

Policing In America Looks Different for Different People

3:26

Messages

Thread



Timothy Burke 
@bubbaprog

...

Cops are taking selfies with the terrorists.



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United States Park Police officers push back protesters during a Black Lives Matter demonstration near the White House, June 1, 2020.
Roberto Schmidt / Getty Images

Alameda Police Reforms and Racial Equity Steering Committee Presentation to:

Public Forum #1
Friday, January 22, 2021

Alameda Police Reforms and Racial Equity Committee Members

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Steering Committee Philosophy: Our Approach to This Work

We are committed to the idea of reforming aspects of the way in which policing is done in the City of Alameda, we hope to do so in a collaborative way.

We understand that policing is important to our community and we respect APD's commitment to the safety and security of our community but we believe that the manner of policing can be improved so that all of the people in our community as well as all who visit our community feel safe, secure and respected.

Steering Committee and Subcommittee Members: How We Were Chosen

The Steering Committee members were appointed in late August 2020. In addition to the four of us on the Steering Committee, we have five Subcommittees involving 60 Alameda community members, chosen in September 2020.

To fill those subcommittees, with the city's help we put out a call for volunteers and we received over 250 responses. Some applicants included detailed background/qualification information and some did not. We felt a need to begin this important work as quickly as possible and we made our decisions based on the information we received as well as any information we were able to gather through internet research. It is worth saying that with a few exceptions, our committee is composed of lay people with no experience or expertise in policing. We are all volunteers and we're here because of our love for this community and commitment to positive change.



The Five Sub Committees

- Unbundling Services Currently Delivered by the Police Department
- A Review of Police Department Policies and Practices
- Police Department Accountability and Oversight
- A Review of Laws that Criminalize Survival
- Systemic and Community Racism/Anti-Racism

Committees’ Work Process

The Steering Committee has a standing meeting every Sunday for 1-2 hours depending on the topic. We also will meet one weekday for an hour as needed. Our Subcommittees meet at least weekly and communicate as necessary between their formally scheduled meetings to accomplish their work.

The larger group has been meeting once or twice a month as needed. The Steering Committee meets once-twice a week and on occasion we have invited the Subcommittee chairs to our meetings in order to coordinate and insure that our processes are uniform and that work is not being repeated. We are constantly re-calibrating and refocusing. We also meet with City Staff at least 1-2 a month.

This is a community-led effort. While we have key staff members supporting our efforts, our meetings are community-run by the Steering Committee and Subcommittee chairs.



Early Sub Committee Recommendations

Subcommittees met regularly, humbled by their charge to develop solutions for racially equitable policing in Alameda. Although they met separately for the most part, many of their recommendations converged. **Above all, we know this work is ongoing.**

Racist and anti-Black practices are endemic to policing in the United States and all of its communities. Positive change will be a continuous process. These recommendations move us closer to the changes we would all like to see, but we know they are not enough. We must all remain vigilant in **keeping policing accountable to all those who live, work, play and pray in Alameda.**

Below are not all of but a beginning of a discussion about some of the considerations/recommendations we wanted to explore. We also note that several of these were overlapping recommendations that came from multiple committees.

1. **Create a Police Accountability Department and Citizens' Police Oversight Committee** tasked with jointly holding APD accountable for adherence to good police practices.
- The Task Force should work to ensure that qualitative data on police-civilian interactions is documented and released for public oversight.
 - The City should also conduct further analysis of fines and fee revenue to determine their extent and effects on poor people of color. The City should also consider how these fines and fees can escalate to criminal offenses, further harming affected BIPOC residents.



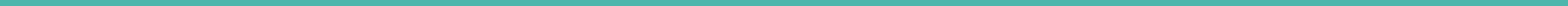
2. **A Police Oversight Board** needs to be written into the City Charter.

- This will provide the longevity, strength, reliability and legally sound effectiveness the community needs.
 - In places where such a board was not written into the charter, in short order it was made largely ineffective by political erosion of rights and powers.
 - If we are to have accountability -- and the members of the subcommittee are in complete agreement that we need accountability -- it must be effective.
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3. **A Policies and Procedures Review Board** could be formed, overseen by both the newly formed **Police Accountability Department**, reporting to the **Citizens’ Police Oversight Committee**.
- Members could be appointed by the Mayor and/or City Council members as well as staff as *ex officio* members (e.g. City Manager, Police Chief, City Attorney or their designees).
 - All efforts should be made to include a cross section of the city taking into consideration race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, and location of residence, business, and/or place of worship. Policies and procedures review board could meet at least quarterly and as needed to review proposed permanent changes and/or additions to APD policies and procedures.
 - This board would advise the City Manager on proposed police policy and procedures and before any such changes are adopted and/or implemented.
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4. We Recommend that APD **Require Mental Health and De-Escalation Training** on an **Annual or Semi-Annual Basis**

- In recent years, police forces have found themselves moved toward militarization by the threat of terrorism and the fear of mass shooting events combined with the ready availability of cheap or free military surplus vehicles. It is increasingly common to see police officers donning olive drab or camouflage uniforms rather than the traditional black or blue. This turn toward militarization has resulted in increased time spent training for violent and sustained confrontation and a corresponding reduction in time spent training on everyday issues such as de-escalation to avoid use of force and interacting with people with mental health issues.
- The training that officers receive should reflect the majority of the type of work that they do. The reality is that the vast majority of APD calls are not violent in nature, but instead reflect mental health, homelessness, and other distress. To the extent that these calls continue to be handled by police officers, rather than by social workers or mental health professionals, police officers must have training to equip them to handle these calls without resorting to the use of force or to arrests.
- Currently, APD officers are mandated to receive fire-arms training on an annual basis. Conversely, officers are only trained in so called "soft skills," such as de-escalation, cultural diversity training and crisis intervention training one time, often at the police academy before actually beginning their careers.^[1]
- We will be recommending that APD conduct de-escalation and crisis intervention training on a at least a semi-annual basis, with the goal of creating a culture of non-violent dispute resolution within APD and ensuring that patrol officers have the skills they need to avoid resorting to the use of force.



5. Add a full-time “*Crime Analyst*” *position* and expand the statistical/data expertise of the Alameda Police Department.

- Report requests for public information in a timely fashion (14 business days).
- Continue to improve data collection and transparency without compromising resident integrity, privacy, and increasing the department's reach in the usage of unnecessary criminological surveillance.



6. **Hire a Police Chief** committed to reform and, in particular, to rooting out bias and use of excessive force in policing, and committed to creating a department characterized in its policies and culture by diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Special attention should be paid to candidates traditionally underrepresented in police chief positions.



7. Advance a **dynamic and robust annual assessment of community needs**, conducted by individuals outside of APD, using service call data, police dispatch and outcome data, surveys of Alameda residents and visitors, and other community outreach modes.

- This taps into recommendations from both Unbundling and/ Community Racism/Anti Racism Sub-Committees.



8. Enhance existing citizen feedback mechanisms to add an **“Anti-racism Reporting/Feedback Tool”** for residents to report instances of prejudice, abuse of power, and racism that they witness.
- Once a report is received, that data shall be provided to city staff for assessment. We recommend amplifying this portal's existence to the community once it's active, via all communication methods the city currently utilizes to communicate with its residents.
 - This data should be assessed annually: conducted by individuals outside of APD, using service call data, police dispatch and outcome data, surveys of Alameda residents and visitors, and other community outreach modes.
 - Once this data is collected from this portal, it shall be assessed and/or addressed, much like the current data from the policing portal but with a larger scope. Any instances of prejudice/racism within our local healthcare providers, landlords, and City Services (Fire/EMT, code enforcement, building inspection) will be documented in this database and shared with the appropriate parties to be assessed accordingly.
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Next Steps

The Steering Committee will give presentations to:

- ~~Civil Service Board, January 6~~
- #1 Public Forum, January 22
- Transportation Commission, January 27
- ACCVF, January 28
- SSHRB, January 28
- "Tuesdays at 2", February 2 or 9 (with Business Associations/Improvement Areas)
- Commission on Persons with Disabilities, February 10

Additional Work:

- Surveys to the community about the subcommittees' draft recommendations, January
- **January 20-February 14:** Public engagement to receive feedback on subcommittee recommendations
- TBD: Present draft recommendations with public feedback to City Council
- **March 2021,** Conclusion of this initial work



Questions

Any additional questions can
always be sent to:

apdreforms@gmail.com

“Not everything that is
faced can be changed, but
nothing can be changed
until it is faced.”

- James Baldwin

