



City of Racine

# Police Reform Report

November 2020



# Table of Contents

Contributors	2
Letter from the Mayor	3
Letter from the Police Chief	5
Letter from Payne & Frazier	6
Executive Summary	7
Reimagining Policing Pledge & By the Numbers	8
Racine Police Department (RPD) at a Glance	9
COP House Neighborhood Impact	11
REVIEW: Task Force Members	12
Overview of Task Force Recommendations	13
RPD Adoption of #8CantWait	14
Task Force Recommendations	15
ENGAGE: Key Questions	20
Participant Demographics	21
Perspectives on Policing	22
Areas of Excellence	
Community Oriented Policing (COP)	24
Areas for Improvement	
Transparency & Accountability	25
Training & Hiring	26
Other Areas for Improvement	27
Understanding Police Killings	28
Future Hopes & Top Priorities for RPD	29
Next Steps	30



## Contributors

**Partner:** City of Racine Police Reform Task Force

**Partner:** Payne & Frazier Consultants, LLC

**Data Analysis & Report Design:** Santiago Global Consulting, LLC

# Letter from Racine Mayor Cory Mason

Dear Racine Community,

Thank you for your interest in this report summarizing the City of Racine's initial Police Reform efforts. This report is the culmination of a months-long effort to engage Racine residents in these important conversations.

In June 2020, I announced a series of immediate actions on police reforms after George Floyd was murdered at the hands of police in Minneapolis. His murder rang out like a clarion call across the country, a story and experience that has become too frequent and familiar in communities across America.

In the wake of George Floyd's murder, Former President Obama challenged Mayors across the country to review their police use of force policies and report back with recommendations in 90-days. He called on us as Mayors to engage our residents in these conversations about policing and drive reform efforts forward with a sense of urgency and resolve. I accepted his challenge and took immediate actions, including creating the Mayor's Task Force on Police Reform.

I directed the Task Force to review the Racine Police Department's use of force policies and decide if and how the City should implement community oversight. I gave the Task Force a very short 90-day timeline to do this hard work and provide recommendations. The Task Force took this responsibility seriously and worked diligently, reviewing hundreds of pages of existing RPD policies. They explored and learned from other cities. They centered the experiences and realities of Racine's residents, and I am grateful for their time and effort. This report includes their detailed recommendations.

Additionally, we engaged community residents, inviting them to share their experiences with Racine policing and visions for the future. These engagements generated extensive data that is synthesized in this report. The murder of George Floyd, and the other similar deaths, have shaken trust and confidence in policing everywhere in America. It is in this context that we began this conversation and issue this report.

This conversation also takes place in the context of an excellent and effective police force here in the City of Racine. Serious crime is at historical lows. We have accomplished this with a police force that has implemented many progressive steps that departments across the state and country are now hoping they can do to improve and reform policing.

We have led the country in community oriented policing for decades, we have body cameras on all officers, have trained our officers in crisis intervention and de-escalation, and we have psychological services available to officers to deal with trauma they may encounter while performing their duties.

Some have asked, "Why, if we have had all of these progressive policing efforts in place, do we even need to consider police reforms in Racine? Why are these conversations and these reform efforts necessary in Racine?" These are important questions and this Task Force process has led me to several answers:

The first answer is that we must restore people's trust and confidence in local policing. If that wanes, it could erode decades of community oriented policing work. After George Floyd's murder, I heard the cries of anguish from so many residents who do not and have not had positive or trust-enhancing experiences with RPD. We should only be satisfied with our efforts when all Racine residents share the same level of trust and confidence in our local police efforts.

The second answer is that, like America itself, the work of building a just and fair society never ends. Every generation is called on to make their community "more perfect" than the one before. While we have an excellent police department, it is not perfect. Improvements can and should be made.

The third answer is that, while our policies might be progressive or based on best-practices in community oriented policing, if our residents do not know that, cannot access both our policies and our data readily, those policies are of limited effectiveness and success.

Fourth, these are community conversations and reform efforts that we need to have. For so many, the state of race and policing in America is deeply exhausting and reflects decades-long realities that are painful and frustrating. What would it say about us as a community if we were not willing to have this conversation?





How would that live up to the notion of what Dr. King called the beloved community if we simply insisted that these problems are not a problem in Racine, and we turned our attention and our focus away from that deeply felt and long-rooted anguish and frustration felt by so many of our neighbors? This conversation and the accompanying reforms are important to give voice and structure to those realities, to clarify and improve policing practices locally, and even to allow for some healing within our community.

The last answer to the question of whether this police reform is necessary in Racine is because, quite simply, in the midst of the Task Force's work and our community engagement efforts, Jacob Blake was shot by police officers less than 15 miles away in Kenosha. It was a stark reminder of the importance of this work; a foreboding feeling that these events can happen anywhere, and that "there but for the Grace of God, go I."

**Justice demands that we as community residents are kept safe from the actions of some who would do harm to others. Justice also demands that there is equal protection under the law, so that conduct, not race, is the determining factor of our enforcement.** These cannot be mutually exclusive concepts. As long as there is avarice and ill will in the human condition, we will need public safety and law enforcement. As long as the experiences of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Jacob Blake, and so many more continue to shape policing in America, we will have to be vigilant to ensure that regardless of race, people are treated fairly by our police force.

**Justice demands that we keep people safe.** I have been thinking about two people in particular as we've done this work with the Task Force and engaging community residents: John Hetland and Tyrese West. Racine Police Officer Hetland was murdered while trying to stop an armed robbery at a Racine bar. Tyrese West was a young man, a Racine resident, killed at the hands of a Mt. Pleasant police officer over an incident that began with Tyrese West not having a bicycle light. Everyone should get to go home safely at the end of the night, whether that is a police officer who wears a shield to protect and serve, or the teenager riding home on a bicycle. Both of them should still be with us today. Both families deserve our compassion and commitment to ensuring events like this do not recur.

These recommendations made by the Mayor's Task Force on Police Reform, coupled with the feedback we received from residents, form the basis for the reform actions the City of Racine will take in the coming months. These steps we are taking today and in the immediate future are the beginning of a transformation. As City leaders and as a police department we must take a hard look in the mirror to examine who we are and what we want to be.

In June when we launched these efforts, I stated that I needed and wanted the community to drive this conversation. To lead on these issues, I needed to listen and learn first, before acting.

I joined every one of the virtual community conversations as a listener, and greatly appreciated residents' willingness to share their experiences so candidly and openly. The experiences residents shared are summarized in this report. That feedback certainly indicates that many residents have in fact had good experiences with RPD. But for too many others, particularly our residents of color, it is clear that we have work to do to improve transparency, accountability, and confidence in our local police efforts.

I am deeply grateful to the people who made this project a reality and a success. I extend my deep thanks to these Task Force members for their thoughtful service and contributions: Yolanda Blair, Carl Fields, Danielle Johnson, County Board Supervisor Fabi Maldonado, State Representative Greta Neubauer, Pastor Ernest Ni'A, Wally Rendon, and Chuck Tyler. I'd also like to express my appreciation to Racine Police Department Lieutenant Jessie Metoyer who served as the liaison between the Task Force and the Police Department and who was instrumental in answering the Task Force's many questions. The work of Kimberly Payne and Dr. Arletta Frazier to facilitate this process in the midst of a pandemic was critical to its success; their partnership and expertise was invaluable. Vicky Selkove in my office, along with Chief Howell and Lt. Metoyer, provided much needed information and assistance to support the Task Force and Payne & Frazier's work.

**This report and its recommendations are the first steps in changes that can and will be made to improve policing in Racine and build a stronger, more united City. To all the residents who took time to provide input and share their experiences: you were heard. We will not forget what you've shared and what you have experienced. It is in the spirit of community oriented policing that we have had this dialogue to make changes to improve the safety of our community and enhance the trust and confidence in our police department. The work of the Task Force and all residents who engaged in this conversation this summer have set us on a course to help keep all of us safe, and to ensure a just and fair community.**



*Cory Mason*

**Cory Mason**  
City of Racine Mayor

# Letter from Racine Police Chief Art Howell

On Memorial Day 2020, the events that unfolded in Minneapolis placed a focused and sustained spotlight on policing in America. The tragic death of Mr. George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement officers in Minnesota shocked the conscience of the nation, setting off a social movement that will test police-community relations for years to come. While this pivotal moment in our nation's history occurred hundreds of miles away, outside of the physical boundaries of our jurisdiction, the impact of this tragedy reverberated locally in a profound and personal manner on the streets of our community.

Within hours of the tragic events occurring in Minneapolis, protestors from outside of our jurisdiction led an arson attack against a local COP House named for a beloved member of our community, the late Dr. Thelma Orr. During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Dr. Thelma Orr led several marches in the fight for equality and social justice. As a disciple of Dr. King's non-violent movement for social change, Dr. Thelma Orr, a woman of small stature, used the most powerful tool at her disposal, her voice. The spontaneous attack against the respected community resource that bears her name was intended to further fracture and diminish local police-community relations; however, the ill-advised attack had the opposite effect.

After years of cultivating relationships and building trust at the neighborhood level under the community policing philosophy, local residents came to view local COP Houses as trusted and respected community resources. From homework assistance programming for students who had no access to broadband Internet services, to summer nutrition programming for local children who lived with food insecurity, the Dr. Thelma Orr COP House represented a national best practice for cultivating positive police-community relations, building stronger more resilient communities.

While successfully practicing the principles of Dr. Herman Goldstein's problem-oriented community policing philosophy during the past 28 years, local officers were not exempt from the criticism of the broader profession in the aftermath of the tragic events occurring in Minneapolis. Public outrage led to calls to defund, and in some cases, dismantle police agencies. The best way forward will require the continuation of the transformational policing strategies implemented during the past 28 years under the COP philosophy.

On June 17, 2019, our community experienced the pain of losing a member of the Racine Police Department, Officer John Hetland, killed in the line of duty.

As many officers accept risk as a requirement of the job, Officer Hetland placed himself in harm's way to protect the lives of others, something peace officers do as a part of their daily routine. Through the spirit of servanthood and servant leadership, police work remains a noble discipline that is more of a calling than a traditional job. Officer Hetland personified this calling, and his service and sacrifice cannot be overstated.

In the U.S., over 24,000 officers have made the ultimate sacrifice in giving their lives in the line of duty in service to others. The motivation to serve as law enforcement officers is intrinsic in nature, as no fiscal compensation is commensurate with the inherent risks associated with this occupation. While there are those within the profession who have not risen to the high standard of excellence and accountability expected and deserved by the citizens we serve, we must guard against tarnishing the honorable service of the broader majority of officers who serve with bravery, integrity and honor.

As documented in the recently released COP House Playbook, the City of Racine has led the nation in developing best practices to reduce crime and improve the quality of life for area residents. From the infusion of community policing strategies in the 18th and Mead Street and W. 6th Street communities in the 1990s, to the more recent transformation of Anthony Lane neighborhood (formerly known as Jacato Drive), collectively, members of RPD have earned the distinction of becoming trusted community partners.

While additional work remains ahead, the strong foundation of police-community relationships established to date is promising. With sustained community input and engagement, and the organizational commitment of law enforcement officials to improve and evolve, our community is well-positioned to survive and thrive in the current policing environment. As we reimagine and re-envision the future of policing locally, we do so in the spirit of Dr. Thelma Orr, Officer Hetland, and others who served our community with honor and integrity, leaving a legacy worthy of replication by future generations.



**Art Howell**

City of Racine Police Chief

# Letter from Payne & Frazier

Thank you, Mayor Mason, and our community, for entrusting us with the critically important work of facilitating our City's efforts to reimagine policing. We share in your commitment to improving policing in our community and we are honored to be part of the transformative work of ensuring that our community's policing practices promote safety, equity, and the overall well-being of our community.

It was a pleasure working with each of you – members of our community and the Police Reform Task Force – who made it a priority to share input and ideas about the future of policing in the City of Racine. Thank you for your support and willingness to lend your time and voices to this timely work.

This project is one that impacts our community today and will affect future generations of Racinians.

The input you shared through the community conversations, surveys and Task Force meetings equips our city's leadership with the ideas and feedback that are needed to enhance our police department. This project would not have been possible without you!

With your continued support, Racine will serve as a national model of police reform and pave the way for many other communities to strengthen their approach to policing. Again, we are honored to serve our community on this journey.

Sincerely,



*Kimberly J. Payne*

**Kimberly J. Payne**  
Payne & Frazier



*Arletta Frazier*

**Dr. Arletta Frazier**  
Payne & Frazier





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2020, Mayor Cory Mason responded to Former President Obama's "Reimagining Policing Pledge," a national call for mayors, city council officials and police oversight bodies to review and reform police use of force policies, redefine public safety, and address systemic racism within law enforcement.

Mayor Mason began the City of Racine Police Reform Project by convening a 90-day Police Reform Task Force that was charged with reviewing the police department's use of force policies and deciding if and how to create a Citizen Review Board to investigate complaints against the police department. Comprised of eight diverse community members, the Mayor's Police Reform Task Force held six virtual, 3-hour meetings from July to September 2020. The meetings were facilitated by consultants from Payne & Frazier and they were streamed live on Facebook to ensure transparency to the community and create a public record of the work of the Task Force.

To fulfill their charge, the Task Force reviewed and discussed national and local best practices for policing, use of force policies, data, protocols, and community oversight of police departments. The work of the Task Force resulted in 10 recommendations on use of force policies and community oversight of RPD. Topline recommendations include: publicly adopting all #8cantwait policing policies that are based on national best practices, clarifying the role and function of Racine's Police & Fire Commission, and improving data tracking, analysis, and public sharing.

In addition to convening the Police Reform Task Force, Mayor Mason partnered with Payne & Frazier to launch a series of community engagement activities aimed at getting broad and diverse stakeholder input on the future of policing in Racine. Four virtual community conversations for up to 100 participants per session were held and two online stakeholder surveys were offered in English and Spanish.

The community conversations resulted in 500 pages of data from nearly 1500 diverse community members who were 72% City of Racine residents, 59% female, 73% White or Caucasian, 17% Black or African American, 8.7% Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin, 2% Asian or Asian American, 2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and 7% Other Race.

This report includes community input from the community conversations and surveys, organized by recurring themes including perspectives on policing, what RPD does well, Community Oriented Policing, transparency and accountability, training and hiring, other areas for improvement, understanding police killings of unarmed African American men and future hopes.

This report offers a set of recommendations from the Task Force and data from the community to drive immediate and long-term impact in support of community aspirations for improved policing in the City of Racine. It is important to note that this report is comprised of both both numeric data and the voices and stories of community members. Through a combination of numbers, percentages, direct quotes and recurring themes, the input, aspirations, and concerns of the community are brought to life in this report.



## FORMER PRESIDENT OBAMA'S REIMAGINING POLICING PLEDGE



### REVIEW

Review police use of force policies & give recommendations



### ENGAGE

Engage the community to include a diverse range of input, experiences, and stories in the review



### REPORT

Report the findings of the review & community engagement to the community and seek feedback



### REFORM

Reform the use of force policies employed by the Racine Police Department

Sections covered in this report

## BY THE NUMBERS



90

days to make recommendations



500+

pages of data



1242

community stakeholder surveys completed



225

community conversation participants



3

ways to give input



2

stakeholder surveys



4

community conversations (July 6-18, 2020)



## Mission & Vision

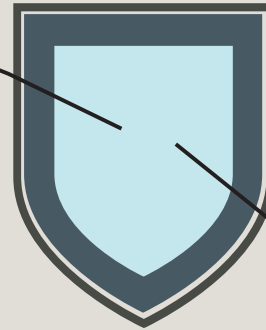
The Racine Police Department (RPD) serves the City of Racine in Southeastern Wisconsin with a population of 77,432 people (2018 Census). RPD's mission is to protect life and property, prevent crime through cultivating problem-solving community partnerships, build trust, and serve with honor, integrity, and compassion. RPD's vision is to provide an environment in Racine that is free from the fear of crime, where people enjoy a high quality of life, and the community can prosper.



calls for police service  
**356,799**

January 1, 2015 to October 22, 2020

23,334 arrests



1,856 use of force incidents

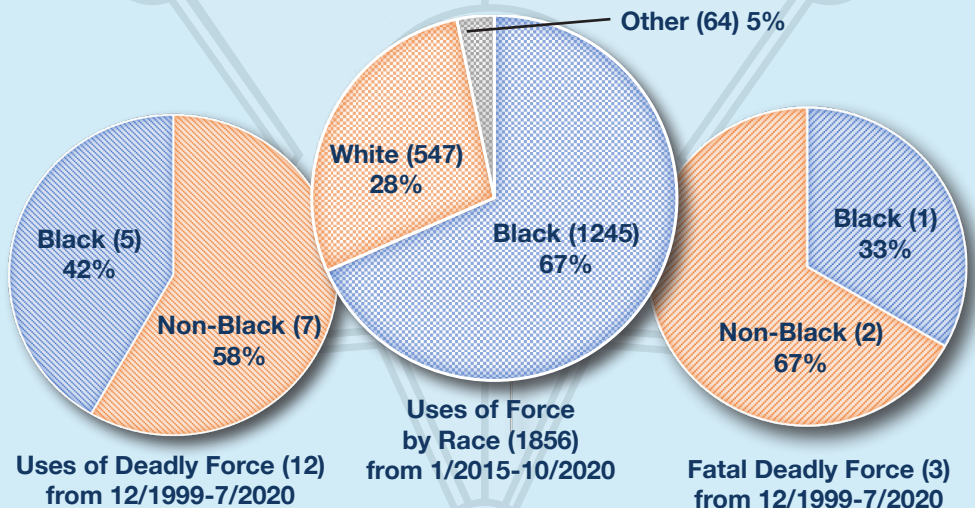
### RPD's Use of Force

RPD's Use of Force policies are bound by the U.S. Constitution, WI State laws, RPD policy, and officer training. The Use of Force continuum is a set of interventions that officers use to de-escalate situations.

Interventions are determined based on using the least amount of force that is necessary to de-escalate the situation while protecting the safety and well-being of those involved. The RPD Use of Force continuum includes the following interventions: canine, chemical agent, electronic control weapon, explosive device, firearm, and the use of hands/fists.

## /// USE OF FORCE ///

**1,856 uses of force**  
from January 2015 to October 2020



# C.O.P

Community Oriented Policing

## Goals

- Building relationships with members of the community
- Improving the quality of life in the neighborhood
- Reducing Crime
- Empowering citizens to take back their neighborhoods

## Programs

COP houses offer more than just a Police Department Outpost, providing a positive and structured environment focused on learning. The police department provides the classroom and a computer lab, while the program provides everything from help with homework to arts and crafts. Volunteers provide their time to the program and the kids.

Some houses even offer specialized programs based on their neighborhoods unique needs.



**82%** White (148)



**9%** Black (16)



**8%** Hispanic (14)



**1%** Other (2)



**14%** Female (26)



**86%** Male (154)

## DEMOGRAPHICS

# training

Police academy training hours increased from 450 hours in 1999 to 720 hours in 2016 with 40 hours of training dedicated to use of force interventions.

Additionally, the State of Wisconsin requires police officers to have a minimum of 60 college credits, attend two weeks of post-academy training, 24 hours of annual training, firearms training four times per year and refresher training as needed.

Training on community engagement, implicit bias and alternative interventions (instead of use of force) is not required by the state, but RPD trains officers in all of these areas.

Racine Police Department. *At a Glance*



# RACINE COP HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT

COP HOUSE	YEAR FUNDED	VIOLENT CRIME (Year Funded)	VIOLENT CRIME 2019	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
WEST 6TH ST	1995	76	8	-89.5%
GENEVA ST & ML KING	1994	80	22	-72.5%
MEAD ST	1996	27	9	-66.7%
DAVIS PL & VILLA ST	1994	86	38	-55.8%
ANTHONY LN	2010	17	11	-35.3%
16TH ST	2010	20	17	-15.0%



1522 W 6TH STREET • RACINE, WI



1140 GENEVA STREET • RACINE, WI



1750 MEAD STREET • RACINE, WI



1146 VILLA STREET • RACINE, WI



2437 ANTHONY STREET • RACINE, WI



1900 16TH STREET • RACINE, WI

# Review

In response to former President Obama's Reimagining Policing Challenge, Mayor Cory Mason convened a 90-Day Police Reform Task Force that was charged with:

- 1 Reviewing the Racine Police Department's use of force policies and making actionable recommendations to the Mayor's Office.
- 2 Deciding if and how they should create a Citizen Review Board to investigate complaints against the police department.



The Task Force was comprised of a diverse group of eight community members who participated in a series of six meetings between July and September 2020 that were facilitated by Payne & Frazier Consultants, LLC and streamed live on Facebook. The meetings resulted in an extensive set of recommendations on police use of force policies and community oversight of RPD.

## POLICE REFORM TASK FORCE MEMBERS

**Yolanda Blair**  
Owner, Yogi's Pud'N

**Fabi Maldonado**  
Racine County Board  
Supervisor

**Rep. Greta Neubauer**  
Wisconsin State  
Representative

**Carl Fields**  
EX-incarcerated People  
Organizing (EXPO) Community  
Organizer for  
Racine/Kenosha Chapter

**Mayor Cory Mason**  
City of Racine Mayor

**Pastor Ernest Ni'A**  
Wayman AME  
Church

**Wally Rendon**  
Community Leader

**Danielle Johnson**  
Secretary, NAACP  
Racine Branch

**Lieutenant Jessie Metoyer**  
RPD Liaison to the  
Task Force

**Chuck Tyler**  
Author, "Youth in the  
Center of My Heart"

# OVERVIEW OF TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS



## USE OF FORCE POLICIES

- 1 Publicly adopt all #8cantwait policies
- 2 Revise the body camera compliance policies
- 3 Update use of force policy language for specificity



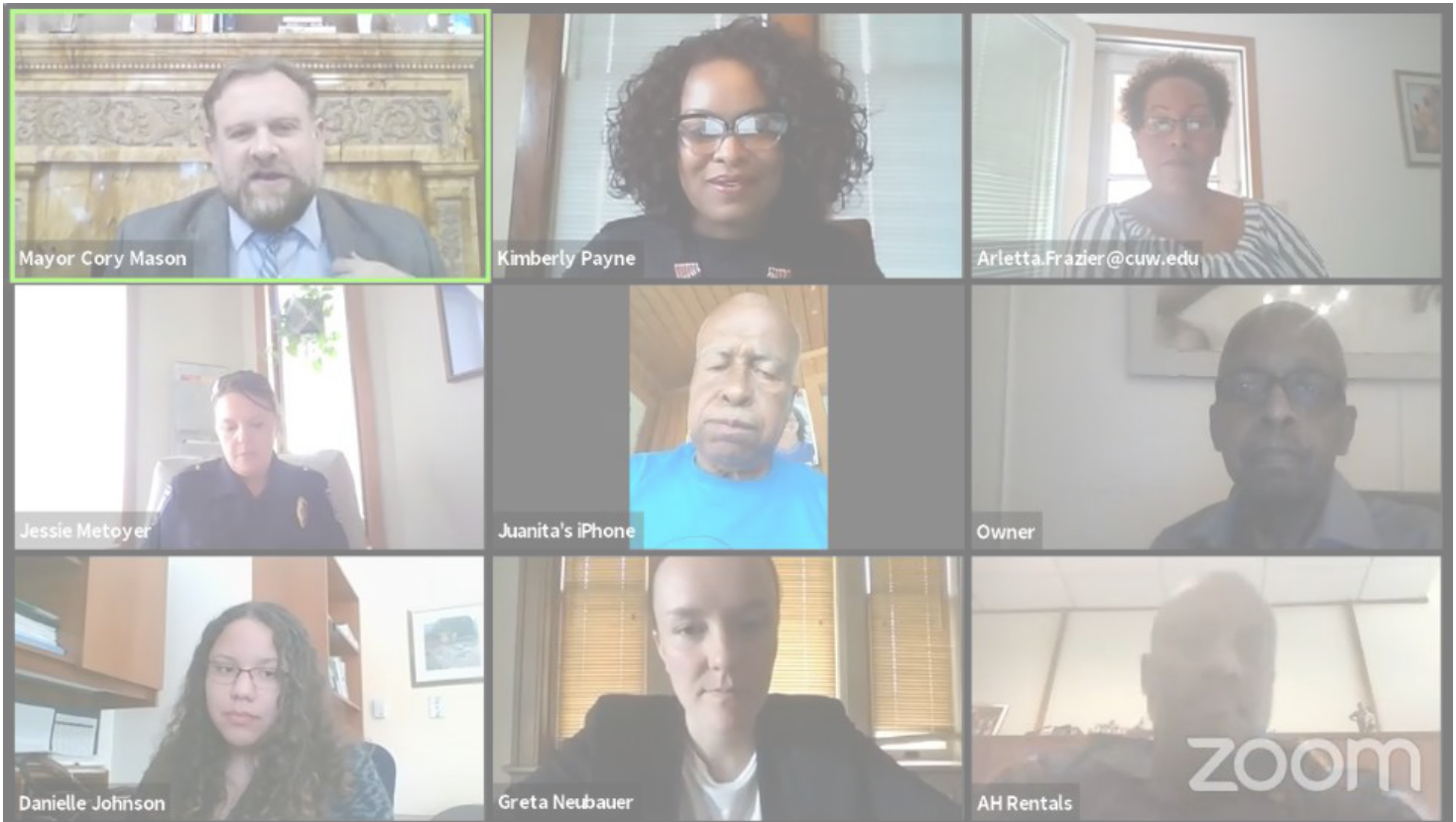
## COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT OF RPD

- 4 Clarify the role and functions of the Police & Fire Commission (PFC)
- 5 Expand the roles and function of the PFC
- 6 Explore the creation of a Community Oversight Board (COB)
- 7 Create easy access locations and means for citizens to file complaints



## BOTH USE OF FORCE & COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT OF RPD

- 8 Improve public relations and community engagement
- 9 Improve data tracking, analysis, and sharing
- 10 Commit to continuous improvement strategies



Screenshot of Police Reform Task Force Meeting











# RPD ADOPTION OF #8CANTWAIT

#8cantwait is a national campaign to bring immediate changes to police departments.

In 2016 Campaign Zero conducted a study of the 100 largest US cities and found 8 types of restrictions in police use of force policies that were associated with lower rates of killings by police.

Research found that having more of these use of force restrictions in place was associated with *significantly fewer police-involved killings* compared to departments with fewer of these policies in place. The study also revealed that police departments with more restrictive use of force policies have better outcomes in terms of officer safety.

#8CANTWAIT USE OF FORCE POLICY	POLICY  RPD has a formal policy that aligns with this #8cantwait Use of Force Policy	PRACTICE  RPD practices this #8cantwait Use of Force Policy, but it is not a formal, written policy
 <b>REQUIRES DE-ESCALATION</b>	✓	✓
 <b>DUTY TO INTERVENE</b>	✓*	✓
 <b>BAN CHOKEHOLDS &amp; STRANGLEHOLDS</b>	✓*	✓
 <b>REQUIRES WARNING BEFORE SHOOTING</b>	✓*	✓
 <b>BANS SHOOTING AT MOVING VEHICLES</b>		
 <b>EXHAUST ALTERNATIVES BEFORE SHOOTING</b>		✓
 <b>USE OF FORCE CONTINUUM</b>		✓
 <b>COMPREHENSIVE FORCE REPORTING</b>	✓	✓

\*RPD has a policy in place that partially meets this #8cantwait Use of Force Policy

# TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

1

## Recommendation

Publicly adopt all #8cantwait policies

### Activities

- Assess which #8cantwait policies RPD already adopted, where the policies are housed and how the policies are currently working in terms of data, outcomes, and impact; address any gaps in #8cantwait and other use of force policies
- Issue a public statement about the policies that are already in place and the adoption of the additional policies
- Revise RPD policies, procedures and data collection and reporting processes to reflect #8cantwait
- Train RPD staff and officers on any newly #8cantwait adopted policies
- Launch a campaign to publicize the adoption of the policies to the community

### Expected Outcomes

- Alignment of RPD with national best practice for reducing police involved deaths of community members
- Public awareness of #8cantwait policies and the potential positive impact in the Racine community
- City of Racine and RPD regarded as a leader in adopting research-based policies and policing strategies

2

## Recommendation

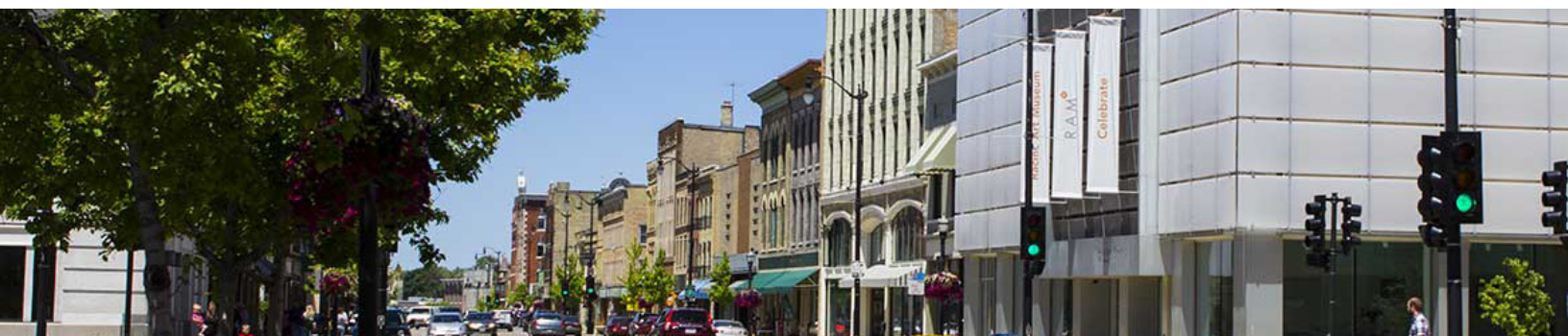
Revise the body camera compliance policies

### Activities

- Assess the current body camera policies including data on body camera compliance, review of body camera videos by RPD and disciplinary actions for non-compliance with the body camera policies
- Identify policy and procedural changes that would improve the percentage of officers complying with wearing and turning on body cameras during arrests and critical incidents
- Explicitly state what the disciplinary actions are when officers turn off their body cameras
- Share the body camera compliance policies and procedures, data, disciplinary procedures, and the outcomes of disciplinary actions with the community

### Expected Outcomes

- Increased accountability internally, within the department and, externally to the community
- Transparency in sharing body camera policies, procedures, compliance data and disciplinary policies and actions
- Increased ability to thoroughly investigate when incidents occur
- Improved percentage of use of force incidents captured using body cameras



3

### Recommendation

Update use of force policy language for specificity

#### Activities

- Revisit and revise the language of policies and procedures that shape police conduct (i.e. update policies to be more specific, explicitly state, and emphasize “de-escalation” in written policies)
- Require a new use of force policy to be written for school officer interactions with students that is rooted in child development and equity research
- Commit to revising the use of force continuum to increase specificity and align with best practices
- Clarify how the officers are equipped/trained to carry the policies forward and what happens when policies are not followed
- Continue to make the policies and procedures accessible to the community through information sharing campaigns

#### Expected Outcomes

- Clear and detailed policies that align with best practice for use of force
- Policies that focus on adults as well as the developmental needs of youth
- Increased equity in the way policies are developed and administered
- Accountability when the policies are not followed
- Empowered community members who can access policy information and clearly understand it

4

### Recommendation

Clarify the role and functions of the Police & Fire Commission (PFC)

#### Activities

- Assess the local role and functions of the PFC and the State of Wisconsin authority granted to the PFC
- Identify what state-defined roles and functions are currently being fulfilled and what gaps could be filled to align the local PFC more closely with the authority granted by the State of WI
- Educate local stakeholders including the PFC, RPD, City Council and community on current role and functions and gaps that need to be filled for the PFC to operate fully within the authority granted by the State of WI

#### Expected Outcomes

- Increased understanding, within the PFC and the community, of the role and functions of the PFC
- Improved knowledge of the authority of the PFC per the State of WI



5

## Recommendation

Expand the role and functions of the Police & Fire Commission (PFC)

### Activities

- Reevaluate the PFC to determine how many residents used the complaint process and whether additional resources or structures, including staff and communications support, are necessary to fulfill the independent investigative and communications functions of the PFC
- Expand the current role and function of the PFC to address the gaps that must be filled to closely align the local PFC with the authority granted by the State of WI
- Educate local stakeholders including the PFC, RPD, City Council and community on the expanded role and functions of the local PFC and how the complaint process works
  - Create a “how to” document that explains the complaint process
  - Develop an online complaint process tutorial
  - Use social media for the community to connect to the PFC and request/submit complaint forms

6

## Recommendation

Explore the creation of a Community Oversight Board (COB)

### Activities

- Clarify what a COB can do and determine if a COB is necessary
- Research best practices for developing COBs including types of COBs, structure, composition, reporting relationships, functions, and resources (personnel, infrastructure, and budget) required to develop and sustain a COB
- Address legalities that apply to COBs
- Determine the type of COB that could work best in Racine considering the role and functions of the local PFC
- Commission a facilitated work group to guide the process



### Expected Outcomes

- PFC that functions fully within the authority granted by the State of WI
- Improved community awareness of the role, functions, and complaint process of the PFC
- Increased utilization of the PFC complaint process

### Expected Outcomes

- Increased trust from the community
- Improved accountability and transparency of stakeholders who are part of the citizen complaint process and investigations
- Proactive community representation and involvement in processes
- Residents feel valued and listened to



7

## Recommendation

Create easy access locations & means for residents to file complaints

### Activities

- Assess current locations for filing complaints to determine if they are easy to access, who takes complaints (uniformed officer or plain clothed staff/community member) and how complaints are forwarded to the appropriate office/person for action
- Utilize paid staff who are not uniformed officers to deliver complaint forms to the homes of community members upon the request of community members
- Based on what is learned from the assessment, add easily accessible locations, technology (website, online filing, Google forms, web forms and telephone) and bi-lingual options as additional means for citizens to file complaints
- Publish complaint filing options on the city's website, in the newspaper, via mailings and other forms of communication

### Expected Outcomes

- Armed/uniformed officers freed up to respond to calls that require their presence
- Increased community trust in the process, especially when they are filing a complaint against an officer
- Reduced likelihood of traumatizing or re-traumatizing community members who may have already had a negative experience with an officer
- Increased utilization of the complaint process

8

## Recommendation

Improve public relations & community engagement

### Activities

- Create easily accessible, plain language, bi-lingual 1 to 2-page documents (use of force policies, investigative processes, residents' rights, etc.) for the purposes of community information sharing, education, and awareness building
- Regularly (monthly/quarterly) engage the community by hosting public events that focus on topics such as knowing your rights, RPD policies and procedures, RPD data and RPD's strategic plan/direction
- Include the community in processes such as the selection of the new Chief of Police and nomination of PFC members
- Commit to release information, videos and/or audio about critical events within 30 days of the incident
- Do public awareness campaigns on the PFC and RPD's policies and processes

### Expected Outcomes

- Increase in the community feeling that they are a valued RPD partner
- Increased community understanding of RPD policies, procedures, and data
- Improved transparency to the community
- Increased trust in RPD-community relationships





9

## Recommendation Improve data tracking, analysis and sharing

### Activities

- Invest in a data tracking system that allows RPD to produce real-time reports that include demographic data for all entries/cases, aldermanic districts or police areas, explicit and extended use of force categories that eliminate the need to use “other” or leave spots blank in reports and tracking of unduplicated numbers
- Collect, analyze, and publicly report data breakdown of interactions between officers and civilians according to demographics, reason for stop, location of incident, time of day, etc.
- Track “duty to intervene” reports to pinpoint problem officers
- Commit to data-driven decision making and process improvement
- Share the reports with the community on a monthly or quarterly basis

### Expected Outcomes

- Increased ability to analyze and use data to identify trends, conduct investigations and make decisions
- Improved accountability and transparency
- Increased community trust that RPD is effectively and efficiently gathering, tracking, and reporting on data and incidents

10

## Recommendation Commit to continuous improvement strategies

### Activities

- When an officer-involved shooting results in deadly force, mandate the department to conduct a “Critical Incident Review” for process improvement and conduct a community input survey and evaluate where the incident went wrong and how it could have been avoided
- Incentivize internal sharing by RPD officers and staff of innovative solutions and changes to current policies and procedures that enhance public safety and reduce loss of life
- Regularly review and update all RPD policies and procedures using data and community input

### Expected Outcomes

- Improved ability to make immediate changes to policies and processes
- Increased community trust and faith in RPD
- Better ability to tell the whole RPD story by highlighting successes, challenges and plans for improvement



# Engage

The Engage portion of this report highlights qualitative and quantitative data that was gathered from nearly 1500 stakeholders over the course of four community conversations and two surveys. In particular, it details the major themes that arose from community responses to the questions below.

In the pages that follow, the "Community Voices" sections highlight quotes that are representative of the main themes. The inclusion of personal stories and experiences serves the important function of humanizing the quantitative data.

## Key Questions Asked of Residents

1

Describe an event or personal experience that has impacted your perspective on policing in Racine. What was the experience and how did it affect you?

2

What 2 or 3 words describe how you see City of Racine policing NOW? What 2 or 3 words describe how you would like to see City of Racine policing in the FUTURE?

3

What is one thing the City of Racine Police Department does well? Why?

4

What are your top three priorities for the City of Racine Police Department?

5

If you were asked to pick one issue or area of improvement for the Racine Police Department to focus on, what would it be and why?

6

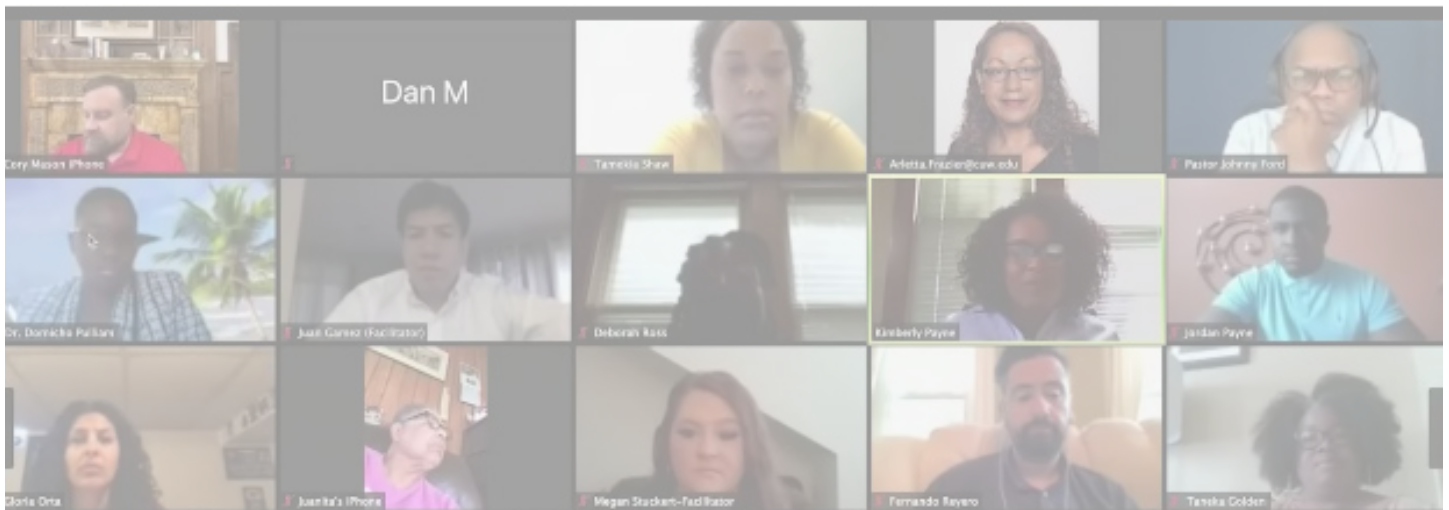
What is one thing the Racine Police Department could do that you think would help eliminate racial profiling and promote the public's trust in police?

7

When you envision a future where Racine has positive police-community relations, what does that look like to you? What kinds of things happen? What doesn't happen?

8

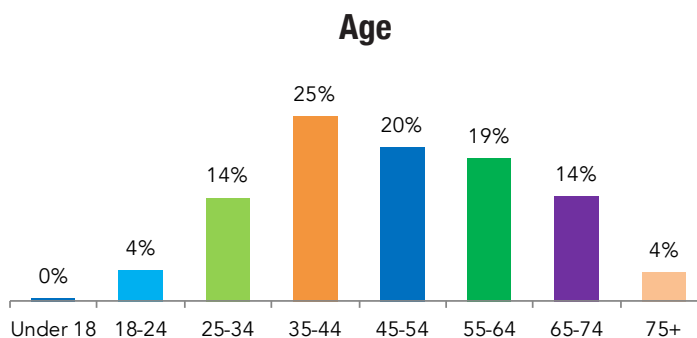
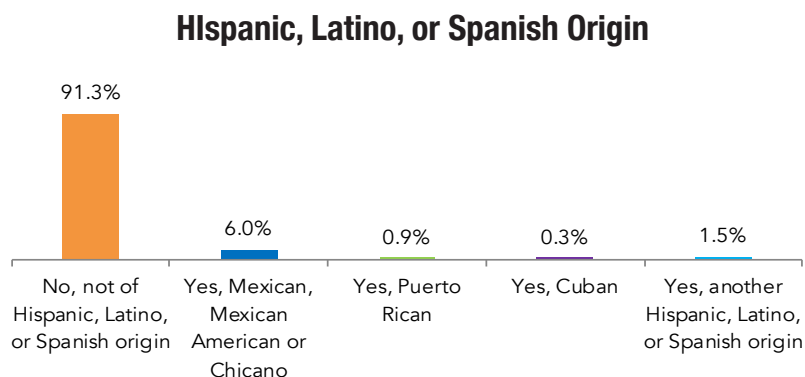
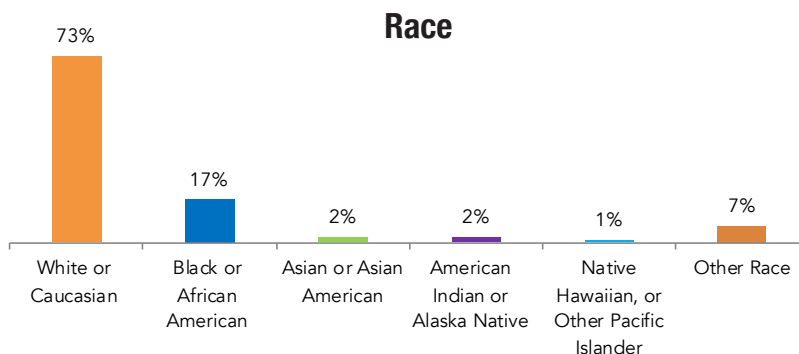
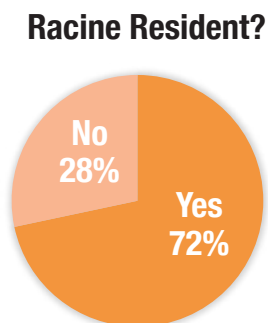
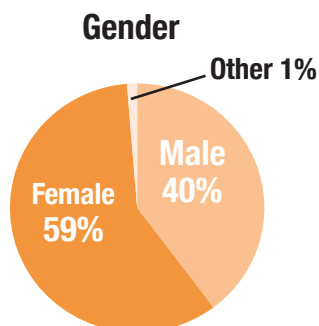
People have different opinions about the main cause(s) for the disproportionate killing of unarmed African American men by police in the US. What's your perspective on these types of incidents? Why do you think they continue to happen in communities around the country?



Screenshot from Police Reform Community Conversations

# PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The charts below represent the demographics of the 1467 community stakeholders who provided input for this report.





# PERSPECTIVES ON POLICING

Participants were asked to describe an event or personal experience that has impacted and affected their, or their family's, perspective on policing in Racine. Below are some of the main themes that arose from their responses.



## MAJOR RESPONDENT THEMES

- Uncertainty about what police should handle and when to call the police
- Desire for more specialized trainings OR greater partnerships with agencies who specialize
- Importance of officers' personal engagement in relation to long-lasting positive or negative impact
- Negative impact of encounters of profiling, discrimination, and unreliability
- Impactful Events: Tyrese West Case, COP House burning and killing of Officer John Hetland
- Black participants used the largest percentage of negative descriptors for RPD, while White participants used the largest percentage of positive descriptors

The three major events repeatedly cited as having a negative impact were the burning of the COP House and the killings of Tyrese West and Officer John Hetland.

RPD was described by participants as "generous," "positive," "helpful," "nice," and "respectful," and positive experiences with RPD included instances of respectfulness, personal support, professionalism, police support for community events and celebrations.

Negative experiences that had long-lasting impact on participants' perceptions of policing included officers pulling guns on children, shooting animals in front of children, children and adults killed by officers, questionable police reporting, profiling, discrimination, and lack of reliability.

General concerns were cited about relations between police and communities of color, specifically from those who described experiences of racial profiling and discrimination, especially during traffic stops. Participants who shared that they had both positive and negative experiences with police highlighted the importance of officers' personal engagement in those experiences.

 **150**

Out of 1242 respondents reported feeling they'd been personally profiled by RPD (12%)

 **64%**

Get information about RPD from Social Media, Newspapers or Word of Mouth

**"Minorities and non-minorities are treated equally by Racine police."**

**45%**  
of participants  
agree/  
strongly  
agree



**34%**  
of participants  
disagree/  
strongly  
disagree

In their characterization of RPD, Black participants used the largest percentage of negative descriptors (45%), while White participants used the largest percentage of positive descriptors (67%).

Overall, “good” was the most common word used to describe RPD in participant responses. Other positive descriptors included: great, excellent, amazing, perfect, okay, tough, fair, hardworking, consistent, compassionate, kind, friendly, just, efficient, helpful, caring, disciplined, honest, fantastic, nice, brave, and courageous.

In general, participants used fewer negative descriptors than positive descriptors for RPD. Negative descriptors included: bad, racist, bias, aggressive, inconsistent, unfair, scary, profiling, arrogant, hypocritical, discrimination, corrupt, crooked, terrible, unethical, harmful, disappointing, cold, judgmental, confusing, poor, militaristic, authoritative, and dishonest.

Beyond positive and negative descriptors, respondents feeling that RPD officers are “under-staffed,” “under/unappreciated,” “under/unsupported,” “overwhelmed,” and “over-worked” was the next most common theme.

## What 2 or 3 words would you use to describe policing in Racine?

Race/ Ethnicity	Positive	Neutral	Negative
White	67%	17%	16%
Black	42%	14%	45%
Hispanic/ Latino	56%	20%	24%
Other	72%	20%	8%



## What is one thing RPD does well?

When asked for one thing RPD does well, the majority of stakeholders mentioned RPD's community engagement and involvement including the positive impact of COP Houses.

Programs respondents highlighted included: Cops N' Kids Reading Center, Shop with a Cop, Christmas with a Cop, Explorers, K9, RUSD's mentoring program, and LAP.

**“The efforts recently to get involved in community service are great. Certain officers have taken time to visit centers, programs, and other volunteering opportunities. Events such as National Night Out and Shop with a Cop are positive interactions I would like to see more of.”**



# COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

Stakeholders discussed their desire for continued non-crisis interactions and improved communication and engagement between police and residents. Based on community input, COP Houses seem to be one important avenue.

“Community Oriented” and “Community Oriented Policing” were some of the most common themes used to describe the current state of RPD, connected to positive words including “professional,” “effective,” and “involved.”



 **84%**

Are familiar with Racine’s Community Oriented Policing approach (COP Houses) (compared to 16% not so, or not at all, familiar)

 **64%**

Agree or strongly agree that Racine’s Community Oriented Policing approach (COP Houses) is an effective way to build relationships with the community (compared to 13% who disagree/strongly disagree)



## COMMUNITY VOICES

*“The COP house is the best community outreach and helps so many.”*

*“They are a national model for COP and have really taken the COP philosophy to heart here with a pretty high fidelity of implementation.”*

*“I don’t know any other department around here with COP houses. Those are crucial to forming bonds with the community.”*

*“A great way for parts of the community to see a different side of policing and the person behind the badge.”*



# TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY



Participants were asked to pick one issue or area of improvement for the Racine Police Department to focus on. Improving accountability and transparency was a major theme of stakeholder input in response to this question. Below are the most common ideas offered by community members for improving transparency and accountability.



## WAYS TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Create a Citizens Review Board
- Improve accountability regarding officer misconduct
- Reform the complaint process
- Use body cameras consistently
- Create easier access to police reports
- Track the number of people of color who are stopped by police



# 59%

## CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD

59% of respondents would support the creation of an independent oversight/review board to monitor and review City residents' complaints about RPD (compared to 29% who would not support). Disaggregated by race, the data shows 64% Black support and 55% White support.

## COMMUNITY VOICES

"Add another form that has to be filled out **whenever a person of color is stopped**, not arrested, but simply stopped. I guarantee that will make a change."

"**Remove their blinders.** I don't see the kind of transparency and accountability that the police department needs to remedy harms it has caused."

"If the complaint process was more fluid and welcoming that would be helpful. I feel sometimes **the process can be intimidating**. There should also be a team in place to review and determine which officers have the most complaints."

"[The police] do not always **hold each other accountable** for their actions, and we as citizens don't ever hear about their consequences when they do something wrong in Black folks' communities."

"RPD can do one basic thing to start. They can hold their officers accountable when it comes to even the smallest infractions. Anyone can take a drive through the City and watch police cruisers speeding, not stopping at stop signs/red lights, stopping in crosswalks, and committing dozens more minor traffic infractions that they can and do write other people tickets for. It is clear they are 'above the law' and are not **held to a higher standard** like they should be."

"We need transparency in investigations. If there are wrong doings found, there should be accountability. I ran across a policy in a community where there is a liaison assigned to a family who works with them to keep them informed on how the investigation is being handled. **I would like a future where there's confidence in how things are being handled.**"

# TRAINING & HIRING

Improving police training and the hiring process were themes for community stakeholders when asked about areas for RPD improvement. Below are the types of trainings and ideas for hiring practices that respondents provided.

## COMMUNITY VOICES

“Offer more training and hire more officers so those working have the best skills available and aren’t overworked.”

“Officers see our community at its worst every day. Seeing people in the most horrible places in their lives **takes a toll on people**. Officers would be more prepared for these situations with more training.”

“In so many incidences involving use of force, you often hear the reasoning that the officer was fearful. Unfortunately, I think there is **a perception and bias in terms of fearing African American males**. There needs to be some bias training that helps address that perception.”



45%

Agree or strongly agree that police officers employed by RPD should be from/ required to live within the City (compared to 30% who disagree/ strongly disagree)



57%

Agree/strongly agree that RPD’s ethnic/ racial makeup should be similar to the makeup of the community (compared to 12% who disagree/ strongly disagree)

### Types of Training



- De-escalation/non-violence training
- Cultural & language training for work in specific communities
- Diversity training
- Anti-bias training
- Training for mental illness cases
- Domestic violence

### Hiring Practices



- Hire more minorities
- Review of an applicant’s “aggressiveness,” “loyalty,” “mental capacity”
- Exclude ex-military due to a possible militaristic approach
- Screen for bias & Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Recruit youth
- Have a residency requirement



# OTHER AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Other themes that emerged during the community conversations and on the surveys included a focus on mental health, increasing non-crises interactions with the police, the increased use of COP houses, warmer behavior when officers interact with residents, and the importance of listening to community input.

## FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

Community stakeholders focused on themes of mental health including desiring RPD to form partnerships and conduct officer trainings to support people with mental illness.

Having better mental health protocols in place for officers exhibiting particular signs and symptoms that are indicative of PTSD was suggested.



## COMMUNITY VOICES

“It’s amazing to me how much trauma police officers go through that many are unaware of.”

“Training for officers relating to mental illness, trauma and providing trauma resources for them. Officers experience so much trauma that gets tucked away but it does come out in interactions with others.”

“Have other people involved in police calls such as mental health professionals and counselors to try and avoid the police altogether if necessary.”

## When to call?

In recounting impactful experiences, community members felt ambivalent about when to call the police and for what issues. Respondants disagreed whether officers should be **trained to respond** to a greater variety of instances or whether RPD should **partner with agencies** with specialized training in mental illness, domestic violence, and more.

“I feel conflicted about calling the same person to respond to a lost infant as I would to an armed robbery. The skill set obviously does not overlap and I’m only assuming this officer would be better equipped to respond to the latter.”

# Understanding Police Killings of Unarmed African American Men

## KEY QUESTION

People have different opinions about the main cause(s) for the disproportionate killing of unarmed African American men by police in the United States. What's your perspective on these types of incidents? Why do you think they continue to happen in communities around the country?

## KEY REASONS

- Systematic Racism
- White Supremacy
- Implicit Bias
- Discrimination
- Dehumanization
- Lack of Accountability
- Qualified Immunity

## COMMUNITY VOICES

"Cut out the racial profiling. I know a wonderful Black pastor who was stopped several times while driving home, in his own neighborhood, to his own home. He was stopped 'driving while being Black.'"

"**Racism and fear.** Racine is socialized by assuming that African American males are more dangerous."

"I think it's been for a number of years when these crimes have happened that most **officers saw no jail time** and no reprimand and I think what that did was start to create a system that you can use your hate to kill someone and we will back you."

During the community conversations, **systemic racism and white supremacy** were the top two themes within participant responses when residents were asked about the causes for the disproportionate killing of unarmed African American men in the U.S. Other prominent themes included the lack of accountability and access to qualified immunity by officers.

Some participants offered other reasons for police killings including **unneeded escalation** by officers, the availability of guns by the public, and a police force that is overburdened. A few participants expressed **doubt regarding the data that shows African Americans are disproportionately affected**.





In the future, stakeholders envisioned more officers on bikes and residents who were unafraid to call police. They saw a future where police knew your name, and **acted more as “peace keepers,” with a friendly, non-threatening approach.** Community conversations that sought resident input would be valued.

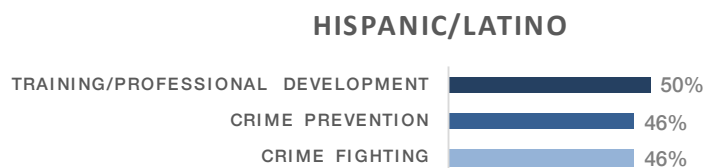
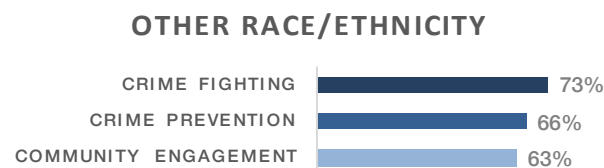
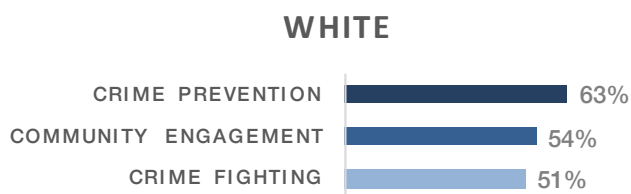
While stakeholders **disagreed about whether their ideal future would involve police in schools**, they agreed on the importance of positive police and youth interactions. In this future, there would be more transparency and accountability, especially during investigations.



## TOP 3 PRIORITIES FOR RPD

### BLACK

Priority	Percentage
RACIAL EQUITY & DISPARITY	46%
ACCOUNTABILITY	42%
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	42%





## NEXT STEPS

All Racine residents need to have trust and confidence in policing for it to be effective. The City of Racine Police Department, in many ways, is exemplary and any reform efforts are built on a very strong foundation. We are fortunate to live in a community where our Police Department has led the nation in its approach to community oriented policing, where we have led the region in implementation of body cameras, and where our officers have long been trained in de-escalation.

However, as this report makes clear, we have room for improvement. For policing to truly work in our community, all of our residents must have trust and confidence in local law enforcement. While many of our residents have in fact had positive interactions and perceptions of our Police Department, disparities exist, and too many of our residents, especially our residents of color, have rightly called for increased accountability, transparency, and related reforms.

The work that has started with the Mayor's Task Force on Police Reform and our initial community engagement efforts are beginnings of important work that will continue now into the implementation phase. This report is not the end of the conversation. This report will be sent first to the City's Affirmative Action & Human Rights Commission, which includes both Common Council members and City residents. That Commission will help to drive these recommendations forward and ensure their swift implementation.

The Commission will also help to ensure that community residents have a voice in future policing issues in our community and that our work to ensure accountability, transparency, and justice continues. The Racine Common Council will also receive this report and be called upon to take action on items that require Council approval. Many of the recommendations in this report will be directly implemented by Mayor Mason.

Updates on this ongoing work will be shared on [www.racinepolicereform.org](http://www.racinepolicereform.org), along with continued invitations for community members to engage and share their perspectives, experiences, and ideas.



STAY UPDATED ON  
RACINE'S POLICE REFORM:

VISIT  
**[RACINEPOLICEREFORM.ORG](https://racinepolicereform.org)**

EMAIL  
RACINE MAYOR MASON'S OFFICE  
**[MAYOR@CITYOFRACINE.ORG](mailto:MAYOR@CITYOFRACINE.ORG)**

