

Ad Hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations (Final Draft)

The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem have been charged by the Council with enlisting the help of five community members who would act as a "convener group." The group's purpose is to develop opportunities for broad-based and inclusive engagement with the community about police and community relations.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes a broad policy framework for Olympia's public services that emphasizes the importance of integrated and interdisciplinary approaches to service delivery. Criminal justice issues can't be addressed solely through policing. Partnerships between police, the courts, schools, the religious community and many other organizations are essential to addressing the sources of much of the crime in our community. Public engagement is a critical part of this work.

As stated in the Public Services section of our Comprehensive Plan [GS15]:

The citizens of Olympia are empowered as partners in solving community problems.

The Ad Hoc Committee is tasked with identifying strategies to advance the following three Comprehensive Plan Public Service Goals:

PS15.1: Form interdisciplinary partnerships with individuals and groups in the community to address policing issues.

PS15.2: Involve citizens as we look for ways to reduce repeat crimes, and use education to prevent crime.

PS15.3: Emphasize the need for our police force to have positive, day-to-day interaction with the public that encourages collaboration on problem-solving, rather than responding only to crises. Regular contact between the police and citizens helps strengthen working relationships and makes policing more effective.

To this end, the purpose of the task force is:

To engage the public and 1) provide them with information on current activities and best practices, 2) listen for opportunities for improvement, and 3) create grounds for positive and productive engagement between people who have different experiences and perspectives.

The specific charge of the Task Force is:

To work as a team, in collaboration with City of Olympia staff and local non-profit organizations, and carry out up to 5 community forums to receive information and share perspectives about:

Ad Hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations (Final Draft)

- ✓ Methods for engaging under-represented and minority groups on policing practices in order to bridge understanding between Olympia's law enforcement officers and the public.
- ✓ Seek input on a preferred process for engaging the public on implementing police-worn body cameras.

Engagement methods will include community briefings by city staff and other criminal justice professionals, small group discussions, and other direct public engagement strategies.

Outcomes:

Within six months of appointment, provide a summary of what was heard that might assist Olympia in achieving its goals as a transparent and inclusive organization.

Challenges for success:

- Achieving broad based community input and understanding
- Attaining adequate resources to support the ad hoc committee
- Staying within the charter of the Committee
- Delivering results within the appointed time frame.

THE DUTIES OF AD HOC COMMITTEE ON POLICE AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

To receive information and share perspectives about:

- Methods for engaging under-represented and minority groups on policing practices in order to bridge understanding between Olympia's law enforcement officers and the public.
- Seek input on a preferred process for engaging the public on implementing police-worn body cameras.

Members:

**Reiko Callner, co-chair; Curt Pavola, co-chair;
Kerensa Mabwa, member; Clinton Eugene Petty, member;
Alejandro Rugarcia, member; Lt. Aaron Jelcick, Olympia Police
Department, ex-officio member**

Summary of Major Themes from Community Input

Ad Hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations. Notes corresponding to Slide 12 from the PowerPoint presentation for the Report to City Council April 12, 2016.

The Process

The overall atmosphere of the forums was at first tentative, but ultimately positive and hopeful. The act of face-to-face engagement and listening was affirming. Each forum had its own character that went beyond the written comments and summaries. (We cannot do justice to the people present in this brief time. A work session after this debrief is needed in order to faithfully relay the input we received.)

The vast majority of respondents reported positive first hand experiences with OPD. There were a small number of adverse experiences, and a slightly larger number of negative second-hand accounts. Note – several people stated they believed that people with the most adverse experiences would not be willing or able to share those experiences with the ad hoc committee.

The model of having citizens who are not employed by the city engaged in outreach on these topics was important to build trust. It was significant that the individual members of the committee were diverse – five citizens including two African Americans, an Asian American, a Mexican immigrant naturalized citizen, two gay men, two women

This 6-month process was a continuing community conversation with many facets, and the council would benefit from hearing how open and honest the conversation was. While many issues were raised by the community, the committee was actively listening and did not often try to answer or address the concerns in the moment. We noted them and pass them along to the city and council. It is important that the city, in some way, respond to the questions and concerns raised through this process. While the engagement itself had intrinsic value, there has been a lasting suspicion that the whole exercise is a whitewash or a sop to real concerns that will remain after the committee is done. We would invite the opportunity to provide further input, after the Council has had the opportunity to absorb and reflect on this material, to meet again in a less formal structure and to try to convey the reality of this collaborative process.

What Did the Committee Hear? Themes/Main Messages

- 1) **Effective policing requires respect, trust, listening, communication, building relationships. Modes of engagement with the public are very important.**

An overarching and consistent priority across the community was the desire for officers to consistently show visible respect and warmth in their interactions and to be open, to listen and pay attention to the individual they are dealing with and to that person's

circumstances. Related to this is the repeated message that the “command and control” style may be necessary at times, but if it is not necessary, that style is very negatively received. Several people referred to officers who arrived to a non-emergent scene in a very amped-up fashion, and that was off-putting or even frightening and dangerous. People want police interactions to be interactive, helpful, and human. The great majority of people reported their personal experiences with OPD were in fact positive and respectful. We repeatedly heard that people would like the chance to know the officers as human beings – to have enough consistency in assignments that they can feel the officers know the neighborhood. There were many specific suggestions for social projects and contexts for officers to do so. It important for officers to strive for cultural competence, including sensitivity to language barriers and the fact that immigrants and many native born might not know the workings of the criminal justice system. Many people said they wanted more opportunities to interact with OPD in a model like the Ad Hoc forums, i.e., with some police presence, but facilitated by diverse citizens who are not affiliated with OPD and not employed by the city. This formal helps engender trust. Training for the department has already been funded and is under way for OPD in relationship-building and multi-cultural awareness. Transparency in what that training consists of is vital to building trust and confidence. Resources for such trust-building also resides within this community and it would be positive for OPD to engage with these local resources.

2) Understanding and perceptions of the internal workings of the police department is limited. Improving that knowledge and understanding would be helpful. Perception of OPD overlaps with and sometimes is formed by people’s perception of police in general.

It was plain that many members of the community are under- or misinformed about OPD’s recruitment, screening, hiring, training, and discipline practices. Whatever communication is being employed is less than effective. As a consequence, there are some wrong assumptions that strongly affect the perception of the local police, many of these originating from experiences from elsewhere or with personnel who are no longer with the city. Each individual encounter forms opinion about all of OPD, and people tell those stories, good or bad, over and over. The great majority of first-hand accounts of how they were treated by OPD were positive. The visuals are important, including the black squad cars, the absence of a “protect and serve” motto, and the grim façade in the foyer of the police department. Affirmative statements of a community service orientation are very significant to people. Specific calls were made for policy changes in use of force and de-escalation, accountability systems; training in hate crimes and incidents; neutral evaluations of complaints against OPD (some of which is already in place); and a citizen review board. If these ideas are already in place, they apparently need to be better publicized. If they are considered and rejected, it would be helpful to have a dialogue about that. When officers attended the forums and people had one on one conversations, the experience was positive. There were a few people at several forums who found the presence of police with guns frightening and even a barrier to

attending and participating. There was, however, no discussion about a firearm being part of the uniform of an on-duty officer.

3. **Cultural awareness/ acknowledgement of implicit bias, institutional injustice. Societal issues are manifested in situations where police respond. There is a community responsibility as well.** Many community members -- some representing ongoing discussion groups in town -- suggested that we all, individually, have biases that play out in policing interactions; and they specifically requested officer training about implicit bias and services for officers that help them process the encounters they have with segments of the population where biases may form over time (meaning officer reaction in a future encounter may be impacted by previous negative encounters). There is a strong perception that process and laws favor police officers throughout the hiring, training, and incident review or corrective actions. Thurston County has a very white population and it is challenging to deal with race issues. Bias can be a two-way street -- some people are biased against law enforcement, and some people scapegoat law enforcement for bias in the population at large. Schools are important places for race and bullying to be addressed. Larger societal issues: race, poverty, homelessness, mental illness, addiction, are manifest in aspects of police/public interactions, but they are not only police problems, even if they're manifested in police-involved flash points. Regardless of individual misperceptions or the presence of actual bias, the broader system is either not aware of or not responsive to the needs of minority groups and marginalized people, notably vulnerable youth. There is a need for cultural awareness and more adequate mental health responses. The lack of resources for these larger societal problems cannot solely be addressed at the police level, but emphasis on data-driven, trauma-informed training could assist OPD in approaching issues in a more community-collaborative fashion.

April 2016

Reflections from Committee Members

Members of the ad hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations wish to share their impressions of the six-month community discussion about policing in Olympia.

Reiko Callner, Co-Chair

We live in a place and time of unusual and dynamic change, nationally and in this city in particular, with regard to police and community relations. The internet and smart phones have created an atmosphere where biased interactions of police with minorities and other marginalized people have been credibly documented as never before. This presents a challenge and an opportunity. I have perceived that OPD and its leaders are sincere and active in desiring to truly serve the diverse public and to earn their trust. Opinions about the police here have been negatively colored by perceptions of police elsewhere where leadership does not share or act on those same goals. Members of OPD who were motivated to join because policing has historically been viewed as a noble profession are experiencing increasingly negative responses in the public that make a difficult job even more challenging.

It is not enough for public servants to do good – to earn trust they must also appear to do good. Consistent effective communication and relationship building is essential. People want and need reliable information about OPD actions, protocols, policies, and practice. They do not have that access now, or at least do not feel that they do. The current modes of communication are not adequate, even for intelligent and motivated information seekers. The current website is not easy to navigate.

Many people expressed the desire for the ad hoc committee to be made permanent. While this is not feasible, basically what people seem to be saying is that the model of a citizen-involved set of diverse, trustworthy, and identifiable players, engaged in focused community outreach, in a context that enables access to one on one conversation with actual police, is a genuine and authentic conversation model. When the ad hoc committee experience came close to this, the results were extremely positive and both police and citizens expressed affirmation, relief and hope in the interactions.

Many people in many contexts, from different walks of life, reiterated that in order for trust to be built, relationships need to be fostered. The alternative to that is that police only interact with people in crisis, and then in a top-down mode of interaction. The latter was perceived as very negative and is destructive to the goal of building trust and partnership. The staff of at least one major victim service provider expressed the wish that police would treat them more like respected allies than they have in the past.

The department is engaged in protocol and initiatives that already are positive and responsive to the hopes and needs of the public. The city is not so good at communicating this. This failure of communication fosters rumor, distrust, and a sense of disenfranchisement, and a sense, on the part of the police, of frustration and futility.

Actually meeting people as human beings and interacting with them in authentic ways goes further than anything else in achieving these goals. It is an Olympia reality that there are people with pre-formed conclusions who will speak loudest and most frequently and may monopolize the conversation, particularly at formal opportunities to engage. To reach the rest of the population, more fluid and nimble forms of engagement need to be employed. This is an aspect of showing respect to the public.

For the Ad Hoc Committee's efforts to have credibility and genuine effect, there must be a visible response on the part of the city, both the Council and the police department, to both the themes and specific issues highlighted in the process. If proposals are declined, there should be some form of communication about why.

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Curt Pavola, Co-Chair

In classic and intentional Olympia fashion, the community has begun working through an issue that many experienced as a law enforcement incident but many others experienced as a statement about their place in the community, and within the legal system. The May 2015 police shooting led Olympia residents to the streets and to podiums, and the city council made this conversation official through the ad hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations.

This incident has sparked a conversation within the community about policing in Olympia and more broadly, with open hearts and minds, and this conversation should continue. Already, during the past six months, the Olympia Police Department, city management and the city council have begun working with information received through the ad hoc Committee toward a process of self-examination and improvement.

On topic for the ad hoc Committee's charge, city staff have begun an effort to better connect with the community around policing issues and to identify opportunities for improvements in both police training and community awareness and involvement in policing.

For the Committee's second charge, the community forum on police body-worn cameras demonstrated the helpfulness of video recordings while posing complex and emotionally difficult questions about releasing videos of people in their moment of highest need and vulnerability, especially those swept up in an incident through no action of their own, and very especially children. The Legislature is currently making improvements in this arena, and the community members attending the forum demonstrated their willingness to thoroughly examine the many legal and philosophical questions posed by police cameras.

As a former city councilmember, some of the most poignant public comments for me related to the policies guiding community policing in Olympia.

The ad hoc Committee heard many comments related to the various policy proclamations in the "*Police Services Promote Public Safety*" section of the 2014 City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan, our community's guiding document for all city policies and programs. For example:

- Procedures/attitudes toward de-escalation of encounters by both citizens and officers,
- Understanding the mindset and history of groups of people, and how that history persists and impacts people's reactions to policing actions,
- Partnerships currently lacking but necessary to prevent non-policing issues from becoming enforcement incidents rather than delivery of a needed social service or mental health care treatment (especially in the downtown area),
- The need for consistent, ongoing, two-way, open communication about community policing to inform both the community and police officers. This argues against one-off, as-budget-is-available, optional, additional workload duties for officers; instead suggesting a redefinition of each officer's routine work methods to interact more meaningfully with groups and individuals throughout the community, regardless of current statewide training and standards from other departments. What kind of ongoing interactions do Olympians want?

Thank you for this enriching opportunity to meet some tremendous members of the Olympia community. We reached many, but I do know we also missed more...the un-organized, the non-connected, and many of the disenfranchised. We as a citizen committee delivered a volunteer-style effort, and the city, long-term, could benefit from a well-funded and consistent outreach effort to monitor the city's progress and to decrease the friction between our stated goal of "policing with the community" and those issues that bring residents and visitors to meet our police officers.

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Kerensa Mabwa

As a 10 year resident of Olympia, it has been both an honor and a pleasure to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee on Police and Community (PCR). This committee, catalyzed by the shooting of two African-American residents by a white police officer last May, provides the opportunity for the City of Olympia and the Olympia Police Department (OPD) to respond and to relate to Olympia citizens in a new way. It was my intention to step into this work to listen, learn and to help hold a vision for more inclusive and safe community.

I believe the PCR Committee's work was an effective first step in a model for the city to better acknowledge divergent views of the community. To be fair, much of the feedback we heard about the OPD was positive. Interestingly, for some particularly disenfranchised members, our listening presence helped them to really be seen as community members. We heard from several different groups but by no means a full representation of our community. The main barriers to the PCR's effectiveness were the Committee's six-month duration and the challenge of listening to people in their own safe environments. Furthermore, the forum process was perceived by some as bogus given our relationship to the city; others were fearful of publicly sharing their stories with police present.

The need for **relationship building** was a huge theme in the community's feedback. We heard some reports of people being misunderstood, disrespected or profiled, often from people who were receiving services of some type, such as shelter, transitional housing or immigrant services. Our committee heard consistent requests that OPD officers find ways to be respectfully present in the community, and to hear the stories of community members, beyond dealing with crime. This could be a deterrent to crime in and of itself, allowing residents and officers to begin develop consistent two-way communication. For instance, the presence of police resource officers in schools allows for some surface relationship building with youth, yet without building trust and safety, officers miss the chance for deeper human connection.

The Olympia community has many different **perceptions** of policing, from media, personal experience in and outside Olympia, and common hearsay, as do police officers themselves. We found the community is often uninformed or misinformed about OPD policy and police officers' roles as enforcers of law. For example, OPD uses data-driven strategies rather than random policing. And outcomes of cases filed against officers are typically not made available via media, giving the perception that the OPD is biased toward its officers. In addition, though not directly responsible for the nationally increase in police shooting people of color, the OPD is a part of this larger context and is not immune to its stigma. The OPD is already working with community groups like the Black Alliance of Thurston County on community conversations about race and changing the WA state law on the use of excessive force. However, the PCR Committee strongly heard need for the OPD to be more **transparent**, give **better access to information** as well as establish a Citizen Review Board pilot to provide better police accountability to the community it serves.

Community service workers noted many OPD officers need deeper **understanding of underserved community members' issues** such as people experiencing homelessness, mental illness, trauma and the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACES). In addition, advocates noted some officers' lack of awareness of street dynamics affecting the safety of street youth, particularly those and LGBTQ of color. Opportunities for officers to collaborate with agencies need to be expanded.

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Kerensa Mabwa

The community strongly voiced that the OPD establish consistent **cultural competence training** for all officers. This is where the community can collaborate. In seeking the diverse voices, skills, strengths and resources already present in the community, the OPD can create a training that shifts the officers' cultural understanding to better meet Olympia's needs. However, our community's makeup is not static. This reality requires all officers to engage in ongoing learning to respond flexibly to our changing cultural landscape. A successful training includes awareness of cultural assumptions/implicit bias, race/ethnicity, poverty, gender, orientation, disability, and historical trauma, etc. How can the OPD make its officers aware that a marginalized person's interactions with an officer are not separate from both parties' perceptions and experiences of race, power and privilege?

As a witness to the personal stories that form part of the fabric of our community, I appreciate serving on the Committee. It impacted me greatly that people trusted us to represent their voices to the Council. I complete my service acknowledging that we simply ran our first lap, and we hand the baton to the City to continue the next stages of creating a true partnership between the City, the Olympia Police Department and each Olympia resident no matter what walk of life. There is no quick fix--we are not here for a sprint, but rather to pace ourselves for the marathon.

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Reflections from Committee Members

Members of the ad hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations wish to share their impressions of the six-month community discussion about policing in Olympia.

Alejandro Rugarcia

DATE: April 4, 2016
FROM: Alejandro Rugarcia
Member, Ad Hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations
SUBJECT: Input for Final Report

Overall Perspective

The convening of the Ad Hoc Committee was useful and productive on the one hand, and not satisfying on the other hand.

The Committee served a purpose in that it brought people together. It focused attention and energy on the relationships the Olympia police have with the public.

Its shortcoming was that it is not easy for marginalized communities or individuals to participate in this type of process. Thus, the stories we gathered do not represent the whole picture of police and people in Olympia. Part of this is due to the very nature of today's law and order framework. The power dynamics make it difficult to be perfectly candid with the police; and at times the police might appear to be, or are, defensive.

Police culture may change after this work. Training will help and leadership that is committed to change will make a huge difference. The goal should be a less confrontational, less aggressive police department that believes in reform.

Specific Areas Identified for Change

#1 Address the laws.

- A. RCW 9A.16.040 regarding use of deadly force needs to be revised.
- The "without malice and with a good faith belief" standard is a barrier to accountability for excessive use of force.
 - Olympia should actively participate in the task force that was created by ESHB 2908 this legislation session. The Association of Washington Cities has a seat at the table and Olympia should work closely with AWC to get the law changed.
- B. Body-worn cameras are subject to the recently enacted legislation, EHB 2362. There should not be wide public access to video and sound recordings. There are serious privacy concerns for many of the interactions between police, subjects, and the public. The City should work carefully with the public to assure that they understand there is limited access to the video and sound recordings. The City should develop a policy that provides access to anyone who has a legitimate need for the information, which should be limited to any individual who has been recorded and their attorneys and advocates.

#2. De-escalation and less lethal alternatives.

The Olympia Police Department should have regular training on how to use less lethal alternatives and how to deescalate situations. Use of deadly force should be a last resort, and the officer's primary duty should be to protect life.

#3. Outreach and Advocacy Position within the OPD.

The Police Department should establish a position within the Department that is responsible for outreach, networking, and building relationships. This should be filled by a person that is not a police officer, and who has the skills to liaison between the police and the public. A key role of

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Alejandro Rugarcia

this person would be to provide follow up and closure to citizen complaints. The person would be like an ombudsman in that they would advocate for the public in order to determine what took place between the police and the public. This would be an internal review position, and the person would have the authority to solve problems related to complaints.

#4. Hiring.

The OPD has a very extensive hiring process that includes many review points and access to background data. This process is thorough but there is an additional review that should be added to provide key information about a candidate's potential. Also, the timing of this additional review should be early in the process so that the OPD has not invested too much already into the potential candidate. The review that needs to take place involves a different evaluation from what is done today for psychological fitness. This evaluation would provide scoring for the candidate related to whether they are open-minded, whether they have fresh ideas, how they react to change, how they react to stress, and how they react to criticism.

#5. Respect.

The Olympia Police Department should place a high priority on a culture that emphasizes the need to respect the people in the community. This means the police have to respect everyone. Police have tremendous power and authority. And police jobs are hard. The public is diverse. And life is tough for many people. Lack of respect impacts trust. Trust is needed in order for the community to be a true partner in policing.

#6. Improvement as part of the OPD culture.

The police should constantly look for ways to do a better job. This will require a frame of mind that can accept that things could be done better and that accepts change. Problem-solving and creativity should be encouraged. The public can also be involved in critiquing and offering ideas.

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Reflections from Committee Members

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Aaron Jelcick

Over the past six months, the Ad Hoc committee on Police and Community Relations organized and facilitated five community forums with the mission to receive information and share perspectives about methods for engaging under-represented and minority groups on policing practices, in order to bridge understanding between Olympia's law enforcement officers and the public. The committee was also tasked with seeking input on a preferred process for engaging the public on implementing police-worn body cameras.

As an ex-officio member of this committee and a representative of the Olympia Police Department (OPD), this was a unique opportunity for me to listen to perspectives of under-represented groups of people in the community about how OPD could better serve them. Each member of the Ad Hoc committee has committed to expressing underlying themes they heard from the community, and to document things that resonated most to them. In this document I have separated what resonated most to me into five categories.

- 1) **Healthy and constructive communication:** Creating a space where all people feel comfortable talking about difficult issues related to police interaction can be difficult. In all five forums the communication that took place was thoughtful, respectful and honest. *Creating time and space for community members to share thoughts and perspectives with OPD is essential.*
- 2) **Negative Perceptions:** The vast majority of people who spoke at the forums had no negative interaction with OPD, however, negative interactions with police outside of Olympia greatly affected their perceptions and relationships with OPD. At almost every forum, community members told me that if they had more opportunities to interact with Olympia officers on a non-enforcement level, it would help change their perceptions of police; this was particularly highlighted by youth at the youth forum. *Non-enforcement community outreach is an essential element to building community trust.*
- 3) **Education about OPD:** Most of the people who attended the forums did not have a good understanding about the policies, procedures, laws, training and hiring practices of OPD, which diminished the level of trust between the police and the community during times of crisis. This was particularly highlighted during conversations related to police use of force and to issues related to body-worn cameras. *Educating the community about OPD is important to building trust and strong relationships between OPD and the community.*
- 4) **Empathy and respect:** At all five forums I heard community members talk about how important it was for officers to show empathy and respect for all people. Empathy in police-community relations reveals itself when officers listened and expressed understanding during their interactions with citizens, which increased trust and legitimacy. This was particularly highlighted in the forum that focused on input from the Hispanic community. *OPD holds its employees accountable for carrying out their duties in a fair and impartial manner, with empathy, and respect.*
- 5) **Training:** At all five forums I heard community members talk about their desire for police to receive training on multi-cultural competency, implicit and explicit bias, and de-escalation techniques related to use of force options. *OPD must continue to seek training for employees that best serves the community.*

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Members of the ad hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations wish to share their impressions of the six-month community discussion about policing in Olympia.

Clinton Petty

I was asked and selected to be a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations by the Mayor. One of the lessons I've learned, being a member of this citizen team on the subject of Police and Community Relations, is that the citizens who live here truly care about this community.

The shooting that took place with two Black youth here in Olympia was both a surprise and disappointment with the action of our police force, and our city leaders on the action or inaction that has been seen around the Nation on the subject matter of shooting of Black males. Is this a part of our culture also? People needed to know what their leaders are doing to find a solution on this matter because a human life no matter the race is important and to shoot a person and ask questions later is not the solution we expect from our police.

I am humbled by the faith and commitment of the people who live in this community. The Forums that were held they were orderly and people spoke from their heart with great concern they had about the Police Department. Some were negative and some were positive. The comments and concerns were well spoken without anger – but with questions about answers to correct this problem is what they want to hear.

The Forums gave us an excellent opportunity to hear their concerns. Some examples and much more:

- Police need to meet with small groups
- Training of police officers using 21st Century techniques
- City Council and Police need to hear people's story
- How do Police process negative/traumatic events during their work day
- Review OPD re: use of force
- Body cameras are not the total solution
- Create civilian oversight of police
- Change the State law re: when a police officer can face criminal charges – remove the requirement for "evil intent or intentional malice"
- Respect is what people want from police

(Example of just a very few of the comments we've heard)

When I think of the person who works as a dish washer in a restaurant, who works tirelessly during the late night shift at 3 a.m. on his second job. He goes home for a few hours of sleep, then still tired from the night before; gets up for a class at a local college before going to his day job may be stopped by the police and has a short temper, what could be the outcome when these two people meet?

We know our Community is stronger when we all look out for each other – when everyone has the Opportunity to Build a secure environment.

I hope as you review this feedback that was given by the people in our community, that it doesn't fall on deaf ears but provide the next step in building the example of how we can live in harmony and safety. The information that was collected need to be put into an Action Response Plan by priority and shared back to our Community using the Website, other Media forms and open discussion.

Ad Hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations

Report to the Olympia City Council | April 12, 2016



Committee Members

Reiko Callner, co-chair

Curt Pavola, co-chair

Kerensa Mabwa, member

Clinton Eugene Petty, member

Alejandro Rugarcia, member

Lt. Aaron Jelcick, Olympia Police Department, ex-officio member

Mission

To receive information and share perspectives about:

1. Methods for engaging under-represented and minority groups on policing practices in order to bridge understanding between Olympia's law enforcement officers and the public.
2. Seek input on a preferred process for engaging the public on implementing police-worn body cameras.

Additional Direction from City Council

- ▶ Listen for opportunities for improvement.
- ▶ Create grounds for positive and productive engagement between people who have different experience and perspectives.
- ▶ Analyze themes into a synthesis that can be used in a constructive, lasting way. Highlight possibilities.
- ▶ Offer ways to build relationships and continue with mutual connection.

Additional Direction from City Council

- ▶ Model and document how to have constructive conversations with diverse people.
- ▶ Help create an “Olympia way” to have these conversations. How do we get beyond the police conversation and create an equity lens, holding the community accountable, and normalize conversations on race?
- ▶ How will you know if you are successful?
- ▶ Map into the future a path for learning about race/power/privilege; possibly by having regular forums for dialogue with the public?
- ▶ How does the public tell you – what is the indicator for you, that you’re being heard?

Ad Hoc Committee Schedule

▶ Planning Meetings

- August 25, 2015
- September 9, 14
- October 5, 12
- November 9
- December 14
- January 27, 2016
- February 8, 15, 22
- March 10, 28
- April 4

▶ Forums

- October 10, 2015 – *African American Community (about 80 attendees)*
- November 5 – *Latino/Hispanic Community (about 80 attendees)*
- December 7 – *Downtown Social Services / Homeless Community (about 30 attendees)*
- January 18 – *Youth (about 25 attendees)*
- February 18 – *Police Body-Worn Cameras (about 30 attendees)*

Ad Hoc Committee Schedule

▶ City Council Briefings

- October 20, 2015 – Initial briefing
- April 12, 2016 – Report out

▶ Other Briefings

- SafePlace
- LGBTQ Youth/Advocates
- Spanish Speaking Students
- Thurston County Needle Exchange
- Drexel House Residents
- Downtown Ambassadors Walk-a-Long
- Freedom Farmers – Olympia High School
- Asian/Pacific Island Coalition



Outreach Tools

- ▶ Personal Outreach by Ad Hoc Committee Members
- ▶ City Website, Email Lists, Social Media
- ▶ News Organizations
 - The Olympian
 - Little Hollywood Blog
 - Informador (Spanish speaking news)
- ▶ Press Release
- ▶ Public Committee Planning Meetings
- ▶ Community Outreach by Forum Hosts
 - Risen Faith Fellowship
 - Cielo
 - First Christian Church
 - Olympia High School

Participation Goals

- ▶ Create a safe, welcoming space for participation.
- ▶ Develop multiple ways for people to participate.
- ▶ Reach out to those less likely to participate in civic affairs.
- ▶ Hear as many voices as possible.
- ▶ “Go out” to meet where people gather.
- ▶ Develop broad based outreach.

Questions Posed at Forums

1. **Opening General Session – Forums 1 through 4**
 - Describe your experience with The Olympia Police Department.
 - How can the Olympia Police Department better serve you?
2. **Breakout Sessions – Forums 1 through 4**
 - Describe effective outreach to under represented groups?
 - How can the City and the Police Department create trust and partnerships?
 - How can the City make community members feel safe when engaged by the police?
3. **Body-worn Cameras – Forum 5**
 - Questions focused on how the community would like to be involved in the discussion about implementing cameras, who needs to be involved, and what type of information about cameras is needed by the public during this process



What did the Committee Hear?

Process/Ideas to Consider for Body-Worn Cameras

- ▶ Education on the topic is essential for the public to participate in a meaningful way.
- ▶ Broadest possible inclusion.
- ▶ Include obvious stakeholders: victims (Safeplace), offenders, children, migrants, prosecutors, defenders etc.
- ▶ Allow enough time to focus on privacy issues
- ▶ Understanding how video might be used can change perspectives – allow the public to explore those trade offs.
- ▶ How and when the City deploys will be shaped by state law.

What Did the Committee Hear?

Themes / Main Messages

- ▶ Effective policing requires respect, listening, communication, relationships.
- ▶ Modes of engagement are crucial.
- ▶ Perceptions of the internal world/culture of OPD.
- ▶ Perceptions of “police” in general.
- ▶ Cultural awareness/acknowledgement of implicit bias.
- ▶ Sense of institutional injustice.
- ▶ Societal issues that manifest themselves in police responses – core institutional references.
- ▶ Community responsibility.

Personal Reflections of Committee Members

- ▶ Committee members will share key take-aways from the community conversation
- ▶ Observations about the process and the outcomes
- ▶ About 3 minutes each
- ▶ Request for time with Council to go into further depth

“Thank you” to City Staff

- ▶ The city has expertly staffed the Committee’s work and helped to foster the community conversation.
- ▶ In addition to Lt. Jelcick, OPD staff members Kandace Johnson and Rebekah Ziesemer have provided excellent support
- ▶ Laura Wohl provided a detailed (and vivid) summary of the functioning, cost and complexity of body cameras and related public records management
- ▶ Steve Hall and Kellie Purce Braseth dedicated significant time to assure completion of the Council’s direction to the Committee

For a Summary of the Committee Work

Visit the Committee's website where you will find:

- Ad Hoc Committee Charter
- Ad Hoc Committee Members
- Meeting Minutes
- Notes from the Forums
- Report to the Olympia City Council
- Personal Observations from Committee Members

<http://olympiawa.gov/city-government/advisory-committees/police-relations-committee.aspx>

Conversation with the Council

Reiko Callner, co-chair

Curt Pavola, co-chair

Kerensa Mabwa, member

Clinton Eugene Petty, member

Alejandro Rugarcia, member

Lt. Aaron Jelcick, Olympia Police Department, ex-officio member