BERKELEY

REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NICJR, along with Bright Research Group (BRG), Pastor Michael Smith and with significant input from the Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce, developed a multi-pronged community engagement strategy designed to engage as many Berkeley residents from diverse populations as possible as well as elevate the voices of those most impacted by police contact.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:
OVERVIEW

Survey
- Report submitted by BRG July 6, 2021
- Raw data submitted by BRG Sept. 3, 2021

Listening Sessions:
- 15 listening sessions were conducted

Community Listening Sessions:
- 3 virtual listening sessions were conducted

Website:
- Dedicated website for the Reimagining Public Safety work in Berkeley

Newsletters:
- Submitted for distribution through City networks

SURVEY

Number of respondents: 2,729

Three zip codes (94702, 94705, 94707) overrepresented

Survey respondents skewed older
- 70% over age 45
- 40% over 60

SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

- Respondents expressed a range of Perspectives regarding the safety of Berkeley, with a plurality selecting "Somewhat safe"

- Respondents who indicated they are white were more likely to perceive Berkeley as safe and very safe.

- Respondents who are Black or Other Nonwhite were significantly more likely to perceive Berkeley as unsafe and very unsafe.

- Most important public safety concerns:
  - homelessness
  - sexual assault

- Lowest priorities in public safety:
  - substance use
  - drug sales
  - police violence

SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

- 80.8% indicated a **preference for trained mental health providers** to respond to calls related to mental health and substance use, with most among those respondents indicating that police support should be available when needed.

- 19% indicated a **preference for a police response**, with over two-thirds of those respondents indicating that mental health providers should be available for support.

- 83.6% indicated a **preference for homeless services providers** to respond to calls related to homelessness, with most among those respondents indicating that police support should be available when needed.

- 15.7% indicated a **preference for a police response**, with the majority of those respondents indicating that homeless services providers should be available for support.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

LISTENING SESSION SUMMARY - BRIGHT RESEARCH GROUP

Targeted communities identified by the City of Berkeley and BRG

- Black
- LatinX
- Formerly incarcerated
- low-income individuals struggling with food and/or housing insecurity

Focus Group Description	Number of Participants
Black residents	18
Housing- / food-insecure residents	27
Black and LatinX youth	4
Justice system impacted students	6
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	**55**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

LISTENING SESSION SUMMARY - NICJR

Focus Group Description	Number of Participants
BPD Command Staff	15
BPD Line Staff Session 1	12
BPD Line Staff Session 2	12
Downtown Berkeley Merchant's Association	13
Total Number of Participants:	**52**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

LISTENING SESSION SUMMARY - LED BY TASK FORCE COMMISSIONERS

Additional Listening sessions were conducted based on the needs identified by Task Force Commissioners:

Communities of Focus:
- Those who have experienced Mental Health Crises
- LGBTQ+
- LatinX
- Gender-Equity and Violence

Listening Session	Number of Participants
Those who have experienced Mental Health Crises	12
LGBTQ+ MH Service Providers	6
LatinX- 2 listening sessions	Information pending
Gender Equity and Violence - 2 listening sessions	8 organizations represented
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	**26 Known attendees**

SUMMARY OF LISTENING SESSION THEMES

Safety:

- Many areas of Berkeley are relatively safe, however:
  - Neighborhoods below Martin Luther King Boulevard are unsafe
  - The hills and neighborhoods above Martin Luther King Boulevard are safe

- Business districts are increasingly less safe

- Young people of color are concerned about their personal safety and being victims of robberies, shootings, and police violence.

"It does not feel safe especially during the later hours of the day."

SUMMARY OF LISTENING SESSION THEMES

Community investments:

- Increase Mental Health Dept. visibility, capacity and leverage to provide services for people in crisis beyond when there is a direct and immediate threat of harm.

- Building an infrastructure to support a higher quality of life for homeless and low-income residents.

- Increase sustainable capacity for community-based organizations and those with lived experience to provide the magnitude of services needed in their respective communities.

- Account for intersectionality and the role of race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, class and other factors that can impact the scope and nature of crisis response for diverse people living with mental health challenges.

- Concern that racism and inequity are broader issue than BPD and need for true commitment to an antiracist approach to program design and implementation, as well as an authentic process to co-create these programs.

SUMMARY OF LISTENING SESSION THEMES

Opportunities for Community-Centered Public Safety:

- Increased police training—including de-escalation, trauma-informed response, and racial-bias curriculum

- Increase community policing: Bike detail, Ambassador program

- Invest in trained peacekeepers and community safety patrols focused on crime prevention and intervention strategies

- Hiring social workers, mental health clinicians, and traffic-enforcement staff who live in and reflect the communities they serve, will be essential to ensuring equitable interactions between residents and any new programs or city departments

SUMMARY OF BPD LISTENING SESSION THEMES

Trained mental health providers/responders respond to disturbance incidents, like someone screaming outside of a business, but is not harming or threatening anyone:

- We need to fix the system for when we do pick someone up on a mental health hold (5150), they are right back out on the street the next day

- Mobile Crisis Team workers are huge resource but won't work without PD

- Redesigning the Communications/Dispatch center to change how calls are dispatched will be very difficult and time consuming and require new and additional staff.

- Reimagining is not about law enforcement – we deal with the same people over and over and there is nothing on the back end to solve the problem (mental health services, frequent flyers, etc)

SUMMARY OF BPD LISTENING SESSION THEMES

Biggest crime problem in Berkeley:

- Property Crime

- Quality of life crime; elected leaders say we should stop responding to these but the public is calling

- People in doorways of businesses; littering; defecating in street; loitering; disturbances to businesses (mental health/addiction)

- PD set up to fail with hypocrisy; public doesn't want PD involved but behind closed doors we are called to fix these problems

Need for improvement in BPD?:

- More officers and more training

- Improve the communication of the good work we do and how it results in lower crime rates in Berkeley.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:
COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Four Community Meetings Planned:

Virtual:
- Districts 1,2
- Districts 3,4
- Districts 5,6,7,8

In-person meeting canceled

What are the most pressing public safety issues impacting you and your community?

What are the most important investments in the community that would support increased public safety?

anti-racism training

calming centers

police academy

more police staffing

healthcare

poverty

more police

health care

homelessness

education of citizens

police training

mental health

more police staff

housing

affordable housing

clean streets

sworn traffic officers

youth programs

mental health support

community policing

Please share feedback on the presentation you just heard

Glad to see Advance Peace has been added to list of recommendations

please don't reinvest further in police reform (such as the new police academy or new QAT bureau)

council members have been for years talking about spending money for a cease fire program and it never happens. looking at our history and why there isn't better community engagement is important.

didn't hear mention of the gangs which have been in the city for a long time

Safety for all - without displacing is complicated and not a concept we actually understand well. A lot of it has to do with actually educating everyone. Berkeley schools hopefully will be engaged in this process and held

While the study is very interesting and great - it takes a lot of effort and openess to change the status quo. How can we build that willingness amongst community members.

we need buy in of city staff for any of the recommendations to work. our elected officials often make policies that staff often doesn't know how to implement and doesn't buy into. I didn't see suggestions for staff

I agree we already have social programs for youth - Under-funding limits their impact.

many of the "recommendations" from NICJR are things already in place/in progress in Berkeley - not sure how helpful they are (e.g., EIS, ending pretext stops)

Very helpful presentation. I see a level of humility that is appropriate in any ground-breaking proposal like this. But we are also being appropriately ambitious due to the challenges we face in revisioning public

Question. Is it possible to train responders into compassion? Compassion would have saved the life of the man who died this weekend just outside the police station.

Training of CERN and who could fill those roles is not well researched/explained

In addition to history of policing, it would have been helpful for report to describe how policing fails to actually prevent most crime and how police "reform" efforts are mostly unsuccessful

concern about nonsworn officers handling DV and traffic stops. also concerned that police are needed to secure situations before mental health and others respond

concerned that some alternatives like CAHOOTS have low percentage effectiveness. again, as i stated, 30-40% of crime in berkeley is committed by out of city offenders.

An A/B pilot test seems reasonable. The other two seem like massive overkill in time, money, and effort in a town where there are mental health services, police review, etc.

Planting trees and neighborhood clean up matters. I've seen research showing that it has a substantial impact on property crime and violence.

Having appropriate non-police response to behavior problems will be a great improvement

Very little here to actually "reimagine" and provide solutions to the underlying root causes of crime (e.g., lack of housing, health care, jobs)

Lighting is a big issue in the city - it makes streets / parks and public spaces safer

What additional ideas or recommendations do you have for the City to consider in the Reimagining Public Safety process?

we already have social programs for youth

How do the CBOs access the money which supposedly exists for more interaction with the community?

the guaranteed income is really not okay when so many community members are struggling to pay taxes here, which are about the highest in the area

City needs to invest substantially in BerkDOT and self-enforcing streets

I am glad to hear positive mention of the Fair and Impartial Policing plan proposed by the mayor's working group and adopted by the city council. However, the specifics of the program are vital for the "Improve"

Are black community members in favor of these changes? elsewhere that has not been the case, I believe

reflect reality of policing in Berkeley by including officers in your discussions. So far it all seems disrespectful to the folks who make life in Berkeley possible.

Significant need for job training and opportunities for youth starting early (e.g., middle school)

agree with writer about lack of mention of gang in Berkeley

City already has many many programs. Are they working? How will new ones help?

Should also think about traffic safety in terms of passive devices: red light camera; speeding cameras; speed bumps.

Having lived many places, BPD seems like a good police department if under-staffed.

CONCLUSION

The City of Berkeley and the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force are well-positioned to use their power and positionality to develop a community safety model that reflects the needs of the community, reduces inequities and disparities, and creates increased safety for all. These reports summarize the key findings from the community engagement strategies conducted in the spring and summer of 2021 and represents an important step in building understanding of community strengths, needs, and public safety priorities.