

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

BERKELEY REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY



NICJR, Bright Research Group (BRG), with significant support and 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.



- The process included: •

- Broadly distributed survey
- Listening sessions designed to engage marginalized, hard to reach, or communities with high rates of police contact

With guidance from the City Manager's Office, BRG focused on four populations for listening sessions:

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STILL TO COME:

- Gender-Equity and Violence
- Additional interviews with Pacific Center staff and/or participants
- District specific Town Halls

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: DATA UTILIZATION

**Informed the Alternative
Response Report**



**Inform the
recommendations
in the Final Report**



**Serve as a foundation for
continued/sustainable City of
Berkeley Community Engagement
efforts**



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: SURVEY RESPONDENTS OVERVIEW

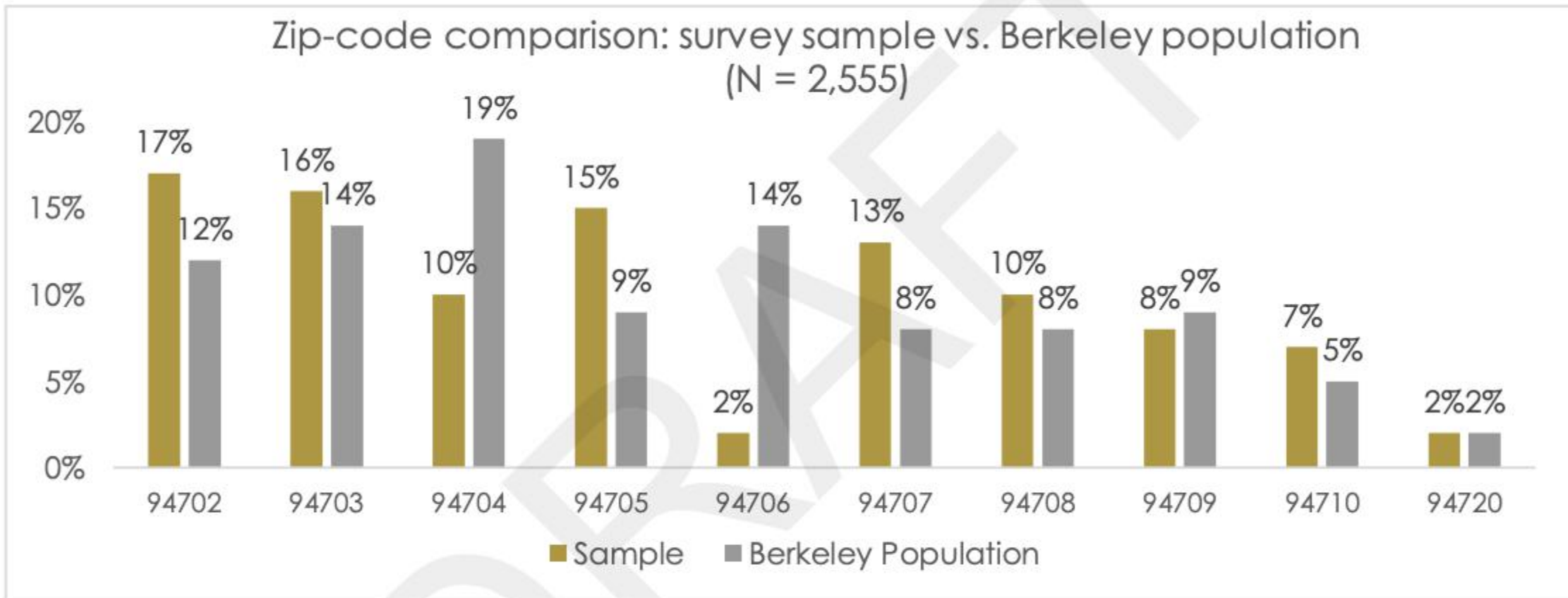
- City of Berkeley Reimagining Public Safety Survey
- Open from May 18, 2021 – June 15, 2021
- Number of respondents: 2,729
- Three zip codes (94702, 94705, 94707) overrepresented
- Survey respondents skewed older
 - 70% over age 45
 - 40% over 60

SURVEY RESPONSES BY AGE AND RACE AND ETHNICITY

Age Range (N = 2,674)	Percent
Under 14 years (1)	0.04%
14–17 (3)	0.1%
18–29 (182)	6.8%
30–44 (21)	23.2%
45–59 (788)	29.5%
60+ years (1,079)	40.4%

Race and ethnicity	Number	% of Total
White	1787	65.5%
Black or African American	137	5.0%
Latin	126	4.6%
East Asian	168	6.2%
South East Asian	53	1.9%
South Asian	47	1.7%
Middle Eastern / North African	42	1.5%
American Indian / Native American / Alaskan Native	33	1.2%
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	22	0.8%
Other	113	4.1%
Prefer not to say	409	15.0%

SURVEY RESPONSES BY ZIP CODE



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

- Priorities for Community Health and Safety Investment:
 - Mental health services
 - Homeless services programs
 - Violence prevention programs
- Nearly half of the respondents reported experiencing street harassment
- 41% reported being the victim of a crime

SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

- Approximately **30%** of the respondents indicated having been a crime victim in the City of Berkeley during the past three years.
- Respondents who are Black and who declined to disclose race and ethnicity were the most likely to indicate that they have been the victim of a crime in Berkeley during the past three years.
- **54%** indicated that they have had contact with the Berkeley Police Department (BPD) during the past three years.
- **38%** perceived the Berkeley Police Department to be somewhat effective
- **55.3%** perceived the BPD to be effective or very effective.
- **6.7%** indicated that the BPD is not effective at all.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

- A little over half of the respondents trust the BPD to usually treat people fairly and equitably
 - **26%** demonstrating low confidence in the police on this measure.
- Among the respondents who indicated that they've had contact with the BPD and chose to report on the quality of those experiences, three out of four (**74.8%**) indicated that the experience was positive or very positive.
- **86%** are far more likely to call 911 in response to an emergency situation *not* involving mental health or substance use
- **57.9%** indicated that they are likely or very likely to call 911 in response to a mental health or substance-use-related crisis.

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

12 listening sessions
have been held between
May 6, 2021 and July 16, 2021.

Bright Research Group, NICJR
and Task Force members
organized and facilitated
listening sessions.

Agency / Commissioner	Sessions Hosted
NICJR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BPD Command Staff• BPD Line Staff (x2)• Merchant's Association
BRG	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Black residents• Housing/food insecure residents• Black and LatinX youth• Justice system impacted youth
Commissioner Fine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBTQ/Trans community• Residents experiencing mental health challenges
Commissioner Malvido	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LatinX community• LatinX youth

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 - NICJR AND TASK FORCE

Additional Listening sessions were conducted based on the needs expressed by Task Force members:

Communities of Focus:

- Those Experiencing Mental Health Crises
- LGBTQ+
- LatinX
- Gender-Equity and Violence

Four listening sessions have been conducted to date:

Listening Session	Number of Participants
Those experiencing Mental Health Crises	12
LGBTQ+	Several organizations and agencies were contacted, no participants showed up. Commissioner Fine is coordinating with the Pacific Center for additional engagement opportunities.
LatinX	Data pending
Total Number of Participants	To Date 12 with additional summary data to come

SUMMARY OF LISTENING SESSION THEMES

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

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.

SUMMARY OF LISTENING SESSION THEMES:

Lens on BPD contact:

- Merchants identified positive interactions with BPD:
 - Bike detail
 - Ambassador program
- Many focus group participants do not view the BPD as a community resource and instead rely on themselves and their communities for safety.
- Those who have experienced mental health challenges feel police officers are not trained to appropriately connect with and help someone in crisis.

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.

“We need to focus on Berkeley Mental Health as an institution and get them more deeply involved with the police department and the community.”

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

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.