



# Redesigning Public Safety in the City of St. Louis

October 2022



Center For  
POLICING EQUITY



Center For  
**POLICING EQUITY**

- Co-founded in 2008 by Dr. Phillip Atiba Goff and then Denver Police Department Division Chief, Dr. Tracie Keesee.
- Partners with cities to help them redesign public safety systems in a community-centered way.
- A non-profit organization committed to racial justice, equity, and inclusiveness in public safety.
- Conducts work powered by science.
- Produces analyses identifying causes of racial disparities in public safety systems to facilitate change that's bold, innovative, and lasting.
- Partners with law enforcement agencies across the country to help them realize their equity goals.



**REDESIGNING**  
REQUIRES A  
COMPREHENSIVE  
ASSESSMENT OF A  
COMMUNITY'S  
**TRUE SAFETY** AND A  
RECKONING WITH THE  
**SYSTEMIC INJUSTICES**  
AT PLAY.

## What Does It Mean to “Redesign” Public Safety?

Public safety is **more than** just policing.

Redesigning **requires** reflection, collaboration, and innovation.

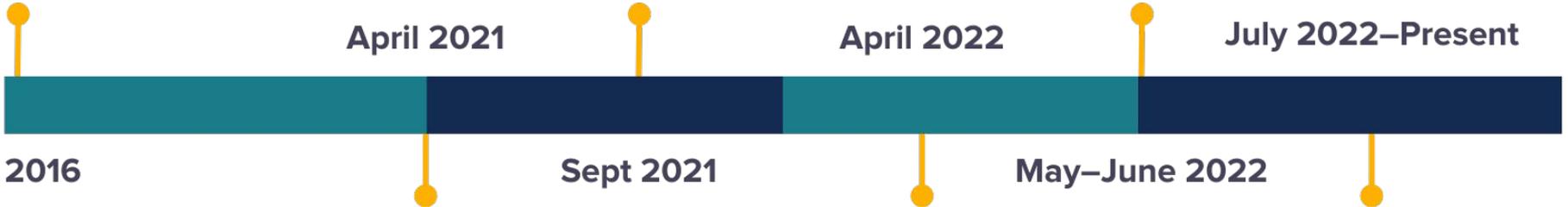
Harm reduction involves **improving** existing systems.

Redesigning involves building **new** public-health based systems.

# Partnership Between CPE & the City of St. Louis

## ENGAGEMENT WITH CPE BEGINS

CPE partners with the Public Safety Department to conduct National Justice Database Report on racial disparities in St. Louis



April 2021

2016

Sept 2021

April 2022

May-June 2022

July 2022-Present

## NATIONAL JUSTICE DATABASE REPORT DELIVERED

## QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS BEGIN

CPE conducts confidential interviews with St. Louis residents

## REDESIGNING PUBLIC SAFETY PARTNERSHIP BEGINS

CPE conducts extensive research and analysis of the current state of public safety in St. Louis

## FINAL REPORT DELIVERED

CPE releases its “Reimagining Public Safety in the City of St. Louis: A Vision for Change” Report

## REDESIGNING PUBLIC SAFETY IMPLEMENTATION BEGINS

CPE facilitates the Public Safety Collaborative and Use of Force Policy & IPV/Domestic Violence Working Groups

# CPE's Data Review & Community Engagement

## Quantitative Analysis

### St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD) Data:

- Vehicle Stops (2016-2019)
- Pedestrian stops (2012-2019)
- Use of force incidents (2012 -2019)
- Calls for service – 911 and Officer Initiated (2015-2020)
- Officer assignment, shift, and leaves

## Community & Qualitative Engagement

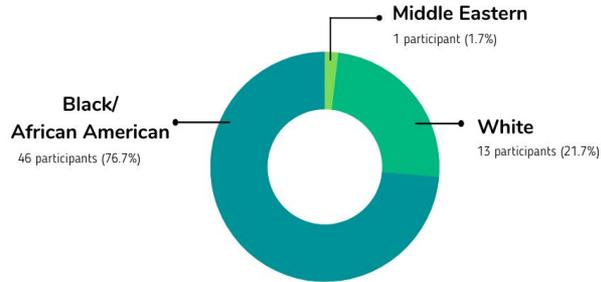
### Spoke with a total of 112 St. Louis residents from Black & disproportionately impacted communities (2022)

- 52 informal interviews
- 60 confidential interviews
- Majority of participants resided in North St. Louis or Dutchtown/Carondelet

# Demographics of Confidential Interview Participants (n=60)

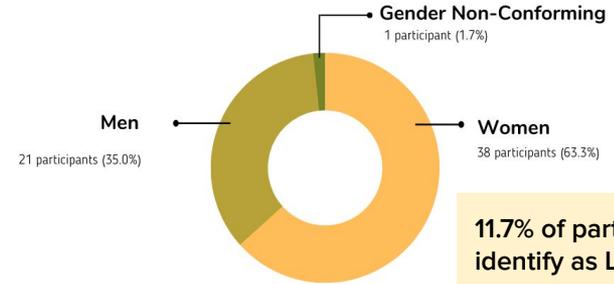
## Race and Ethnicity

60 participants total



## Gender

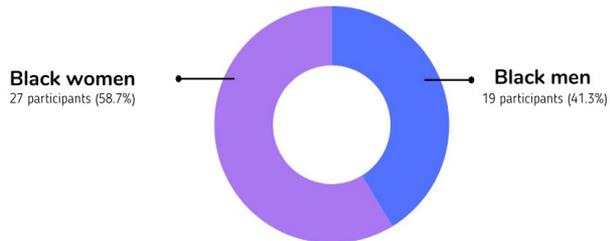
60 participants total



11.7% of participants identify as LGBTQ+

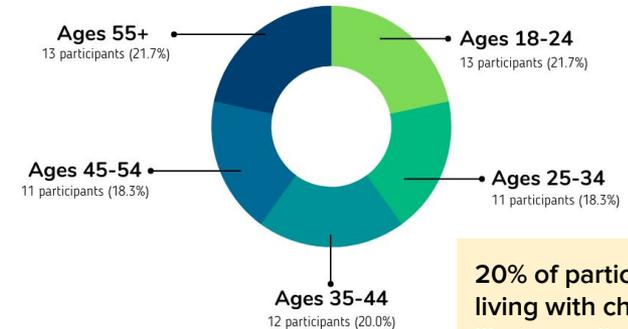
## Black Participants (gender)

46 participants total



## Age

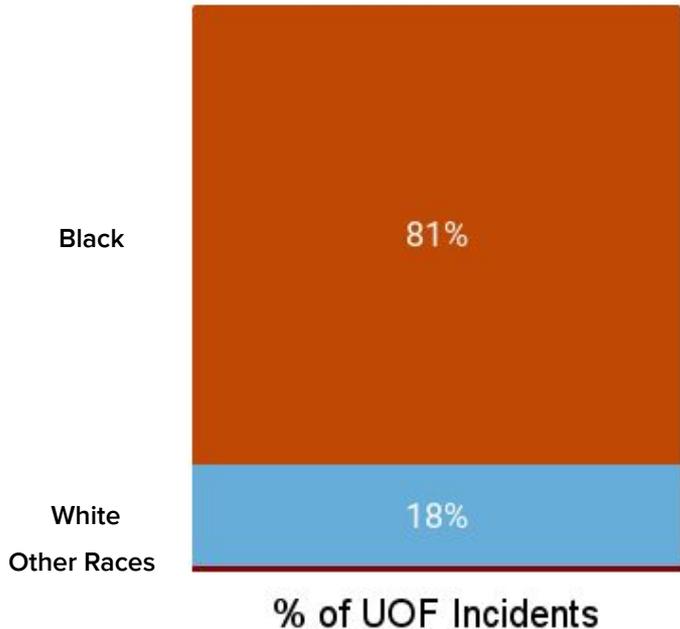
60 participants total



20% of participants are living with chronic illness or disability

# Use of Force

**Black people were subjected to force 4.3x more often** than White people, even after controlling for crime and neighborhood characteristics.



## What Community Members Said

**25% of the 112 community members we interviewed discussed experiencing or directly witnessing use of force by police.**

*As an African American male, especially in the world that we live in now, I've **definitely seen officers use a lot of force to get what they want, even if it was illegal, or legal...** Sometimes they don't have that therapeutic approach to be able to have that conversation without being able to use force.*

–Black man, Downtown

***The police came in there and like basically, like slammed me. And like when they slammed me, it was like all the air out my lungs came out.** Like it was just like this big ass man just slammed me like and it was like oh, like I couldn't breathe for a minute. They had to take me to the hospital and stuff, and he didn't get in trouble or nothing for it... and it didn't even need to be all that.*

–Black LGBTQ+ woman, Kingsway West

# Use of Force by District

There are more use of force incidents per capita in Districts 4, 5, and 6 (North St. Louis).

## What Community Members Said

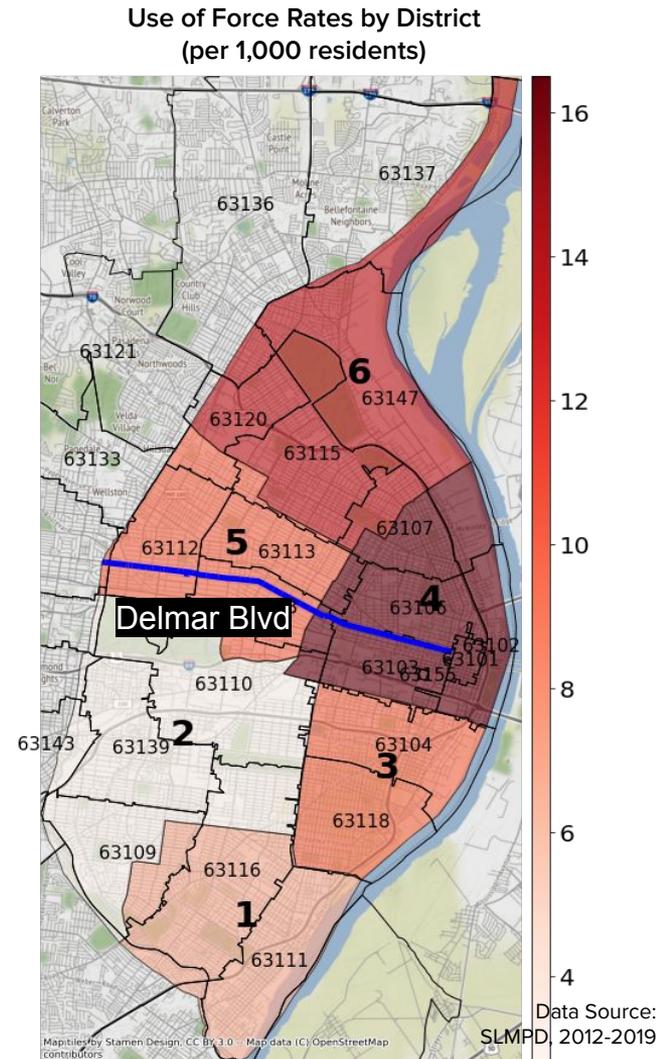
**Participants perceived that Black people living in North St. Louis were engaged with greater use of force and suspicion by the police than predominantly White neighborhoods in South St. Louis.**

*The reasons why I think...use of force happens more to black people is probably due to what, I would say, is preconceived ideas about black people... What I've seen with White people who are stopped, especially White men, it's a conversation.*

—Black man, Kingsway West

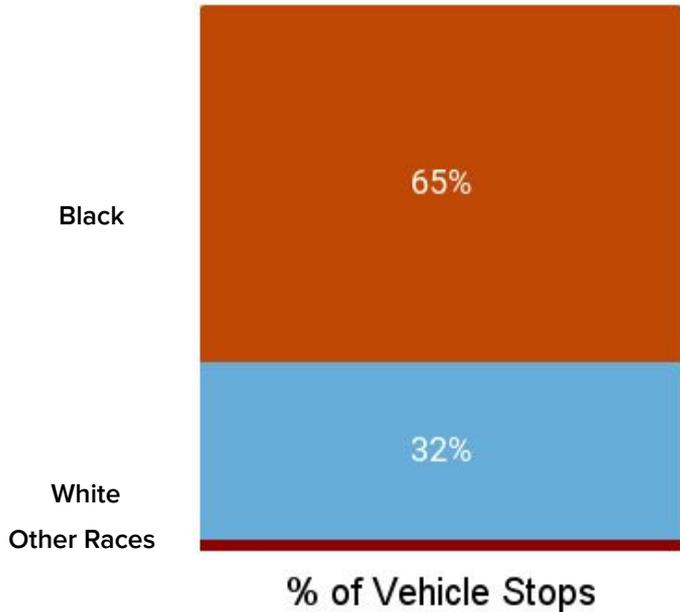
*And whenever I drive and I seen when the police have pulled young [Black] men over, they're sitting on the curb, have them handcuffed sitting on the curb in the city... [W]here they get pulled over by in South St. Louis or farther, they have them standing there like, you know, having a friendly conversation.*

—Black man, O'Fallon



# Vehicle Stops

Black drivers were 2X more likely to be stopped than White drivers.



## What Community Members Said

**33.9% of the 112 community we interviewed discussed vehicle & pedestrian stops. The most prevalent themes included:**

- Perceptions of racial profiling
- Differences in how Black vs. White people are treated when stopped
- Frequent searches of Black drivers' vehicles during pretextual stops

*I have other [stories about being stopped] but that's the one I wanted to share... I **just walked away feeling just, like I said, violated and icky...like belittled, like, my dignity was being ripped.** You know? I mean, no one was showing respect at all, for no reason... Like, you just walked up with such vitriol.... [I]f someone walks up to you and starts like, with weapons, you know, with six people like bullying. You felt like you were being bullied.*

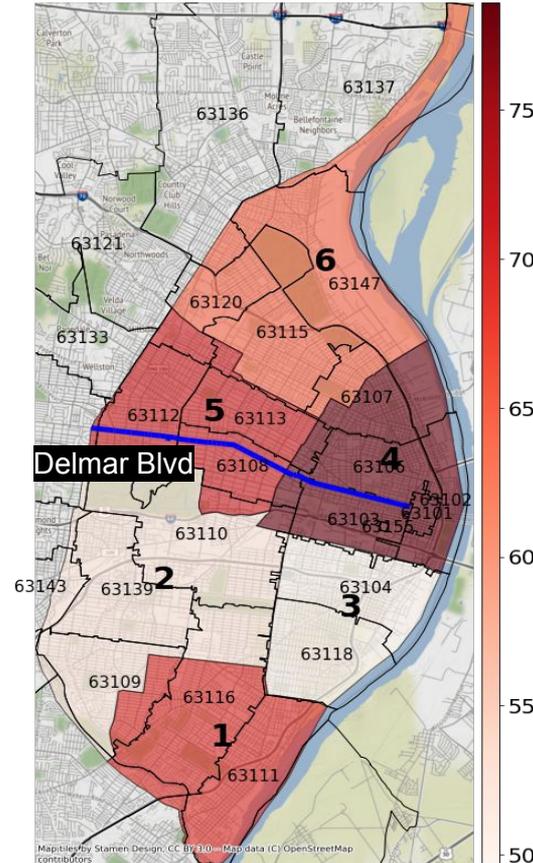
—Black woman, North St. Louis

# Workload & Patrol Staffing by District

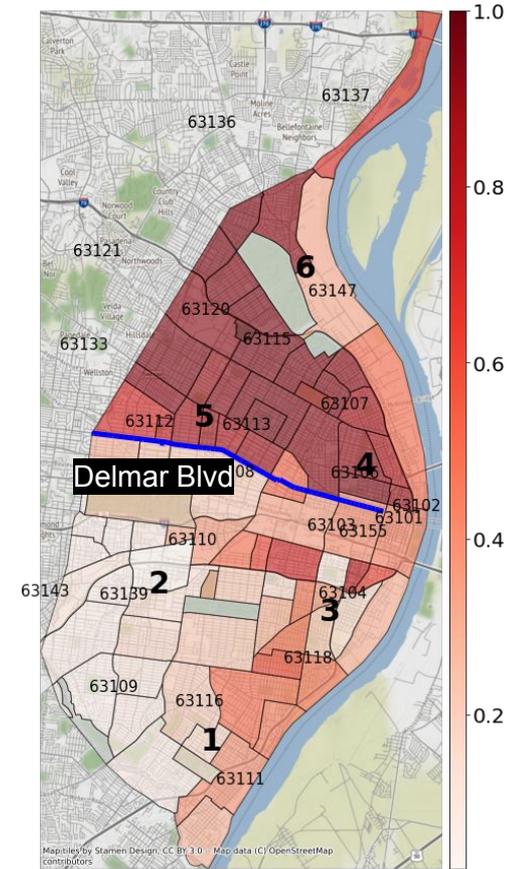
Current patrol staffing is not in-line with workloads.

- Despite higher workloads in North St. Louis, **patrol staffing is relatively equal across districts.**
- This **creates significant disparities in service levels** among districts.

% of Patrol Hours Committed to CFS



% Black Residents



Data Source:  
SLMPD, 2012-2019

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# 911 Calls for Service

**42% of 112 community members discussed 911 calls for service.**

## The most prevalent themes were:

- Extremely slow responses.
- Experiences where responders did not show up at all.
- Being put on hold for long periods by 911 dispatchers.
- Perceptions that response times in North St. Louis are slower than in South St. Louis.

## What Community Members Said

*Speaker 1: What have your experiences been when you have tried to call 911 for a response?*

*Speaker 2: **Uh slow. Slow slow slow.** So, I you know I've been in car accidents in the city, I've called the police in the city. Um, very slow. And, I think, **I'm sure that there's a discrepancy between White and Black neighborhoods.***

–Black woman, Tower Grove South

***I was caught in the middle of a shootout right outside and called called police... I was like 911, they're shooting out here. These are not fireworks. Like I said, nothing....** I would say an hour and a half later a little [police] truck just drove by, slowed down, and then turned the corner, went northbound. I was like, wow.*

–Black man, Kingsway West

# 911 Calls for Service Cont.

- Upon arriving to calls for service, participants claimed that police officers sometimes regarded them with suspicion or lacked a “protect and serve” approach.
- Some community members expressed being afraid or hesitant to call the police in emergencies.

*And **you're the one who called the cops, and then they put it back on you...** But you're the one who called about this or that and they flip the script and turn it back on you. So then you don't want to talk about what I called you for.*

–White woman in Reentry, Mt. Pleasant

## What Community Members Said

*I will say people automatically being in fear, living in like in a police state, you know, like the police is gonna take me away. Take my child away, take you know, **they scared to call the police you know, they have... have intense feelings when they see the police... Nobody wants to call the police about anything...Stress. Anxiety.***

–Black woman, Hyde Park

*We called the police because somebody was locked out of their car. He pulled his gun on the person who was locked out of their car. **He's like, "get away from the car." He's like, "But it's my car, I called you." "I don't know if that's your car." He's like, "But I called you!" He's like, "Can I show you my ID?" and he's like, "No, you get down because how do I know you're not stealing this car?" He's like, "I called you!" So, a lot of people don't even talk to them [the police] anymore.***

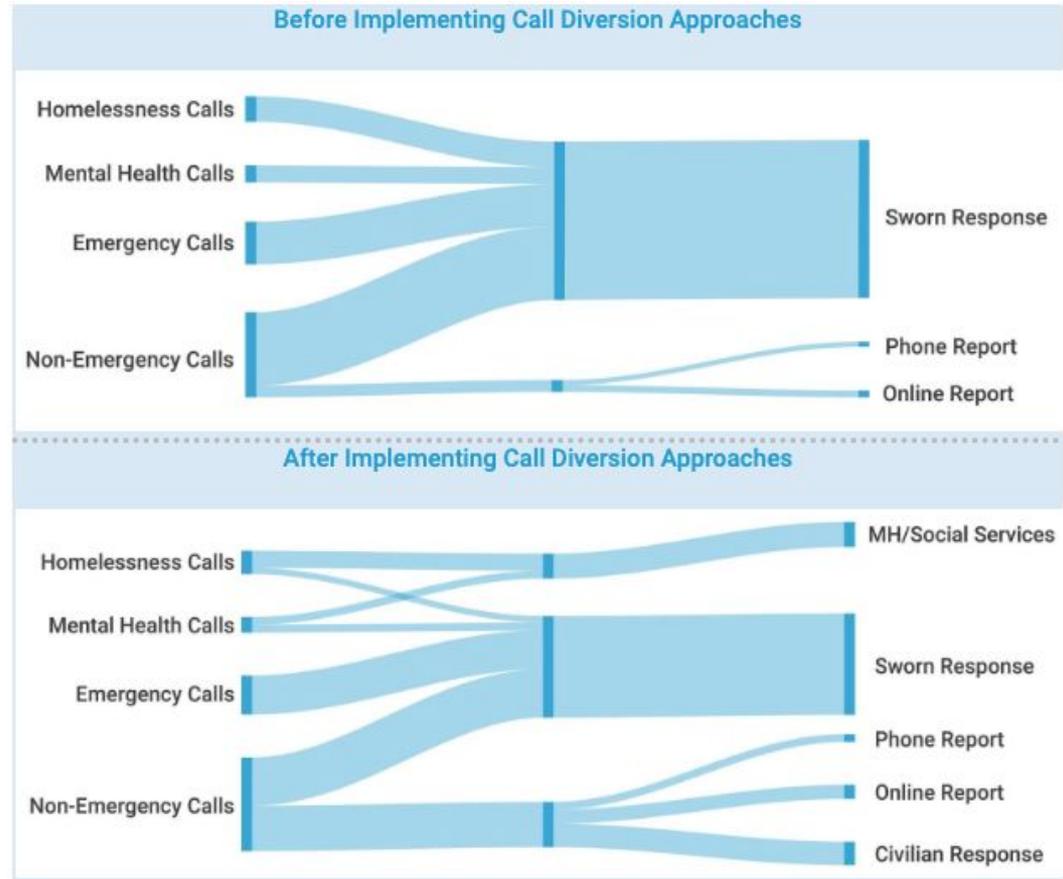
–Black woman, South City

# Diversion Opportunities for 911 Calls

Analysis found that **18% of 911 Calls for Service could be diverted to civilian responders (2019 data).**

**Opportunities for call diversion include:**

- Establishing a civilian field responder
- Expanding phone and online reporting
- Using other city agencies and non-profit organizations



# Community Perspectives on Redesigning Public Safety

The need for investment & resources in historically Black neighborhoods – **53.5% of 112** participants

- Youth centers and programming
- Employment opportunities
- Addressing vacant lots and dilapidated buildings
- Neighborhood clean-ups

*Not see them empty lots with a lot of bushes and vacant buildings, they could definitely go... they could build something nice, where people could walk along through a little park or something... They'll make people more look at each other more positively.*

–Black LGBTQ+ man, Wells Goodfellow



*A civic engagement forum in St. Louis*

**Need for crisis responders other than police** – **40% of 112** participants

- Mental health workers
- Social workers
- Domestic violence experts

**Stronger accountability measures for police officers** – **37.5% of 112** participants

# Community Perspectives on Redesigning Public Safety

Community members' proposed solutions acknowledged the need for harm reduction approaches by police officers, as well as community-driven solutions:

- **Training police officers and public safety responders** – **33% of 112** participants
  - Cultural competence/reduced bias about Black people and neighborhoods
  - De-escalation tactics
  - Identifying and appropriately responding to incidents involving mental health crises
- **Community-driven solutions** – **24% of 112** participants
  - Ranged from proposals to support Cure Violence prevention models to self-organizing neighborhood blocs
- **Improved structures for community members' involvement in public safety decisions** – **21.4% of 112** participants
- **District staffing that enables timely responses to incidents that need police attention** – **13.4% of 112** participants

# How Community Wants to be Engaged by Police

A majority of community members (**63% of 112** participants) spoke about community engagement. Participants emphasized **everyday interactions**, **relationship-building**, and **interventions to reduce police officers' stereotypes** about them.

- **Building relationships as a way to reduce assumptions or stereotypes** about Black and other marginalized community members was the most prominent theme – **43% of 112** participants
- Among those who discussed community engagement, some emphasized **Black community members' distrust for the police** to be partially rooted in a history of negative encounters when stopped, experiences of being racially profiled or stereotyped, and policing practices such as stop-and-frisk.
- Several community members emphasized the need for SLMPD to **prioritize service-oriented policing approaches** over punitive ones – **20.5% of 112** participants

## What Community Members Said

***Listening. And getting in touch with the kids. And, you know, cleaning up. Listening.** That community type of policing that I think it's going to help to help bring it back around.*

–Black man, Downtown

*It needs to stop being an us and them. **It needs to be a we. They need to be public service, serving the public... I would like to know who the police officers are... If they can get out of the vehicles, get a chance to know people...** [E]vents, I don't know, that helps to put people's mind at ease. So that when somebody see the police they're not triggered.*

–Black woman, Hyde Park

# How Community Wants to be Engaged by Police

- When talking about community engagement, the need for **informal everyday practices** were emphasized much more (**28.6% of 112** participants) by community members than **formal police-community events** like “Coffee with a Cop” (**7% of 112** participants)
- **Improving police officers’ cultural competence** and understanding of the people and neighborhoods they police was also mentioned as a desired outcome by community members – **25% of 112** participants
- **Regular police-community meetings** where residents and police can share information and public safety concerns was mentioned by **16% of 112** participants

## What Community Members Said

*I would say, for the police to love what they do, which means the community, which means the neighborhood, **get out the car and walk the beat**, as they used to say in the old days. **Go to the different churches or stores**. Go in and say, "Hey, how you doing?" ... Show the community that you care. Don't just do this for a paycheck, and the ability to say, hey, I have this badge and this gun and I'm invincible and you can't do nothing about it.*

–Black man, Kingsway West

***Lots of officers don't understand the community they're in.** Lots of younger officers from south St. Louis have never been to the North side and are told to be scared of the area.*

–White man, Religious Org working with Youth

# A Vision for Change: Implementation

## Overall Work Focus:

- At the City’s request, CPE will continue to support the ongoing efforts to redesign public safety by working with community members to implement select recommendations from the report.

## Primary Priorities:

- Implement seven (7) recommendations from the “*Reimagining Public Safety in the City of St. Louis: A Vision for Change*” Report to redesign public safety and reduce harm.

<b>Implement</b> the City of St. Louis Public Safety Collaborative supported by Data-Informed Community Engagement (DICE)	<b>Facilitate</b> an external partnership to audit body-worn camera footage	<b>Explore</b> a robust, holistic response to intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic violence (DV).	<b>Create</b> a community engagement strategy to improve the co-production of public safety.
<b>Create</b> a working group to update use of force (UoF) policy	<b>Continuation</b> of Crisis Intervention Team policy working groups	<b>Support</b> a Citywide Survey	

# THANK YOU!



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