

## Future of Policing Task Force

Report #1

April, 2022

**Background:** The Future of Policing Task Force (FPTF) was established as part of the City of Bloomington's (COB) participation in the Divided Community Project with the Moritz School of Law at The Ohio State University. Following participation with the Divided Community Project Academy, the local DCP team developed a Racial Equity Plan and was asked to address policing perceptions, policies and procedure as a part of the City's commitment to the reduction of racial inequities and continuous improvement of outcomes for all residents. The DCP team issued a call-out for task force participants as well as made targeted requests to City advocacy commissions, civil rights organizations and faith communities. In May 2021, the Future of Policing Task Force was named. Members were asked to make a two-year commitment to the work of the FPTF. Task Force members include:

- Carolyn Calloway-Thomas – Professor, Indiana University African American and African Diaspora Studies; City of Bloomington Human Rights Commission
- Kevin Farris – Ellettsville Town Councilor
- A'ame Joslin – Clinical assistant professor, Indiana University Purdue University Department of Education; City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women
- Treon McClendon – Director of Student Life, Development, and Leadership, Ivy Tech Community College; City of Bloomington Martin Luther King Holiday Commission
- Malik McCluskey – City of Bloomington Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission;
- Amy Makice – Founder, Bloomington Center for Connection
- David Norris – Pastor, City Church for All Nations
- James Sanders – Electronics Engineer, Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center; City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Black Males
- Jim Sims, President – Bloomington City Council
- Garfield Warren – Research Scientist, Indiana University Department of Physics

The following City staff provided administrative support and resources to the task force:

- Beverly Calender-Anderson - Director, COB Community and Family Resources
- Chief Michael Diekhoff - Bloomington Police Department
- Marissa Parr-Scott - Program Specialist, COB Community and Family Resources

**Vision:** The Future of Policing Task Force is comprised of Bloomington/Monroe County residents actively working to develop a vision for policing that is forward thinking, responsive to community needs, inclusive of diverse community voices, equitable in implementation of policies and procedures regardless of race, age, gender, gender identity, economic, health or housing status, and provide appropriate protection for all residents, visitors and law enforcement officers.

## Activities:

- Access: A Google file was set up and shared with task force members that enabled them to access resources, agendas and minutes whenever they wanted or needed.
- Leadership: Carolyn Calloway-Thomas was named chair of the task force and takes primary responsibility for facilitating the meetings. Garfield Warren is the co-chair. Marissa Parr-Scott, Beverly Calender-Anderson and BPD Chief Michael Diekhoff attended each meeting to provide guidance, administrative support and serve as City resources.
- Formed sub-committees and divided the tasks between internal and external activities. The internal sub-committee dealt with issues related to the current policies, procedures and programs of the BPD, while the external group focused on community perception and researching other communities.
- Reviewed community survey – As the task force began their work, several members reviewed the 2021 Bloomington Community Survey. The results of this survey were compiled from the responses from 3,000 randomly selected resident households starting in March 2021, shortly before the task force began meeting. A total of 527 surveys were completed, yielding a response rate of 19%. In addition to the random sample survey, a link to an online open participation survey was publicized by the City through various channels. The open participation survey was identical to the random sample survey and open to all Bloomington residents. A total of 235 open participation surveys were completed. The task force members paid special attention to the areas of the survey results related to public safety concerns.
- Reviewed The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing report; U.S. Justice Department’s Understanding Community Policing; A Qualitative Analysis of Community Policing in the United States; Housing First and Criminality: Effects of Housing First Placement on Participant Arrest Rates and The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) documents.
- Researched Community Policing programs in other communities – Boston, MA Smart Policing Initiative; Little Rock, AR - employing individuals with lived experience to serve in certain "hotspot" communities who are able to take the "pulse" of that community, or even help defuse situations before they get dangerous or violent).
- Viewed PBS *Frontline* episode, “Shots Fired.”
- Participated in police ride-alongs – Task force members were invited to spend a shift riding with Bloomington police officers to observe what “a day in the life” entails. This allowed officers to share their experiences, both negative and positive, with the Task Force. It also provided an opportunity for task force members to ask questions or receive clarity on issues they were curious about. Four members participated in ride-alongs (one member had participated prior to joining the group) and reported their findings back to the larger group.
- Conducted Focus Groups – In order to understand how Bloomington residents perceive and experience BPD, the task force conducted focus groups. Specific agencies were identified and asked to publicize focus groups to their clients/guests. Among these were Middle Way House, The Bloomington

Chamber of Commerce, Beacon, Inc, City commissions on the Status of Black Males, Hispanic and Latino Affairs, the Status of Women, the Monroe County Branch NAACP, and the Bloomington Homeless Coalition. In addition, the task force is currently planning to conduct a community-wide Zoom-based focus group for community members who may not have been reached by any of the others, as well as a session for BPD officers and staff.

- Met with BPD social workers – BPD social workers attended a meeting to explain their role with BPD, how they provide support in situations when a sworn officer's presence may not be needed and to clarify questions or concerns task force members may have had about their role or what their role might become.
- Review of BPD training resources – Task force members are especially concerned about de-escalation, cultural competency, and intercultural/intercultural communication training received by the members of BPD. They have asked to review some of the training materials.
- Presentation on less lethal responses/Tasers – There have been several discussions about Tasers and less lethal forms of response. The task force feels additional research is needed and will be discussing this further in the future.

### **Challenges:**

- In the formation of the task force, both Monroe County Government, Monroe County Sheriff's Department and the IU Police Department were invited to be a part of this process. The hope was that participation by these entities would help facilitate consistent communications and law enforcement practices across all jurisdictions. This collaborative approach would help the task force, and by extension the community, understand the challenges of working with three independent agencies in one community. Monroe County Government and the Monroe County Sheriff's Department declined participation. The Sheriff's Department offered access to resources as we might need them. The IU Police Department is currently undergoing a system-wide assessment and preferred not to participate in the City's initiative.
- Although the Task Force has met since June 3, 2021, there has seldom been full attendance. This may be a result of the day and/or time of the meetings or the busyness of the team members. Team members who have not been in attendance have contributed in facilitating focus groups, providing resources or by reading the minutes and giving input. The task force is considering surveying members to see if the meeting time is an issue, as well as breaking tasks down to sub-groups in order to provide opportunities to contribute outside the regular meeting time. This will work especially well as we coordinate community-wide focus groups and conduct further research.
- Focus group yielded lower numbers than anticipated. Although some were conducted in person, most were done virtually because of the pandemic.

### **Initial Recommendations:**

In January, 2022 the Task Force submitted the following to Mayor Hamilton with the caveat that they had not gathered enough information for a comprehensive list of

recommendations. The recommendations submitted reflected their work done to date. Task Force members anticipate additional recommendations will be submitted as their work moves forward.

1. Increase the salaries of police officers by **X** amount within the next three years.
  - a. **Rationale:** The Bloomington Police Department needs stability for continuity of actions and purposes, with huge benefits accruing to citizens. If the salaries of Bloomington police officers are commensurate with the salaries of officers in comparable cities, it should help reverse the migration of officers from Bloomington to other cities and towns, statewide and nationally.
2. Increase social/personal interactions between officers and the public at large.
  - a. **Rationale:** Holding community events for officers and residents should go a long way towards fostering trust between officers and the public. The public meetings should also help establish social and cultural conditions where officers and diverse citizens can interact cooperatively with one another.
3. Annually, convene a series of public meetings to help gauge citizens' perceptions of the "day to day practices and behavior" of officers.
  - a. **Rationale:** The meetings should foster a spirit of openness and promote a free exchange of ideas between officers and citizens. The forums would also be in keeping with the Task Force's mission, which is "to develop a vision for policing that is forward thinking, responsive to community needs, inclusive of diverse community voices equitable in implementation of policies and procedures regardless of race, age, gender, gender identity, economic, health or housing status, and provide appropriate protection for all residents, visitors and law enforcement personnel."
4. Find new and robust channels and means of publicizing the good that officers do.
  - a. **Rationale:** If we publicize the good that officers do, and how they work in the community to lessen tensions between the police and citizens, the practices should serve as a source of trust-building for the community.
5. Ensure that officers receive training in intercultural/interpersonal communication.
  - a. **Rationale:** All officers should know and understand the importance of using words and actions that bind people together. Such practices/policies should also address the question: how do words work to foster good, effective policing? Training officers in both verbal and nonverbal communication —and also in matters of vocal tone, the impact of saying things paralinguistically (quality, pitch, emphasis, loudness, etc.).

6. Assure that BPD has the proper number of officers on the force. Hire up to par with officers we need.
7. Invest in an app to monitor the health of officers, which will also allow them to be able to receive needed assistance or to reach out without fear of stigma or have it count against them on their record. Establish some type of health check for officer's mental, emotional, physical well-being. A local faith community has indicated they would be willing to contribute to the cost of the app or a similar product.
8. Sustain required diversity training annually – understand the diverse types of backgrounds, personalities and health issues officers may be dealing with and include a component of interpersonal, intercultural, empathetic dynamics.
9. Police social workers – coordinate with Stride Center, Community Care specialists and Centerstone staff. Provide enough human and infrastructure resources to coordinate with the three new agencies. This is in reference to the new outreach workers coming on board from Bloomington Healthnet, Centerstone and the Bloomington Fire Department.

**Observation/Questions:**

1. Can the Task Force review the current diversity/inclusion training module?
2. Have the Bloomington Police Department provide the task force with a breakdown of training and hours - especially diversity training modules, but would like to see all training.
3. How can the legislature be influenced to support an additional law enforcement academy (either temporary or permanent)?
4. Are there activities that can be safely, legally, and appropriately passed from a sworn officer to social workers, community service specialists, or other non-sworn personnel?

**Moving Ahead/Additional Recommendations (as of 3/24/2022)**

- Further explore community policing – Realizing that some of the stated benefits of Community Policing include closer alliances between the police and the community; reducing community fear of crime; improving community-police relations and the facilitation of a more effective response to community problems. Community policing is not without its challenges. The task force will explore multiple community policing models and initiatives to see how they might be adapted or utilized in Bloomington. One of the benefits of community policing is the adaptability to the culture of a given community. It is not one size fits all, however, it will be beneficial to know what has worked or not worked in other communities similar in size, scope and culture to Bloomington, Indiana.
- Increase salary for officers: It should be noted that as of this date the City and the Fraternal Order of Police have reached a contingent agreement which includes a 2023 salary increases of more than 13% for officers first class and more than 12.5% for senior police officers; a 60% increase to members' annual

longevity benefits, and have agreed to double officers' longevity pay in their 20th year, from \$2,500 to \$5,000 annually.

- Monitor mental health of officers – A meeting is planned with Lexipol, the providers of an application designed to monitor police officers' stress factors and stress levels. Decision-fatigue happens when officers are under undue stress, whether related to the job or not. This application helps identify officers who may be experiencing higher than normal stress levels and guides officers to resources to help reduce that stress. The use of this program will allow officers and their families to monitor their stress levels in real time and seek support sooner. This is one of several programs of this type which is being evaluated.
- Explore possibilities to have agencies outside of the police department with the ability to respond to mental and physical health emergencies. Research other community programs of this type to determine what might be applicable to Bloomington/Monroe County.
- Bring total number of sworn officers to a total of 105.

In future meetings, the task force will delve deeper into the following topics:

- Revisit findings from research from other cities and further explore community policing.
- Create an opportunity to shadow Dispatch because of their role in routing calls to the appropriate responder.
- Hold larger discussion on non-lethal responses (Tasers, specifically).
- Address the use of force data (how stats are reported by different agencies – how do you get a true picture).
- Examine ways to increase collaboration and communication across agencies (BPD, IUPD, MoCo Sheriff).
- Explore incentives to hire and maintain officers.

### **Conclusion:**

This report represents the preliminary work of the Future of Policing Task Force. There is much left to be done. Task force members are looking forward to continuing this work by not only exploring what is or is not working in other communities, but also examining the experiences of Bloomington's residents with law enforcement agencies. These findings will be evaluated and documented in future reports. Each task force member appreciates the opportunity to serve the residents of Bloomington in this way.