pointed out that he had been told the lack of officers led to community members’ complaints not being taken seriously. A number of community members also reported they had never had a challenging experience.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

A recurring issue was confusion over the complaint process and follow-up. In addition, officers’ negative attitude on particular occasions was noted.

Citywide (4):

Challenging experiences ranged from complaints not being properly followed up on and unprofessional conduct at traffic stops to community members feeling like they were not heard in exchanges with officers.

Citywide (5):

Answers to this comment ranged from one person saying they were a victim of police brutality to another saying that, when they attempted to flag down officers on horses around the Prudential Center, they were ignored. In addition, officer attitude during interactions, an arrest based on homelessness, and harsh treatment during an arrest were also listed among the community members' negative experiences.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Several community members did not have any negative interactions with the police. Other comments ranged from rude behavior during encounters while community members were in their cars, the perceived general view by police of community members as "the enemy," siren noise, and call delays.

Question 5: What are the biggest crime-related or quality of life issues in your neighborhood?
What do you think the Newark Police could do to better address these issues?

Universal Takeaways:

- Drugs, prostitution, loitering, and robbery/theft were listed as some of the most common crime-related/quality of life issues.
- One solution proposed to address these issues is to have more police officers on the street.

First Precinct:

Drugs, guns, theft, loitering, and homelessness were listed by community members as the main quality of life/crime-related issues. Solutions they proposed to address these issues include the following: having more police on the streets, providing emergency phone numbers to report issues, and more walking posts.

Second Precinct:

Community members listed theft, prostitution, drug use, gun fire, ATV drag racing, pan handling, and abandoned buildings as some of the key crime-related/quality of life issues. Solutions proposed ranged from police having more walking posts, working with the city to clear out abandoned buildings, confiscating ATVs, putting an end to panhandling, and helping to expand programs that can keep people out of trouble.

Third Precinct:

Prostitution, assault, theft, stolen vehicles, carjackings, drug use (heroin and crack were listed), general incidents at the Riverfront, homelessness, street cleaning, potholes, excessive noise,

mugging, murder, armed robberies, and parking were listed as major crime-related/quality of life issues. The main solution proposed among the community members was that more police need to be walking in the streets and generally patrolling.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Speeding, double parking, loitering, murder, drugs, noise, littering, and abandoned properties are the main crime-related/quality of life issues that community members identified. The main proposed solution shared among the group was increased police presence and visibility.

Citywide (4):

Crime-related/quality of life issues community members noted included the following: car break-ins, lack of police presence, drug dealing, burglaries, and loitering. Proposed solutions to address these issues include quicker response times and increased officer presence (especially on South Orange Avenue).

Citywide (5):

Crime-related/quality of life issues included the following: drugs, sexual abuse, arson, theft, gun violence, murder, drug trafficking, prostitution, robbery, homelessness, and carjacking. Community members suggested more community meetings, better engagement with youth, and more police on the street (on foot) as possible solutions.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Robbery, vandalism, drugs, homelessness, prostitution, shootings, car accidents, loitering, stolen cars, home burglary, speeding, double parking were various crime-related/quality of life issues relayed. Potential solutions put forth included foot patrols and community members talking to young people to put them on a positive path.

Question 6: What is your preferred method of receiving communication from the Newark Police?
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Universal Takeaways:

- Social media, email, phone, text, and mail were generally the most preferred methods of communication.
- Community meetings, school visits, and church visits were also preferred locations for community members to receive NPD information.

First Precinct:

Social media, emails, phone calls, and handouts/mailers were listed as the preferred methods of communication.

Second Precinct:

Texts, calls, emails, community meetings, visits to schools, mailers, and face-to-face were the preferred methods of communication.

Third Precinct:

Phone, email, social media, newspapers, radio, television, text, were the preferred methods of communication.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Phone, face-to-face conversations, email, community meetings, internet, a loud speaker, social media, bulletins, mail, and text were listed as the preferred methods of communication.

Citywide (4):

Email blasts, texts, and calls were the preferred methods of communication.

Citywide (5):

Email, social media, text, phone, community meetings, and school visits were listed as the preferred methods of communication.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Mail, phone, email, text, text messages, newsletters, a direct NPD helpline (proposed), 311 calls, community meetings, school/church visits, informational table/bulletin board in police precincts, and flyers were listed as the preferred methods of communication.

Question 7: To what extent does your law enforcement agency work together with community members to solve local problems? Why do you think this is?

Universal Takeaways:

- Answers varied, with some praising officers' presence at community meetings, while others cited the tense relationship between community and police as a source of conflict.
- Several community members named specific officers as wonderful community resources.
- Some said that a breakdown in communication limited community/police collaboration.

First Precinct:

Some community members praised community meetings as a way to engage with officers, while others noted that they were unclear how officers actively engaged with community members in problem solving. One community member also noted that it was a plus that officers gave out their contact information and made themselves available to be contacted.

Second Precinct:

Answers varied as to what extent law enforcement engaged with the community in problem solving. Several community members left this section blank. Others said there was no or low

involvement. Other answers ranged from the community policing program being very strong and helpful to Officer Molina serving as a great resource. One community member also said that NPD should work closely with the planning and zoning boards to assess any public safety issues surrounding new buildings.

Third Precinct:

Answers to this question varied; some community members thought that the community precinct meetings were an extremely helpful way to bring the community and police together, while others thought there was very little engagement. One overriding request was that officers be more responsive when issues arise, in order to make sure issues are resolved in real time. Specifically, one community member said that Sergeant Michael Silva was a wonderful resource and help.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Generally, community members thought the police were doing a good job at engaging the community, and had seen improvement in recent years. They would like community meetings to continue and for NPD to make a concerted effort to engage youth.

Citywide (4):

Generally, community members thought the police were doing all they can to engage the community, but that they were limited by a lack of resources. They said that more training, follow-up and communication is needed for even stronger collaboration.

Citywide (5):

Community members listed a lack of communication/information sharing as one barrier to law enforcement effectively problem solving community member issues. In addition, one community member noted ongoing tensions between the community and the police union being one limit to continued engagement.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Community members said community meetings and officer attendance at block associations was a great first step in engaging the community. However, they thought NPD needed to make more of an effort in reaching the people who didn't come to these meetings, and should do more foot patrols (as was done in the 1990s and early 2000s). In addition, NPD should consider providing transportation to community meetings to make them more accessible.

Question 8: Do you think that improvements can be made in how the Newark Police communicate with the public? If so, what?

Universal Takeaways:

- Community members wanted more community meetings.
- Youth engagement should be increased.
- More foot patrols would make communication with the public easier.

First Precinct:

Improvements that could be made include better communication, more transparency, a willingness of officers to engage with the community, and continuing council precinct meetings and mailers.

Second Precinct:

Improvements mainly revolved around better communication; some community members felt that officers should listen more than they speak, while another said that the NPD should be trained on how to best communicate with the public. On communication, another community member said NPD should use a variety of methods, other than just Nextdoor, to push out and convey information. One community member said that NPD should engage more with high school youth, and another stated that police officers should be required to attend at least two years of college.

Third Precinct:

Improvements that community members suggested ranged from more foot patrols and continuing/increasing community meetings to bringing back the guardian angels program and strengthening police training. In addition, one community member said that clergy should be more engaged, and another said that officers should engage more with community groups and schools.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Community members would like better communication about what the police are doing (including an education component about police policies, actions, etc.) and more meetings. One suggestion was to create a community/police team that could go around and inform the community about various ongoing events.

Citywide (4):

Community members felt that increased foot patrol and open dialogue were needed improvements, in addition to police officers becoming more engaged with schools and seeing issues through a trauma-informed lens.

Citywide (5):

Improvements listed included increased communication, bringing back the PAL program, strengthening NPD's communication/marketing team, having new police officers involved in the community meetings, and putting a stop to the shifting of officers between precincts.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Increased communication and respect were resounding themes with community members for this question. In addition, they would like to see more officers on foot in the streets and perhaps the creation of informational fairs as a way to spread information and engage with community members in different venues.

Question 9: do you think it is easy or difficult to provide input to the Newark Police (e.g., comments, suggestions, and concerns)? If you find it difficult, what would you change?

Universal Takeaways:

- Answers varied—some community members stated that frequent community meetings made it easier to pass along input, while others said police didn't seem to care about community feedback.
- Many worried that NPD was not implementing community feedback.

First Precinct:

Answers varied as to whether it was easy or difficult to provide input to the police. A few members stated that the precinct meetings made it easier for people to provide feedback. One member said it was difficult because the police could be friendlier and more willing to speak, while another person who said it was difficult advocated for an easier channel of communication. One person also said it wasn't difficult to provide feedback but it was unclear if their input made a difference.

Second Precinct:

Answers varied, with some community members finding it easy to provide input to officers, and others finding it difficult. For those who found it easier, they stated that the community policing program has gone far to facilitate community input, but some still worried about whether that input is acted upon. Those who found it more difficult echoed the feeling that their community input was not heard, with at least one person saying they had no idea how to give input and/or who would be their appropriate officer contact.

Third Precinct:

Answers varied on this question, but a large number of members felt it was difficult to get their input to NPD. Reasons ranged from the police not caring and there being no follow-up to language barriers and officers not believing residents' complaints. Community members who said that it was easy to provide input said that the Nextdoor app and the community meetings were very helpful in facilitating feedback.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Generally, community members felt it was easy to provide input, especially at community meetings. One member said that it would be easier to speak to some officers if they developed “people skills,” and suggested officers undergo communications training.

Citywide (4):

Responses were scant for this question, but community members’ answers ranged from no to sometimes, without much further detail.

Citywide (5):

Answers varied to this question. Some community members felt it was easy to reach officers, in large part based on ongoing community meetings. Others who had a more negative reaction listed ongoing hostilities between police and the community and the perception of officers as hostile as possible factors that need to be addressed.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Answers varied widely for this question. Some community members thought it was easy to engage with officers, especially those who routinely attended meetings. Others felt that the broken relationship between community members and the police made it difficult to communicate openly and effectively. One community member also said the NPD should set up a hotline so people could speak to an NPD representative without a long wait time or delay.

Question 10: If there was one thing you would want to see in a Newark Police community policing policy, what would it be?

Universal Takeaways:

- Answers varied to this question.

First Precinct:

Community members would like to see an increase in police officers. They also asked for an improvement in positive community relations and to patrol communities more.

Second Precinct:

Answers on this point ranged from stronger communication and getting to know community members before choosing to arrest them to working more with youth. Peacemaking circles and restorative justice practices, in addition to sensitivity training for officers, were also suggested recommendations.

Third Precinct:

Community members wanted a range of things to be included in the policy, including the following: police officers living in the community they police, better training for 9-1-1 dispatchers, more foot patrols, stronger communication, better follow-up on issues, and an increased respect for community members.

Fourth Precinct: No questionnaires collected.

Fifth Precinct:

Community members would like the NPD to increase their youth engagement, as well as a way to ensure that police officers treat all Newark residents the same across the wards.

Citywide (4):

More communication, the continuation of block watches, more school events, and increased training were all things community members wanted to see included in the policy.

Citywide (5):

Increased accountability, communication, positive interaction with those with mental illnesses, educational opportunities for positive police/community engagement, and alternatives to arrest were all things that community members wanted to see included in the policy.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Community members want increased transparency, expanded engagement with the community, increased police presence, respect, and an increase in responsiveness to certain crime-related or quality of life issues to be at the forefront of the new policy.

Question 11: Please provide any additional comments or suggestions.

Universal Takeaways:

- Answers varied to this question.

Citywide (4):

Community members said that they are thankful for the opportunity to complete the survey and want to see continued community engagement efforts of this kind.

Citywide (5):

Community members had a number of additional comments, including making this questionnaire a 311 alert to maximize community feedback, having NPD present opportunities for community members to pray with officers, providing more self-care opportunities for officers, and imbuing policies with a restorative justice model.

Citizen/Clergy Academy:

Community members had a number of additional comments, including the need to increase the number of cameras on the street, ensure officers are on foot patrol, recruit more officers, expand methods of communicating with the community, and to bring back truancy programs.