Manager's Report

September 22, 2020

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE



Presentation Overview

- On June 9, staff presented a 30/60/90 Day Work Plan and over the past several meetings have updated Council and the community on our work.

- The 30/60/90 Day Work Plan was developed in response to numerous requests from the Black Asheville Demands coalition to address specific racial justice and economic inclusion issues.

- The Work Plan reflects when we would **start** working on these requests.

- This evenings presentation will focus on the community engagement efforts to Reimagine Public Safety in Asheville

Key Takeaways

- This effort is much **more than a budget exercise**; the community is beginning to establish a **long term vision** for how we **collaborate to address public safety** in Asheville

- This year's immediate adjustments **reflect initial steps** to begin to **reallocate some functional responsibilities** out of Police and **into other departments or partner agencies**

Key Takeaways

- Recommendations designed to:
  - Increase public outreach and engagement at the neighborhood level
  - Strengthen support and/or development of neighborhood organizations
  - Collaboratively work with communities to identify and solve community problems
  - Improve quality of data collected related to public safety and enhance public access to that data
  - Address changes to policies and training for Police in order to lessen impacts on key groups
  - Be implemented quickly
- Other budgetary adjustments will likely be made this fiscal year from APDs budget if other programs and initiatives are identified and are ready to be piloted or fully implemented

Thank You!

Community Partners

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
- Beloved Asheville
- Burton Street Community Association
- Buncombe Co. Communications & Public Engagement
- Cenzontle Language Justice Cooperative
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
- Do the Write Thing / Asheville City Schools DropOut Prevention
- Downtown Businesses
- East End / Valley Street Neighborhood
- Housing Authority City of Asheville
- Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance
- Links Incorporated
- My Daddy Taught Me That
- Shiloh Community Association
- Southside Community
- WRES 100.7 FM
- Word on the Street

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Thank You!

City Departments

- Communications and Public Engagement
- Equity and Inclusion
- Information and Technology
- Parks and Recreation
- Police
- Human Resources
- Finance and Budget
- Community and Economic Development
- City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA)

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Reimagining Public Safety in Asheville

Goal: *Determine how the City of Asheville structures department responsibilities and community partnerships in a way that promotes racial equity and economic inclusion.*

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Public Engagement Process

- Step 1 (complete): Get feedback on an approach from key focus groups
- Step 2 (complete): Host Community Meetings
- **Step 3: (in process)**: Report, Recommendations and Implementation

Selected Facilitators: Thank You!



Shemekka Ebony Coleman, MS, Founder of Shemekka Ebony, Founder of Black Girl Magic Market, Co-Founder I Am Brilliant and the CROWN Campaign, Raleigh, NC



Glenn Thomas
Project Facilitator, Amplify Community Consulting
Founder and Managing Partner of Leadership Matters Group



Christine Edwards
Founder and Principal
Amplify Community Consulting (Amplify Charlotte)

Public Engagement Process

- The goal of the project was to provide a venue for feedback about public safety priorities in Asheville, NC through virtual meetings and an online survey developed by the City of Asheville.

- Feedback from the community engagement process was used to make current and future budgetary recommendations.

- Through 6 virtual listening sessions, several one-on-one meetings and 2 in-person engagements, Asheville residents and stakeholders from relevant populations highlighted the strengths, vision, challenges and opportunities in regards to public safety in Asheville; specifically community policing efforts.

Reimagining Engagement Meetings

	9/3 6:00 PM Kick-off Meeting	9/8 12:30 PM	9/9 12:30 PM	9/9 6:00 PM Civics 101	9/10 6:00 PM	9/11 11:00 AM
Registered	33	109	75	107	71	67
Attendance	42	101	63	72	51	65
White[1]	25%	82%	81%	87%	78%	77%
Black	68%	18%	18%	12%	17%	16%
Latinx	0	0	0	0	4%	0
Asian	0	0	0	4%	0	0
Native	0	0	0	0	0	3%
Race Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	3%
Other	6%	0	0	0	0	0

Total Virtual Engagement: 461

Reimagining Public Safety Questionnaire

- Responses are still being analyzed and work is being done to make sure there are no duplicate responses or data discrepancies due to technical difficulties that could have impacted numbers reported.

- With a commitment to transparency, all responses for the **open ended questions** were posted to the website on Friday.

- The responses to the **multiple choice questions** will be posted in the next two weeks once the deeper analysis of the data, which includes researching duplicates and discrepancies, can be completed.

Highlights from Engagement Process

What does safety mean to you?

- Freedom
- Equal access to resources
- Racial equity
- Ownership of space
- Representation
- Mutual respect

Highlights from Engagement Process

Which areas are a priority and which should be reallocated?

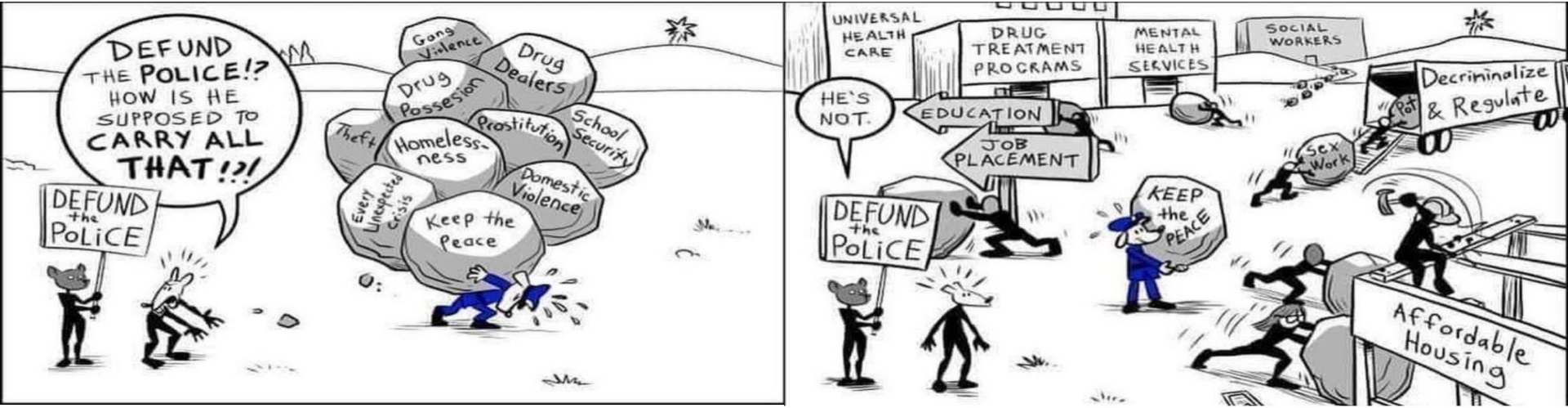
- Violent Crime
- De-escalation Training
- Increase in Community engagement
- Increase budgetary transparency
- Increased Collaboration between APD and Mental Health Providers
- Nuisance crimes reallocated
- Crowd Control

Highlights from Engagement Process

Themes (in no particular order and based on first impressions)

- APD has an important role in public safety
- Defund and Divest from APD
- Address Homeless Issues
- Better coordination and distribution of social service responsibilities
- Police Training
- Access to Affordable Housing
- Economic Opportunity

Summary of Reimagining Public Safety Strategy



-- Neal Skorpen

Focus areas for Budget Adjustments and Impact

Focus Area	Impact
1. Nuisance Reponse a. Animal Control and Noise Ordinance enforcement move to Development Services Department	➔ *Reallocation of non-violent calls for services to another department and out of APD*

Focus Area	Impact
2. Data Management and Transparency a. Position(s) in the IT department	➔ *Improved Public Safety data analysis* ➔ *More transparency in reporting data* ➔ *Improved access to data by the public* ➔ *Enhanced information and coordination between neighborhood and Police to prevent and/or respond to crime*
b. One time payment for internet connection in Housing Authority	➔ *Improved connections for tenants/students* ➔ *Enhance collaboration with Housing Authority and Asheville City Schools* ➔ *Advances Equity and Inclusion to address the achievement gap*

Focus Area	Impact
3. Community Engagement and Outreach a. Additional position(s) in the Communications and Public Engagement office b. Additional position in Parks and Recreation	➔ *Better serve communities and neighborhoods to help problem solve and address community issues* ➔ *Provide outreach to communities and neighborhoods* ➔ *Enhance park security, patrol and problem solve*
4. Homeless Outreach a. Additional support for homeless outreach and referral services	➔ *Work with partner agency to provide referral services and outreach* ➔ *Focus on Pritchard Park area* ➔ *Free up other resources to do outreach in other parts of the City*

Focus Area	Impact
5. Police Reforms and Policy *(No additional funding at this time.)* a. Written consent for pedestrians b. Minor modifications to Choke Hold Policy c. Study innovative crowd management tactics d. Changes to use of force and use of force reporting	➔ *Revisit the proposal to expand written consent to pedestrians* ➔ *Ensure consistency with State Task Force language* ➔ *Ensure consistency with nationwide best practices* ➔ *Increase public accountability and transparency in use of force incidents*

Focus Area	Impact
5. Police Reforms and Policy e. Review of APD policies by 2 local attorneys, who are not city affiliated. Review will include participation from representatives of marginalized communities, including BIPOC and varying age groups. Group to present any concerns and recommendations.	➔ *Create an opportunity for public involvement in policy creation* ➔ *More transparency in reporting data to the public*
e. Review all policies that aren't currently on APD website to see if they contain any information requiring them to remain confidential, or if they can be made public.	➔ *Provide the public with more accessibility to policies and procedures impacting law enforcement interactions with the community*

Focus Area	Impact
5. Police Reforms and Policy g. Establishing a policy for officer interaction with Transgender, Gender-Variant, and Nonbinary Individuals.	➔ *Outreach and collaboration with 4 local LGBTQ+ organizations for input on a draft policy.* ➔ *Allignment with the National Center for Transgender Equality.* ➔ *Ensure inclusivity within marginalized communities*

Focus Area	Impact
5. Police Reforms and Policy h. Drug Suppression Unit (DSU) will be eliminated.	➔ *Less emphasis on enforcement of low level drug crimes.* ➔ *Greater focus on violent and property crime* ➔ *Better provide law enforcement with the ability to focus on the root of rising violent crime and property crime incidents*
i. Establishment of a Citizen Review Board	➔ *Increases transparency within the department* ➔ *Provides additional community oversight*

Focus Area	Impact
6. Training and Recruitment *(No additional funding at this time.)* a. Implement Verbal Defense & Influence (de-escalation) training b. Implement training around how to more safely restrain people who are resisting arrest	➔ *Intended outcomes:* ◆ *Better communication under pressure* ◆ *Reduced incidents of conflict* ◆ *Reduced incident of violence* ◆ *Improved customer satisfaction* ◆ *Lower rates of complaints* ◆ *Improved morale* ➔ *Provide law enforcement with additional tools to address individuals resisting arrest*

Focus Area	Impact
6. Training and Recruitment *(No additional funding at this time.)*	
c. Officer Wellness & Health Program	➔ *Create a healthy work environment*
d. Working on a recruitment strategy to increase black, latinx and other people of color officers	➔ *Create a workforce that mirrors the makeup of the community we serve*
e. Outward Bound	➔ *Create opportunities for APD and youth in the community to build relationships and trust*
f. Racial Equity Institute (REI) Training	➔ *Increased understanding and ability for officers to address racism in the organization and the community.*

Next Steps: Initiatives to be pursued:

- Continue community engagement conversations starting in Nov. and develop strategies to:
    - Consolidate 911 emergency call center to more efficiently respond and deploy resources for emergency response calls
    - Create with community partners a collaborative rapid response team model to respond to mental health, drugs and alcohol, homeless, domestic violence and similar types of calls with goal of having Police no longer being the first or only responder
    - Develop new model(s) for School Resource Officers to further support student mentoring and other identified needs in schools
    - Develop with tenants and Housing Authority staff new model(s) to enhance safety in Housing Authority communities
    - Identify other training or police reform initiatives to be investigated or implemented
- Make additional budgetary adjustments this fiscal year from APD's budget if other programs and initiatives are identified and are ready to be piloted and/or fully implemented



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