

Reconciliation Between Police and Communities

CASE STUDIES AND LESSONS LEARNED



National Network
For Safe Communities
at JOHN JAY COLLEGE

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Reconciliation between Police and Minority Communities: Why and How?

Issues surrounding race and public safety have become preeminent concerns for the United States yet again. As in the Civil Rights Era or the aftermath of the Rodney King trial, today's national reckoning has been particularly concerned with the interactions and lack of trust between African Americans and law enforcement. Since the public outcry¹ and sharp divide² over the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the 2013 shooting death of Trayvon Martin, incidents of violence involving police and African Americans have sparked local protests or unrest and drawn national attention. The deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Laquan McDonald, and many others have both highlighted the specific local legitimacy crises faced by many police departments and propelled new activist groups like those affiliated with the Black Lives Matter movement to push police-community relations to national prominence. At the same time, many police officials have suggested that violent attacks on police officers—the killings of New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos;³ the attacks on law enforcement in Dallas, Texas,⁴ and Baton Rouge, Louisiana⁵—have been the result of a growing anti-police sentiment. A spike in homicides in 2015 contributed to a spirited debate over its cause—whether criticism of police hurt morale and proactive crime prevention or whether publicly known police abuses delegitimized law enforcement and therefore encouraged crime and vigilantism.⁶

Although the relationship between police and minority communities has gained new relevance, the issues at hand are old. As the front line of government policy, the institution of policing was responsible for enforcing systems of racial injustice such as slavery and Jim Crow and for pursuing crime-fighting strategies that either disproportionately disrupted minority communities or left crime-ridden neighborhoods without adequate police response. The concentration of urban drug trade and violent

1. Adam Nagourney, "Prayer, Anger, and Protests Greet Verdict in Florida Case," *New York Times*, July 14, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/15/us/debate-on-race-and-justice-is-renewed.html>.

2. "Big Racial Divide over Zimmerman Verdict," Pew Research Center, last modified July 22, 2013, <http://www.people-press.org/2013/07/22/big-racial-divide-over-zimmerman-verdict/>.

3. Danielle Tcholakian and Katie Honan, "'Blood on the Hands' of Mayor in Officers' Deaths, Police Union Boss Says," *DNAInfo*, last modified December 21, 2014, <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20141221/bed-stuy/police-union-says-blood-on-hands-of-mayor-shooting-of-officers>.

4. Manny Fernandez, Richard Pérez-Peña, and Jonah Engel Bromwich, "Five Dallas Officers Were Killed as Payback, Chief Says," *New York Times*, July 8, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/09/us/dallas-police-shooting.html>.

5. Steve Visser, "Baton Rouge Shooting: 3 Officers Dead; Shooter Was Missouri Man, Sources Say," *CNN*, last modified July 18, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/17/us/baton-route-police-shooting/>.

6. Richard Rosenfeld, *Documenting and Explaining the 2015 Homicide Rise: Research Directions* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, 2016), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249895.pdf>.

crime in disadvantaged minority neighborhoods, in turn, has often bred a cynicism among many in law enforcement that residents of these areas are not interested in safe communities or in working with the police. In short, distrust is the lived experience and shared history of many minority communities and the police departments that serve them.

In some neighborhoods and cities, however, police and communities have undertaken innovative and substantial efforts to recognize and fundamentally reset the nature of their relationship. The events of recent years have highlighted the continued need to understand how this long-held distrust can be overcome. During the administration of President Barack Obama, the White House and the US Department of Justice (DOJ) made that task a priority, convening the Task Force on 21st Century Policing,⁷ commissioning a number of ambitious projects to explore and implement new approaches to bridging the trust gap,⁸ and granting \$5.75 million for a three-year project called the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice. Hosted by the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) at John Jay College in collaboration with Center for Policing Equity, the Yale Law School Justice Collaboratory, and the Urban Institute, the National Initiative is a six-city pilot project to improve relationships between police and minority communities. The project, which is substantially funded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, focuses on three pillars of work: (1) procedural justice, (2) implicit bias, and (3) reconciliation. Work in these six cities has informed this document with concrete experience and has reiterated the urgent need for a guide for police-community reconciliation.

What reconciliation means in such settings is open to considerable debate and has had little systemic study. For this report, reconciliation refers to a process whereby police and communities engage in joint communication, research, and commitment to practical change to foster the mutual trust essential for effective public safety partnerships. The reconciliation process attempts to directly address both the current and the historic relationship between minority communities and law enforcement that serves as a backdrop to daily interactions and the periodic flare-ups that continue to embroil American cities.

This report offers essential components, concrete lessons, and early guidance for those interested in pursuing a reconciliation process in their cities. Its findings are based on a multidisciplinary research, writing, and action process that has included consultation with police and community leaders, academics, and experts in transitional justice; detailed case studies of reconciliation experiences from three American cities; research into and collection of police acknowledgments of harm; and initial

7. *Establishment of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*, Executive Order 13684, 79 Fed. Reg. 77,357, December 24, 2014, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-23/pdf/2014-30195.pdf>.

8. Office of Public Affairs, "Justice Department Awards over \$23 Million in Funding for Body Worn Camera Pilot Program to Support Law Enforcement Agencies in 32 States," press release, US Department of Justice, September 21, 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-awards-over-23-million-funding-body-worn-camera-pilot-program-support-law>; Office of Public Affairs, "Attorney General Holder Announces the First Six Pilot Sites for the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice," press release, US Department of Justice, March 12, 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-holder-announces-first-six-pilot-sites-national-initiative-building-0>; see also "National Initiative Updates," National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.trustandjustice.org>.

reconciliation implementation in the National Initiative cities. The document also draws from on-the-ground experience during one of the original instances of operational police-community reconciliation: the 2004 implementation of the Drug Market Intervention (DMI), a strategy the NNSC used to close down open-air drug markets, in High Point, North Carolina. The DMI relies heavily on the power of the community to stand with police to set and uphold norms against drug dealing and disorder and rests on a reconciliation and truth-telling process that encourages police leaders to acknowledge the legitimacy of community grievances while expressing that they want the community to be safe and need the community's help to make it so.⁹

Using this body of work, this document describes the component parts of a reconciliation process using evidence from the field to illustrate the role of reconciliation in building trust and helping to achieve traditional public safety goals. It details the choices and practices that together created current situations and which the reconciliation process must address, including how present dynamics are related to past tensions; how police leaders have grappled with the roots of police-community distrust; the internal departmental dynamics that have promoted and discouraged change and leadership responses; the policies and practices police leaders have installed to change the dynamic; community reactions to policy changes; communities' own initiatives and the results; and steps that have been taken to make the trajectory toward reconciliation sustainable.

The entire report has three parts: (1) an executive guide summarizing the core components of reconciliation and providing highlights from the field, (2) a thematic report on the "acknowledgment of harm" component of reconciliation, and (3) three comprehensive case studies on cities' experiences with reconciliation-based projects. The case studies offer further reading on reconciliation projects in very different contexts: resetting a policing model and growing relationship-based policing in a large city (Los Angeles, California), layering reconciliation on a community policing strategy in a mid-size city (Las Vegas, Nevada), and building reconciliation into a problem-oriented policing intervention in a small city (Rockford, Illinois). The executive guide can be read as a standalone guide for understanding police-community relationships or as an introduction to the longer thematic and city case studies completed for this project.

This executive guide presents the core components of reconciliation and highlights examples and lessons from city reconciliation attempts. As National Initiative sites and other cities take up explicit reconciliation projects, best practices will be identified and refined from the lessons learned along the way. The concepts here are meant only as a first entry to the practice of reconciliation between police and minority communities in the United States but will hopefully move police agencies and communities a little closer to beginning this crucially important work.

9. National Network for Safe Communities, *Drug Market Intervention: An Implementation Guide* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), 27, <http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P303>.

Part One.
**Guide to Components of Police-
Community Reconciliation**

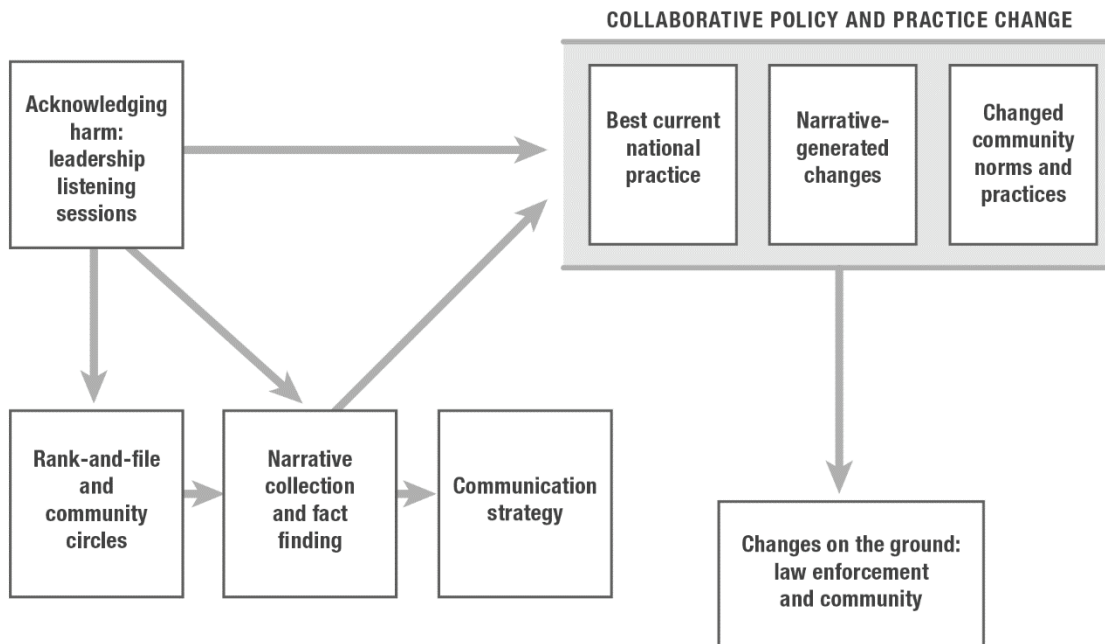
Introduction

The divide between American police and the communities (especially minority communities) they serve is not a single divide. It plays out in different ways in thousands of neighborhoods across the country; state to state, city to city, neighborhood to neighborhood, even block to block, the local experiences and histories on which distrust is based are unique. However—and encouragingly—our research suggests that effective efforts at reconciliation are made up of a set of generally applicable practices. Not all sites that begin on a path toward reconciliation engage all of these areas, or in this order, and some do more. The most promising efforts to overcome the distrust between police and minority communities, however, share these four components: (1) an acknowledgment of harm, (2) listening and narrative sharing, (3) fact finding, and (4) policy and practice changes.

1. **Acknowledgment of harm.** A public acknowledgment by the police of harm they have done—as an institution, a department, or, at times, as an individual officer—and a commitment to improvement
2. **Listening and narrative sharing.** Sessions and outreach to air and collect group concerns and individual narratives
3. **Fact finding.** Compiling a clear, objective account of the history that has necessitated the reconciliation process
4. **Policy and practice changes.** Collaboratively specifying, developing, and implementing concrete changes to policy and practice

Taken together, these components represent a powerful foundation on which reconciliation can be built. Owning and condemning past harms aligns the values of police with community; listening and narrative sharing offers the opportunity for groups to better understand one another's lived experience; fact finding establishes a shared understanding of past events and current conditions; and policy and practice change uses this new trust to build mutually beneficial conditions for all parties. Figure 1 on page 4 is a graphic representation of a reconciliation process framework that has been pursued by the cities participating in the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice. The framework incorporates many of the components described here; lessons learned from these sites are included in this chapter. The following sections describe the scope of each component and present what each component looks like in practice.

Figure 1. Example reconciliation process



Acknowledgment of Harm

Members of marginalized communities have faced official persecution and neglect from the United States' founding through the end of segregation and continue to be disproportionate recipients of adversarial law enforcement. In African-American communities, in particular, police enforced laws to maintain the institution of slavery, intimidate Black voters, and segregate schools. Police pursued narcotics and low-level crime enforcement in Black neighborhoods—many of which were created by discriminatory housing practices—leading to African Americans' unequal rates of arrest and incarceration.¹⁰ Above all, this adversarial relationship with law enforcement is expressed in violence, whether directly in acts of violence and abuse committed by or against police or indirectly through police inaction during violent race riots and neglect of festering violence in Black communities. Overlapping national narratives about the police as an institution and local narratives about the actions of particular departments inform how communities view and interact with law enforcement.

The first step toward ameliorating this generational distrust is a public acknowledgment of the harm caused by police. Even though a great many modern police leaders and officers privately or personally disapprove of the racist institutions and practices of the past and are dismayed by the role that law enforcement has played in them, it is rare for professional public servants to acknowledge these facts. Nonetheless, acknowledging that the police have done harm as well as good is a crucial validation of the community's experience and promotes a longer-term perspective for officers who feel personally attacked. In these fraught contexts, harm may go both ways, but these harms are not equal: Government institutions have a larger and longer reach than non-state actors. Police have the responsibility to go first and open the reconciliation process with a sincere recognition of the past and a commitment to a different future. This recognition, as this paper will illustrate, can range from a simple acknowledgment that harms occurred to a more robust apology on behalf of the department for past failures and abuses, whether or not such failures and abuses were intentional.

Police leadership has made great strides and shown considerable courage in this project—shifting the language around these events from “That was a long time ago and we weren't part of it” to “The police were involved and we have to acknowledge and address that.” Statements made by local chiefs and national figures in policing model a wide range of approaches to creating the space for further collaboration. In many cases, these statements were crucial in demonstrating a readiness and desire to reset relationships between policing and civilians and between departments and specific communities they serve.

10. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness* (New York: The New Press, 2012).

Statements and Discussions

Remarks by national law enforcement leaders

Nationally, policing leaders have made important public statements acknowledging failures and harm in the history of American policing. In February 2015, then FBI Director James Comey delivered a speech at Georgetown University titled “Hard Truths: Law Enforcement and Race.” His statements on the history of policing are among the highest-level acknowledgments of police wrongdoing by any government official.

“All of us in law enforcement must be honest enough to acknowledge that much of our history is not pretty. At many points in American history, law enforcement enforced the status quo, a status quo that was often brutally unfair to disfavored groups. . . . That experience should be part of every American’s consciousness, and law enforcement’s role in that experience—including in recent times—must be remembered. It is our cultural inheritance. . . . One reason we cannot forget our law enforcement legacy is that the people we serve and protect cannot forget it, either. So we must talk about our history. It is a hard truth that lives on.”¹¹

Then New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton delivered similar remarks at a 2015 meeting of the National Order of Black Law Enforcement Executives. Referring to law enforcement’s role in “some of the worst parts of Black history” such as slavery, lynchings, and blockbusting, Bratton said, “[I]t doesn’t matter that these things happened before many of us were even born. What matters is that our history follows us like a second shadow. We can never underestimate the impact these had. The hate, and the injustice, and the lost opportunities—for all of us. . . . As police, we must fix what we’ve done and what we continue to do wrong. It’s ours to set right. It’s the crisis, it’s the challenge, it’s the opportunity.”¹²

Former Director Comey and former Commissioner Bratton’s remarks were rare and high profile acknowledgments of wrongdoing by the institution of policing. In 2016, Terrence Cunningham, president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), added an apology on behalf of his association of police leaders—a gesture that received a standing ovation from its members as well as approval from civil rights groups.

11. James Comey, “Hard Truths: Law Enforcement and Race,” remarks delivered at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, February 12, 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/hard-truths-law-enforcement-and-race>.

12. William J. Bratton, Remarks at NOBLE William R. Bracey CEO Symposium, Atlanta, Georgia, March 13, 2015, <http://trustandjustice.org/resources/article/william-bratton-remarks-at-noble-friday-march-13-atlanta-ga>.

Referring to the “dark side of our shared history,” Cunningham sought to begin to address the “multigenerational—almost inherited—mistrust between many communities of color and their law enforcement agencies.”

“The first step,” he said, “is for law enforcement and the IACP to acknowledge and apologize for the actions of the past and the role that our profession has played in society’s historical mistreatment of communities of color.”¹³ President Cunningham explained in an interview following the remarks why he chose this topic for his address: “Communities and law enforcement need to begin a healing process and this is a bridge to begin that dialogue. If we are brave enough to collectively deliver this message, we will build a better and safer future for our communities and our law enforcement officers. . . . It is my hope that many other law enforcement executives will deliver this same message to their local communities, particularly those segments of their communities that lack trust and feel disenfranchised.”¹⁴

Former Director Comey, former Commissioner Bratton, and President Cunningham’s statements are all examples of prepared remarks delivered to police professionals, academics, and the media. As other police leaders and officers look to formulate their own statements, these examples offer language about the general history of policing and race to help reset society’s understanding.

Local acknowledgment

Local police leaders have also acknowledged this broad history as well as the specific times and ways their departments have harmed or failed to protect their communities. These statements have been specifically important to advancing public safety goals.

Small operational meetings have been one major setting for these statements and conversations. The implementation of the DMI in High Point, North Carolina, relied on repeated presentations from Chief Jim Fealy on how previous attempts at stopping the drug trade and violence had failed or had even caused harm. After speaking to his department, Fealy held small meetings with community representatives to express regret about past aggressive tactics and ask for the community’s help in the new strategy. In community meetings that followed, Fealy would begin his remarks with a simple statement: “I’m sorry.”¹⁵ Fealy believes the frank discussion and taking of responsibility that followed was one of the most important aspects of forging a new relationship with the community.¹⁶ In Rockford,

13. Tom Jackman, “US Police Chiefs Group Apologizes for Historical Mistreatment of Minorities,” *Washington Post*, October 17, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2016/10/17/head-of-u-s-police-chiefs-apologizes-for-historic-mistreatment-of-minorities/?utm_term=.f001c423abed.

14. Ibid.

15. Trevor Stutz, “Five Police Departments Building Trust and Collaboration: Innovations in Policing Clinic, Yale Law School, High Point, North Carolina, Full Case,” BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2015), <http://bjaexecutivesessiononpoliceleadership.org/pdfs/006.2cFivePDCaseStudiesHPNCFull.pdf>.

16. Jim Fealy, chief, High Point (North Carolina) Police Department, interview with Stephen Lurie, research and policy associate, National Network for Safe Communities, January 2016.

Illinois, Chief Chet Epperson used meetings with religious leaders from the Black community to articulate his frustration at the department's previous responses to drug crime, which he saw as ineffective, racially inequitable, and overly punitive. These meetings introduced their implementation of the DMI and helped earn buy-in from respected community representatives.

Leaders of Las Vegas' Safe Village Initiative (SVI) also integrated acknowledgment in setting up and sustaining their policing strategy. The captain who initially led the initiative apologized for the "big lie" of earlier policing efforts in West Las Vegas that tried to operate without the community's help. Later leadership institutionalized this understanding by organizing departmental discussions about the historical roots and contemporary drivers of mistrust in the area.

Finally, in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, regular community meetings of the Watts Gang Task Force and later the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) served as a platform to express a shared understanding about loss, failure, and tragedies. Part of establishing a working relationship in a traditionally distrustful environment, as noted by Sergeant Emada Tingirides, who leads the CSP, is being able to acknowledge mistakes, to see an incident, such as a shooting, and say "It's tragic, and it's okay to say I'm sorry that that happened."¹⁷ In each case, acknowledgment and apology has opened the space for police to authentically connect with community partners through a shared understanding of past events and a common direction for the future.

Public events, whether impromptu or carefully choreographed, have been another avenue for police leaders to begin reconciliation efforts through acknowledgment and apology. Some of these statements have addressed historical injustices that have continued to be symbols of division generations later. In 2013 in Montgomery, Alabama, Chief Kevin Murphy took a golden opportunity to make a gesture to the visiting civil rights hero US Representative John Lewis. Lewis, who had been attacked and injured in Montgomery when he was a Freedom Rider in the 1960s, had never received an apology from the police who had decided not to provide protection to the traveling activists. During Lewis's visit to Montgomery's First Baptist Church, Murphy offered an unscripted apology for the Montgomery Police Department's (MPD) failure and gave Lewis his badge. The remarks, though candid, were recorded by an audience member and became a national news story and local symbol of turning to a new era of policing.¹⁸

While Chief Murphy had taken a chance because it had presented itself, others have sought out fitting moments for public acknowledgments. Chuck Jordan, chief of the Tulsa (Oklahoma) Police Department, recognized the police role in the Tulsa Race Riots as a lingering source of pain in his city. In 1921, mob violence claimed 300 lives, destroyed 35 city blocks of the city's Black neighborhood, and left thousands of Black families without homes. Police failed to stop the escalation of the conflict and aided, armed, or

17. Emada Tingirides, sergeant, Los Angeles Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 25, 2015.

18. Traci G. Lee, "Civil Rights Leader Rep. John Lewis Accepts Long-Awaited Police Apology," NBC Universal, last modified September 12, 2013, <http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/civil-rights-leader-rep>.

deputized White vigilantes¹⁹ in their rioting and attacks on Black people and Black-owned property.²⁰ The impunity that followed these attacks, scholars believe, led to a regional resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan.²¹ In 2013, Jordan contacted the mayor's office to help coordinate an opportunity to address the riots and took a speaking slot during a Literacy, Legacy, and Movement Day event hosted in the same Black neighborhood that had been destroyed by the mob. In his speech, he spoke to the historical nature of policing and his ongoing commitment to public safety for all Tulsans:

“I can't apologize for the actions, inactions, or derelictions of those individual officers or their chief, but as your chief today, I can apologize for our police department. I am sorry and distressed that the Tulsa Police Department did not protect its citizens during the tragic days of 1921. I've heard things said like 'Well that was a different time.' That excuse doesn't hold water with me. I've been a Tulsa police officer since 1969, and I've witnessed scores of different times, and not once did I ever consider these changing times somehow relieve me of my obligations of my oath of office and to protect the lives of my fellow Tulsans.”²²

Chief Jordan also took the opportunity to point to the department's actions to respond to recent hate-related violence as evidence of the department's changes.

Police departments participating in the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, a US Department of Justice– and COPS Office–funded project administered by a partnership of action research institutions including the NNSC, have initiated reconciliation processes based largely on the framework described in this document. Each of these processes of reconciliation has begun with an acknowledgment of harm by the police chief on behalf of his or her department. In the cities where the process is underway at the time of this writing—Minneapolis, Minnesota; Birmingham, Alabama; and Stockton, California—the chief made a statement to acknowledge harms both historical and contemporary and those perpetrated intentionally and those that were the unintended consequences of good faith efforts. In each case, the audience was a small group of community leaders carefully selected for their local influence and potential buy-in, including some who had been explicitly and directly critical of the police; and in each case, the acknowledgment has effectively grounded the larger reconciliation process initiated by these acknowledgments of harm in this unusual commitment to addressing the fundamental drivers of distrust both past and present—which has placed the subsequent steps

19. *Tulsa Race Riot: A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, 2001), 11–12, <http://www.okhistory.org/research/forms/freport.pdf>

20. “1921 Tulsa Race Riot,” Tulsa Historical Society & Museum, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://tulahistory.org/learn/online-exhibits/the-tulsa-race-riot/>.

21. *Ibid.*

22. “Police Chief Chuck Jordan's Speech and Greenwood Walk,” Tulsa World, accessed February 23, 2017, <https://vimeo.com/75105920>.

described here on relatively firm footing, as demonstrated by the continued participation of the community leaders in the listening sessions, strategic planning, and early implementation of the other aspects of the process described here.

When police leaders discuss not only the history of policing but also the record of their own department, they are “owning their institution.” They are accepting responsibility for their current work, acknowledging the history of their department, and recognizing the tangible effects both have had on people’s lives. Moreover, these acknowledgments become particularly powerful when they are coupled with tangible evidence that the department has changed or specific plans for how it will change in the future. These are all crucial components of being seen as a trustworthy partner. At the same time, it is important that police distinguish their department from other municipal failures—in other words, that they *not own* other institutions. Police can bear the brunt of distrust for the perception that government has failed or persecuted a community on many fronts (housing, education, healthcare, infrastructure), even though police are obviously not accountable for all of these shortcomings. Recognizing this basic fact helps police share some of the burden of public distrust. In fact, that recognition can lead police to become allies with the community in advocating for improvements. In both Los Angeles’s CSP and Las Vegas’s SVI, police acknowledged the failure of the city to provide adequately for certain neighborhoods and helped organize or lobby for service, infrastructure, or economic development. At the core, however, police agencies should focus on understanding what their institution represents and how its history and actions may still be alienating to their community and take the first step towards publicly acknowledging and addressing this history and present day reality.

Lessons

Key insights for the acknowledgment component of reconciliation are as follows:

- **Take the lead.** The police department has to make the initial outreach to the community to begin reconciliation.
- **Acknowledge or apologize.** Acknowledgments or apologies are an important first step for reconciliation. Identify and recognize the specific harms the department has caused the community or public safety failures it has allowed to occur.
- **Remember to “own your institution” but consider not owning others.** Differentiate the role police have played and can play versus the role of other municipal institutions.

In considering and practicing acknowledgment, cases from the field help provide useful examples and themes to draw upon:

- Apology and acknowledgment do not require the original wrongdoers or victims.
 - Wrongdoing and injustice can become attached to a group, organization, or institution.
 - Victimization can be shared by direct victims, their families, and their communities and across generations.
- Apology and acknowledgment mean more than saying sorry. They include
 - taking responsibility for an action;
 - recognizing the reality of harm done;
 - expressing respect for the position (fear, anger, etc.) of victims.
- Credibility of an acknowledgment or apology can be bolstered by
 - some form of reparation (rhetorical, symbolic, or socioemotional);
 - some form of practical measures to prevent future wrongdoings (policies, trainings, etc.).
- Acknowledgment and apology establish common understanding between communities and police. These gestures
 - confirm a common history;
 - legitimize previously ignored grievances;
 - establish a united front against future injustice.

Listening and Narrative Sharing

Police speak and act first to kick off a reconciliation process, but the process relies on hearing, exchanging, and capturing the grievances, aspirations, and narratives of the full range of voices in a community. The perspectives and experiences of civilians and police officers make up the basis for their approach and trust of one another—but each side’s background is rarely understood by the other. Through a process of executive-level listening sessions, expansion through the department, and public narrative sharing, police and their communities can come to better understand what causes distrust and begin to address its sources.

Executive-level listening sessions

Small group listening sessions with senior police leadership and community representatives offer a manageable way to begin to build understanding and trust. Identifying natural and authentic community representatives is crucial: There is no single “community” voice. Any city has multiple groups that have substantively different experiences with the police whether by race, neighborhood, LGBTQ+ status, age, or some other factor. Identifying and connecting to individuals with credibility and influence in these groups allows police to engage in small settings but distribute a message among the wider population. During these meetings, a primary trust-building act is simply to listen to grievances: to take special care to allow community members to air their grievances, consider those grievances, clarify misconceptions, and eventually work collaboratively to overcome the issues they identify for which there is no immediate solution in place. When following up on an issue presented by a community member who feels alienated or unheard by the police department, engaging that individual or someone they trust in the process of solving the issue powerfully conveys the department’s commitment to changing narratives. It is important that community members not fear the possibility of punitive measures for sharing their experiences and concerns. Police leadership should listen calmly and carefully and should be careful not to respond until the community members have shared their experiences and concerns to the extent they desire. In responding, officers should express thanks for the community members’ willingness to share what may have been a difficult experience with an authority figure as an accurate understanding of community concerns is necessary for improving police service and developing further trust. Where language barriers exist, law enforcement should provide interpreters.

Part of engaging in honest conversations and hearing difficult criticism means understanding that community members’ positions and understandings may be historically and personally rational without being factually correct—and that officers’ narratives can be tightly held and just as inaccurate. American history has given members of marginalized communities substantial reason to believe that the government—and specifically the police—has conspired and continues to conspire against them. Of course, though significant disparities still exist, the United States and its public institutions have made great strides to ensure everyone equal protection under the law. This fact does not erase that past experience, its lasting impressions, or the perceptions that current incidents or harms stem from the

same discriminatory outlook. It is important to understand the root of misperceptions and why beliefs that are factually incorrect (e.g., that the police have conspired with the Federal Government to distribute crack in minority neighborhoods) have such great salience among rational individuals. Understanding the sources of these divisive narratives removes the personal sting from allegations against law enforcement—or the community—that officers and community members might otherwise find unreasonable. Officers often see the community at its worst, providing a basis for officers to draw unfair conclusions about residents. Also troubling, officers consistently report feeling alienated by the disdain they feel from members of the communities that need their help most—and for whom they risk life and limb every day. Community members, especially those from communities with poor relationships with the police, are not often exposed to police perspectives. Articulating the experiences informing distrust is humanizing, especially if it is done with an acknowledgment that, like the community’s perceptions, distrust can be based on narratives that are arrived at but are ultimately unfounded. Open discussion of these experiences and contexts positions officers and community members to operate empathically without becoming entangled in arguments over specifics that can derail trust-building efforts. Through this type of experience, executives can come to understand the history and narratives underpinning distrust between the department and certain communities.

Small group executive-level discussions have been successfully conducted in a variety of contexts and designs. In Rockford as well as the National Initiative cities, chiefs have coordinated small group conversations as an intentional component of reconciliation. Through honest and direct meetings, Chief Epperson of Rockford gradually established connections and credibility with the city’s Black clergy. He also set up time and resources dedicated to hear directly from the city’s growing Latinx community. Fostering opportunities for community leaders to engage directly and honestly with the chief helped form partnerships necessary to address Rockford’s drug market problem.

The National Initiative cities already in the midst of their reconciliation processes have begun to model small group listening sessions. In Minneapolis, a few times a month Chief Janee Harteau met with representatives of local advocacy and service organizations usually for about two hours at a time. The meetings, which were private and kept small, generally included representatives of groups working on behalf of similar populations—LGBTQ+ or Hispanic people, for example—and were mostly populated by those chosen by the members of those groups who participated in the initial kickoff meeting. Community members were asked to describe their primary concerns and aspirations regarding the police department, policing in general, their communities’ relationship with and trust of law enforcement, and their personal stories that animate their and their communities’ perception of policing. A scribe took notes to flag compelling narratives to be documented as well as opportunities for follow-up.

In Birmingham, the NNSC piloted a new model for mutual listening called the Safety and Equity Circles (SEC). Over a period of three weeks, a group of approximately 10 rank-and-file officers and line supervisors met regularly with an equal number of community representatives for facilitated conversations and exercises designed to build a local, trust-based partnership to address community and police concerns and enhance public safety. The group continues to meet and is formulating collaborative approaches to improving public safety. In an anonymous after-action survey, all

participants agreed that the process “was a rewarding experience,” citing the “new skills and knowledge to address challenges in my community,” “an opportunity for personal reflection and insight so that my highest values can drive my outer work,” an enhanced understanding of one another’s motivations and experiences, and an enduring commitment to continuing to work together to improve trust and public safety in their communities. The NNSC team continues to work with those involved to determine how best to scale the process up. A guide produced in collaboration with Sustainable Equity, LLC is forthcoming. Anyone interested in learning more about the process should contact the NNSC.

In Stockton, Chief Eric Jones has developed a graphical representation of the various strands of listening sessions to share with community and city participants so they can better understand how they can be involved in the process. The model, which he calls “Listening in a New Way,” creates opportunities for elite-level police and community listening sessions; rank-and-file and community listening sessions; “Safety and Equity Circles” in the Birmingham model; and opportunities for other representatives of the criminal justice system, including the district attorney and chief of probation, to conduct listening sessions of their own. He also fed preexisting listening efforts into the framework. A documentarian who will be assisting in recording narratives on film sits in on the sessions, noting when powerful anecdotes regarding police distrust—or trust—are shared, flagging them for follow-up.

Though not led by a chief, the Watts Gang Task Force presents a similar type of group engagement and airing of grievances. In that case, the task force constitutes both a forum for community crime problem solving and a forum for grievances. Captain Phil Tingirides found the combination could be productive, rather than distracting, for public safety. When he began attending meetings of the Watts Gang Task Force, he was taken aback by the anger and despair he heard. Over time, he learned that listening to that anger and despair helped reduce it—especially when he acknowledged the pain he heard rather than getting defensive about specific allegations of police misconduct. When all concerns were out in the open, he could begin engaging them—by conveying a desire to do better and clarifying misconceptions about police practice where they existed. Tingirides and other officers also used the opportunity to share their narratives and press the community to do their part in crime reduction efforts. The openness of these meetings allowed the task force to defuse tense situations after incidents and act collaboratively to prevent crime. An important fact is that the task force also adapted to the needs of multiple populations in the community—to address the concerns of a newer Latinx population, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) set up parallel meetings with members of a Watts Latinx leadership group to facilitate the free flow of ideas and concerns specific to that group.

Expanding through the department

If executives can successfully engage with the history and narratives underpinning mistrust between the department and certain communities, it is both viable and important to push that understanding down through the department. The process of close engagement with the community—bringing to light and carefully considering the facts and narratives driving distrust, committing to a process of reconciliation, and beginning to chart that path—must be replicated in lower levels of the police department. Doing so also lets officers feel as though their own experiences are being validated and expressed and expands reconciliation thinking throughout the staff. This is especially crucial because these lower-level officers

are the ones with the most direct contact with alienated communities and therefore the greatest opportunity to advance or undermine efforts at reconciliation. Bringing your rank and file along can take many forms: trainings, conversations, direct exposure to community narratives, even changing metrics for success so that they align with the goals of reconciliation. But it is crucial that these officers be informed about why reconciliation is important and what makes it necessary, what it can do to help them do their jobs and be safer, what changes it will require from them, and how changes in practice emanate from the desire to reconcile. Certain things can be compelled—departments are discipline-based organizations—but a project as encompassing as seeking to reconcile with alienated communities requires top-to-bottom buy-in to comprehensively counter the divisive narratives at the heart of distrust. If officers do not believe in the rationale for reconciliation, it is extremely unlikely to have the deep or lasting impact envisioned here.

Although the SVI in Las Vegas did not start as a top-down reconciliation strategy, the spread of its principles demonstrates one way reconciliation listening and narrative sharing can spread through a department. The SVI began as an effort to remake the police department’s approach to preventing violence and making the neighborhood safer by committing to a sustained collaborative effort with community residents. Police leadership laid out a strategy for violence prevention, response, and intervention that set out specific roles for interested community members and law enforcement. The initiative involved both acknowledging that past strategies had not worked and close coordination and conversations with local religious and civic leadership. Leaders of that initiative took lessons from these experiences with them as they were promoted in the department. There, Undersheriff Kevin McMahill and others oriented priorities to bring reconciliation thinking to the attention of command staff and line officers. Discussions of historical precedent and narratives were introduced for command staff; line officers’ enforcement priorities were shifted to lead to fewer adversarial encounters; community tours offered formal opportunities for line officers to converse and meet community members; and other structured programming put officers and community members together—such as in a mentoring program for ex-inmates—specifically to engage and reduce distrust. Finally, the department decided to establish an entire Office of Community Engagement (OCE), which in part identifies leading critics of the department—particularly those who have built followings—and directly engages them in discussions about their concerns and department efforts to address them.

Share narrative at a general and public level

Beyond the direct engagement with community leaders and individuals that rank-and-file officers reach, there is a broader public need to collect and share narratives. On one hand, narrative collection can be important in empowering both police and community members to feel that their voices are heard and to use those voices to help inform changes. In Los Angeles, for example, the Blue Ribbon Rampart Review Panel’s collection of LAPD officers’ narratives was crucial in mapping for department leadership the conditions and perceptions that helped sustain the culture of “thin blue line” policing that drove a stake between officers and especially minority Angelenos. It laid the foundation for a comprehensive reassessment of LAPD culture that sought to address the drivers of officers’ feelings of alienation both within the department and toward the community.

But there is little precedent for narrative collection and sharing particularly for reconciliation: gathering information that is meant to be commemorated and shared to inform the larger social understanding of police-community relationships. Collecting and sharing narratives helps bring reconciliation to individuals who are not directly involved in small group sessions. Some independent organizations have conducted research that might be seen as a model in form. Although there is relatively little precedent for larger-scale narrative sharing, particularly in the cities reviewed here, some initiatives along these lines do exist. The Invisible Institute's Youth/Police Project works with teenagers on the south side of Chicago to collect and disseminate via YouTube video their experiences of everyday encounters (not perceived abuse) with police.²³ The *New York Times* has developed a video series of interviews with current and former police officers as they describe their perspectives on policing and race in the United States.²⁴ Pursuing similar efforts as part of a local reconciliation process has the potential to add great nuance to police and community understandings of one another.

23. "Youth/Police Project," Invisible Institute, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://invisible.institute/ypp/>.

24. Geeta Gandbhir and Perri Peltz, "A Conversation With Police on Race," *New York Times*, November 11, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/10/opinion/a-conversation-with-police-on-race.html>.

Lessons

Key insights for the listening and narrative sharing component of reconciliation are as follows:

- **Start small and high-level.** Police leaders should meet in small group listening sessions with community representatives to air grievances and understand narratives.
- **Seek rank and file buy-in.** When ready, create opportunities and direct staff in ways that bring similar conversations and narratives to officers on the ground.
- **Collect and share narratives with the public.** Expand the reach of the reconciliation process by establishing a way to collect and share police and community perspectives with those not directly involved in conversations and group sessions.

In considering and practicing listening and narrative sharing, cases from the field help provide useful examples and themes to draw upon:

- Small discussion groups are more effective than large events for listening; large events can be hard to manage and can get out of hand.
- There is no one “community.”
 - There are many populations in a given community that may have different concerns.
 - Set up opportunities to hear from and speak to each important group.
- Narratives can be powerful and important even if they are not necessarily fact; recognize that beliefs matter and often arise from real and painful experience.
- Give officers a chance to share their stories as well; understanding department narratives helps to work through perceptions that may be problematic for trust building.

Fact Finding

Listening and narrative sharing offer space for reconciliation participants to understand and process the narratives and personal experience that shape relationships; a formal fact-finding process helps to build an objective account of the local history and harms that produced the distrust behind those relationships. In the police-community context, this process might include a thorough accounting of the prejudicial laws police were compelled to enforce, major instances of police-community tension, data on disparities in treatment by the criminal justice system (and conceivably other public institutions), and other research that gives important context to the claims made by both groups. Public records, interviews with experts, and use of secondary sources and news reports are useful for establishing a clear and unbiased history that all parties can endorse. The fact-finding process often culminates in an official report or other product that is widely disseminated and used to bolster the case for reconciliation. Even if it does not, however, the process of fact finding itself leads participants to focus on and discover information they might otherwise not have found and to mainstream information that may be common to some populations but brand new to the broader public. The effort also demonstrates to the community that the department takes the history and status of the community seriously and is willing to face what may be ugly truths.

Types of fact finding

Although fact finding is common to reconciliation processes in other countries, there is not an extensive record of the process for police-community reconciliation in the United States.²⁵ That said, fact-finding reports on policing that were not explicitly geared toward reconciliation still offer useful examples.

In Los Angeles in particular, a number of reports were instrumental in redirecting the course of the department. The Blue Ribbon Rampart Review Panel—appointed by then Chief William J. Bratton but led by outside expert and activist Connie Rice, the police commission, and the inspector general—worked to get to the bottom of the underlying causes of the Rampart scandal of the late 1990s and point a way forward. The reports that followed were able to fully and officially establish, for the first time, the extent of the harm done to public trust and police morale and own the institutional culpability for Rampart.²⁶ The report catalogued the organizational failures of the LAPD and the prosecutorial

25. Martina Fischer, “Transitional Justice and Reconciliation: Theory and Practice,” in B. Austin, M. Fischer, and H.J. Glessmann, eds., *Advancing Conflict Transformation: The Berghof Handbook II* (Opladen, Germany: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2011), http://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/edaktion/Publications/Handbook/Articles/fischer_tj_and_rec_handbook.pdf.

26. Blue Ribbon Rampart Review Panel, *Rampart Reconsidered: The Search for Real Reform Seven Years Later* (Los Angeles: Blue Ribbon Rampart Review Panel, 2006), <http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/Rampart%20Reconsidered-Full%20Report.pdf>.

agencies to monitor conduct and rein in misconduct.²⁷ The document also identified the post-scandal reform of the Rampart division as a case study for possible reform—a positive vision for policing—describing the new emphases on community engagement, collaboration with the private sector, proactive supervision, integration of data and technology, and improved coordination with gang intervention workers.²⁸

The process of interviewing, fact finding, and airing of grievances demonstrated that Chief Bratton’s LAPD could be receptive to meaningful engagement with outside partners—even civil rights activists. Bratton embraced the findings of the Rampart report and lauded the work of the panel.²⁹ That report also set the stage for other high profile outside reports that would echo the blue ribbon panel’s emphasis on “decentralized community police and crime reduction strategy” and drill down on a new vision for gang violence reduction. In fact, just six months later, Rice’s Advancement Project presented a report commissioned by the Los Angeles City Council laying out the failure of past gang suppression strategies and the dysfunctional relationship between criminal justice agencies and offering a comprehensive, integrated, and neighborhood-sensitive approach to gang violence.³⁰ City Controller Laura Chick followed in 2008 with her own report, which added criticism to existing gang efforts, singled out the failure of approaches to youth, and requested an office be created in the mayor’s office to centralize new work.³¹ Bratton’s endorsement of concepts from these reports helped establish a common understanding of existing challenges and made solutions politically and practically viable.³²

In Stockton, the NNSC team is working with Dr. Elizabeth Hinton, Assistant Professor of History at Harvard University, to develop a factual record of police-community trust in the city. This effort—which is in its early stages—will likely include a combination of reviewing archives held by the department and city, newspaper archives, interviews with longtime residents and retired and current police officers, community policing and violence prevention strategies, and more. The medium in which this information will be preserved and presented is yet to be determined by a combination of Hinton, a documentarian, the police department, and members of the department’s Community Advisory Board.

27. Ibid., 46–80.

28. Ibid., 12–15.

29. “Chief Bratton Reacts to Blue Ribbon Report,” news release, Los Angeles Police Department, last updated July 13, 2006, http://www.lapdonline.org/july_2006/news_view/32893.

30. *A Call to Action: The Case for Comprehensive Solutions to L.A.’s Gang Epidemic* (Los Angeles: Advancement Project, 2007), <http://advancementprojectca.org/ap-publications/a-call-to-action-the-case-for-comprehensive-solutions-to-l-a-s-gang-epidemic/>.

31. Los Angeles City Controller, *Blueprint for a Comprehensive Citywide Anti-Gang Strategy* (Sacramento, CA: Sjoberg Evashenk Consulting, Inc., 2008), https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/controllergalperin/pages/106/attachments/original/1453848157/08-17b_lacityp_008236.pdf?1453848157.

32. Joe Domanick, *Blue: The LAPD and the Battle to Redeem American Policing* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 315.

Lessons

Key insights for the fact finding component of reconciliation are as follows:

- **Establish a shared record.** Fact finding creates an authoritative account of events that all parties can endorse.
- **Process matters.** The process of fact finding can uncover and publicize important but sidelined histories and circumstances.
- **Identify problems.** Fact-finding reports identify and highlight areas for improvement; this identification can also spur action and collaboration
- **Demonstrate willingness to face facts.** Committing to fact finding proves that the department is willing to face what may be uncomfortable truths.

Policy and Practice Changes

Acknowledgment, listening and narrative sharing, and fact finding establish the reasons and context for distrust—and these reasons are without fail based in past or continuing policies or practices.

Reconciliation requires committing to substantive changes in the behaviors and policies that brought about and continue to drive distrust. These changes can range from revisions to police protocols (e.g., deciding to issue citations rather than tickets for low-level crimes or altering internal review policies and repercussions for use of deadly force cases) to less formal measures (e.g., changing cultural norms by setting expectations of a certain degree of courtesy for stops). Only once police demonstrate a good faith effort to carry their stated commitment to trust building into their actions will the door open for communities to take on their own role in mitigating distrust. The burden is on police departments to create space for that conversation.

To pursue the most impactful policy and practice changes for reconciliation, departments should make sure to collaboratively develop and then communicate a commitment to better policing, to actually implement changes, and to explicitly connect these changes to the larger process of reconciliation. First, communicating a willingness to improve is a counterpart to the acknowledgment of harm: This statement confirms that the department is invested in building a fundamentally different relationship with the community. These commitments serve as driving principles for change and should be derived from close consultation with the community—whether formal mission statements or a concept that underlies behavior. The OCE, in Las Vegas, has a goal “to have the most progressive, engaged, and enlightened partnerships between law enforcement and the community in America”³³—which sets an ambitious agenda for the department as it seeks to develop interventions premised on the SVI framework. Connect Rockford, one product of the reconciliation process there, is organizing around the mission of “driving public safety strategy and community alignment through collective impact principles.”³⁴ In Watts, the CSP organizes its work around a relationship-based policing model. These are general commitments, rather than specific plans, but they help set expectations for the direction of the agencies.

Second, following through on changes—even if the changes are initially minimal—demonstrates that the agency is serious about its commitment to the reconciliation process. In fact, promising and then following through on actions is exactly how trust is built and how communities become more open partners for longer-term collaboration. Changes can be operational tweaks, shifts in priority, or overhauls of practice, but they should always address needs and wishes expressed by the community.

33. Draft strategic plan, supplied by Sasha Larkin, lieutenant, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, to Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Trust and Justice, January 6, 2016.

34. Draft strategic plan, supplied by Amanda Payton Hamaker, project manager at Connect Rockford, to Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Trust and Justice, November 10, 2015.

Finally, as these changes are announced and implemented, departments should clearly tie all new initiatives back to the original goal of rooting new practice in an acknowledgment of historical harm and an effort to improve on the dynamics that exacerbate the legacies of that harm in the present. Though police leaders may conceive and implement a number of diverse efforts in the same spirit of reconciliation, those efforts may not necessarily be understood as such by members of the community. This step provides a proof of concept for the process and helps promote further collaboration with community partners.

Examples of Changing Policy and Practice

Police leaders can start effective policy and practice change by understanding the major sources of discontent in the community. The process of listening and fact finding should provide ample opportunity to identify areas of focus. Beyond grounding change in need, the world of possible changes is broad. It may be helpful to think about changes within the department and changes to how the department interacts with the community. Establishing and providing resources for a new, community-oriented unit—such as the SVI or CSP—is one type of comprehensive internal change. In Rockford, the establishment of a new protocol for reviewing officer-involved shootings is an example of an incident-specific internal policy change. New types of training, like the one designed by the Advancement Project in Los Angeles, can also fulfill a commitment to new internal practice. Externally, agencies can adopt a new formal strategy—such as DMI—or emphasize new priorities that change the way they practice policing in the community.

Lessons

Key insights for the policy and practice component of reconciliation are as follows:

- **Communicate the commitment to change.** Publicly express a vision and intent for how policing should happen.
- **Consult with community.** Collaborate with community and review findings of fact finding and listening to identify priority areas for change.
- **Follow through.** Change policies and practices in ways that will improve the way police and community members interact.
- **Tie changes to the reconciliation process.** Explain how changes are fulfilling commitments set out in the reconciliation process to help establish trust and promote further collaboration.

Conclusion

The present national moment of heightened awareness of racial tension, particularly in the criminal justice system and particularly with respect to police-community relations, presents a unique opportunity—and challenge—for brave police executives across the country. Though the discussion is national, the solutions will start locally. This document draws out some of the specific practices that have allowed a few innovative police leaders to address these issues as best they can and provides guidance for what a full reconciliation process might look like. By examining these practices across cases and considering them in the context of both decades of work to build trust between police and communities in the field and a more recent concerted effort to work with law enforcement and communities to design a reconciliation process, the NNSC has been able to identify a number of components that seem to be essential to implementation. These components and their key elements are as follows:

- **Acknowledgment**
 - Take the lead. The police department has to make the initial outreach to the community to begin reconciliation.
 - Explicitly acknowledge historical harms and apologize.
 - Own your institution. Recognize the role of policing and this particular agency in those harms (as opposed to “we didn’t do that”).
 - Consider not owning other institutions—recognize anger toward other parts of government and society, and differentiate between them and the police department.
- **Listening and narrative sharing**
 - Start with small, executive-level listening:
 - Identify natural, authentic community representatives (as opposed to those who have come to identify themselves to outsiders as owning the issue and the community). Work with them in small, safe ways and groups.
 - Listen to their stories, experiences, and perspectives. People need you to hear them (which is different from simply making operational changes that address issues).
 - Tell your own story: Make clear what it is you represent and where you want to go (rather than letting expectations or others define that for you).

- Recognize that positions and understandings may be historically and personally rational without being factually correct.
- Bring your rank and file along while understanding their anger and their own experiences; expose them to community experiences and narratives.
- Collect and share narratives at a general and public level.
- **Fact finding**
 - Pursue a formal fact-finding process.
- **Policy and practice change**
 - Make an explicit statement, informed by consultative process, of how you think policing should happen.
 - Commit to actual policy and practice changes including a process for consistent evaluation of practices in light of the reconciliation effort and a process for implementing those changes.
 - Connect changes to the reconciliation process.

These components are drawn from cases where cities used some form of reconciliation to achieve impressive and substantive public safety goals, the best practice literature around other reconciliation processes, and initial implementation of intentional reconciliation processes in a handful of sites. Nonetheless, it is up to those with local knowledge and relationships adapt this guidance to local conditions and needs.

The United States has been at similar crossroads before: Mutual distrust between police and especially communities of color has simmered for generations and has boiled over to similarly explosive effect in at least two comparable waves since the 1960s. But precedent does not necessarily portend recurrence. This guide is presented with the firm conviction that history does not have to repeat itself and includes evidence to that effect in the form of the case studies presented here. Explicitly acknowledging the historical harms perpetrated by police and police departments and committing to changing in order to improve trust can halt the cycle of echoing recriminations that have traditionally dogged any discussion of the police-community dynamic. Both police and communities have serious, rational, considered concerns about one another. Understanding the experiences underpinning those divisive conclusions and working conscientiously to carefully refute the narratives on which they are based is the central dynamic of reconciliation.

Part Two.
The Practice of
Acknowledgment

Introduction. Acknowledgment and Apology about Injustice

In the 2010s, many police departments have used the national focus on criminal justice and policing to undertake important efforts to improve training, alter departmental policy, and create opportunities for respectful interaction with their communities, particularly communities of color.³⁵ These elements mostly consider the present and future of the policing profession with reforms often sparked directly from recent incidents.

Some police leaders have looked backward in addition to looking forward. They are recognizing that community beliefs and narratives are shaped not only by extreme or recent events but also by a much longer history. That history is not addressed by any suite of forward-facing reforms; effective efforts at establishing trust will also acknowledge the past. Fundamentally, reconciliation depends on some form of common understanding: a mutual recognition of the realities that led to the present. Though this retrospective approach to reconciliation is a fledgling movement in the United States,³⁶ law enforcement executives have started to operationalize it by leading their agencies in examining, recognizing, and publicly acknowledging the history and role of the police in past injustice. This study presents examples of these acknowledgments from diverse opportunities for reconciliation: civil rights era injustices in Alabama, race riots in Oklahoma, the harms of heavy drug enforcement in North Carolina, contemporary race and policing in Pennsylvania, an acknowledgment on the national stage by the head of one of the world's largest police organizations, and a variety of others following a defined reconciliation framework in diverse cities across the country. The actions of police chiefs and other law enforcement executives in these cases offer a range of practical examples for the new and developing practice of acknowledgment of harm, which can be the product of overt wrongdoing or the unintended consequence of good-faith efforts. They also show that the process has real, tangible effects leading to more trusting community relationships, stronger crime control strategies, and a healing of deep and historical divisions.

35. *Defining Moments for Police Chiefs* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 2015), <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/definingmoments.pdf>.

36. The practice has been used widely in other countries such as Canada, Norway, and much of Latin America: "RCMP Apology," Royal Canadian Mounted Police, last modified January 24, 2012, <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/aboriginal-autochtone/apo-reg-eng.htm>; Ofer Aderet, "Norway's Police Apologize For Their Role in the Holocaust," *Ha-Aretz*, last modified November 27, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/norway-s-police-apologize-for-their-role-in-the-holocaust-1.480742>; Kathleen Malley-Morrison, Andrea Mercurio, and Gabriel Twose, eds., *International Handbook of Peace and Reconciliation*, Peace Psychology Book Series no. 7 (New York: Springer Science and Business, 2013).

“Some of the worst parts of Black history would have been impossible without a perverted, oppressive law and order, too. Slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, lynchings, blockbusting. None of us did these things. None of us were troopers on the bridge at Selma. But it doesn’t matter that these things happened before many of us were even born. What matters is that our history follows us like a second shadow. We can never underestimate the impact these had. The hate and the injustice and the lost opportunities—for all of us. But where does this leave us, the police? Because law and order should never be the tool of oppression, not today. And while unfairness and inequality persist, we as police face a truth that some others would rather deny. . . . We cannot forget what is behind us nor the legacies still with us—but we cannot ignore the duty laid before us. As police, that duty is two-fold: As police, we must prevent crime and disorder. As police, we must fix what we’ve done and what we continue to do wrong. It’s ours to set right. It’s the crisis, it’s the challenge, it’s the opportunity.”

— William J. Bratton, Commissioner, New York City Police Department, remarks given at National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives symposium, March 13, 2015

Injustices of Past Eras

Where distrust characterizes the relationship between the community and the police, that distrust likely predates most if not all of the individual community members and police officers. Trust is built and eroded over long periods, and the tenor of many relationships may be influenced by events or time periods with much longer consequences. Police forces are often the most visible and active representative of law and the government to the public. In some communities, this visibility has created a historical record in which the police are associated with dire racial histories. In some cases, specific events in the course of a city's history can serve as placeholders for the past conduct of police and take on special historical and symbolic significance. Police chiefs in some jurisdictions have started to address these histories directly and proactively, using acknowledgment as a key component of reconciliation.

Example 1. Montgomery Freedom Riders

On the morning of May 20, 1961, a bus containing a group of Black and White civil rights protesters departed from Birmingham, Alabama, for Montgomery, Alabama. Activists were traveling by bus through the southern United States to hasten the enforcement of Supreme Court rulings that had deemed the segregation of public buses to be unconstitutional. In Birmingham, buses carrying Freedom Riders had been attacked by a mob led by the Ku Klux Klan and facilitated by the Birmingham police—a repetition of abuse they had faced prior to Birmingham en route from Atlanta.³⁷ Despite the direct expectation that the same could occur on their next step, this new set of activists left Birmingham for Montgomery. Although the Montgomery Police Department (MPD) knew of their impending arrival, the department did nothing to ensure their safety. In fact, the commander of the city's patrol division had promised a local Klansman that the police would not protect the Freedom Riders when they arrived;³⁸ a detective even told a local paper that the police “would not lift a finger to protect” them.³⁹ Reports later indicated that Police Commissioner L.B. Sullivan himself had gone so far as to guarantee the mob time to commit their violence.⁴⁰

37. Terry Gross, “Get on the Bus: Freedom Riders of 1961,” NPR, last modified January 12, 2006, <http://www.npr.org/2006/01/12/5149667/get-on-the-bus-the-freedom-riders-of-1961>.

38. Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice, Pivotal Moments in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 212.

39. *United States v. US Klans, Knights of Ku Klux Klan, Inc.*, 194 F.Supp. 897 (M.D. Ala. 1961), <http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/194/897/1943344/>.

40. Arsenault, *Freedom Riders* (see note 38), 220.

Upon arrival in Montgomery, the bus encountered a crowd of 200 people, many with weapons, and no police protection in sight.⁴¹ As they exited the bus, the activists were set upon and beaten by the mob. Those who did not escape were seriously injured, including future Congressman John Lewis, activist Jim Zwerg, and US Department of Justice official Robert Seigenthaler. Once the police and police commissioner did arrive, with the riot in full swing, “there was no effort to detain or arrest anyone involved in the beatings. Nor was there any attempt to clear the area, even though the crowd continued to grow. . . . Indeed, according to several observers, the realization that the police were openly sympathetic actually emboldened some members of the crowd, turning gawkers into active rioters.”⁴² The full police force materialized three hours after the violence had begun; it took another three hours until the riot ended, leaving 20 people seriously injured, including the activists and other African Americans in the vicinity.⁴³

The activists who did not require intensive medical care regrouped the next evening at the First Baptist Church, where they met the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., other leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and 1,500 community members. While there, a White mob of 3,000 surrounded the church, vastly outnumbering the small cohort of US Marshals assigned to protect it. The mob lobbed bricks through windows, set cars on fire, and forced the crowd inside to spend the night in the church until the Alabama National Guard could rescue them.

At every step of the ordeal, the MPD and others failed to adequately protect the traveling activists and local Black community and in some instances actively facilitated their abuse. The 1961 district court case *United States v. US Klans* criticized the MPD for its role in the attacks. Specifically, the court found, “the failure of the defendant law enforcement officers to enforce the law in this case clearly amounts to unlawful state action in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.”⁴⁴ The court ordered an injunction against the Ku Klux Klan, prohibiting them from interfering with the movement of activists across the south. However, it also ordered an injunction against the activists for “agitating within the law,” suggesting their actions were equivalent to those of the violent mobs. The Freedom Riders were “just as effectively causing an undue burden and restraint upon the free flow of interstate commerce in this State and district as is the activity of the other defendants in this case,” the decision read. “All are due to be enjoined and/or restrained from such further activities that produce this evil result.”⁴⁵ Rather than receiving increased protection or support as a result of the mob violence, the activists and the Black community of Montgomery were criticized by an arm of the criminal justice system for their “agitation.”

41. “National Register of Historic Places Program: African American History Month Feature 2012 Montgomery Greyhound Bus Station, Alabama,” National Park Service, accessed July 7, 2016, http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/afam/2012/montgomery_greyhound_bus_station.htm.

42. Arsenault, *Freedom Riders* (see note 38), 216.

43. *Ibid.*, 218–220.

44. *United States v. US Klans, Knights of Ku Klux Klan, Inc.* (see note 39), 902.

45. *Ibid.*

More than 50 years later, Montgomery local, Freedom Rider, and now Congressman Lewis received his first ever apology for the failure of the city to protect him and the African-American communities of the city. The messenger was MPD Chief Kevin Murphy. In March 2013, a delegation from Washington, D.C., including Lewis visited the city and First Baptist Church during a Congressional Civil Rights Pilgrimage. Murphy, who had admired Lewis and heard him speak as a member of other visiting delegations, received a call from the mayor asking him to attend the event at First Baptist. Murphy was waiting outside the church, which is across the street from the police department headquarters, when the delegation arrived. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas told the chief that his presence there as a police officer still made her nervous, a fear Murphy acknowledged. Having decided he needed to address the history of injustice in Montgomery and that this could be the fitting time, Murphy asked the pastor coordinating the visit if he could have a few minutes to speak. The pastor said he could not promise to fit the chief into the schedule, but when the group took a break for lunch and reporters left for their own meal, Murphy picked up the microphone for a statement he had only prepared mentally and discussed with one person (his deputy chief in attendance). He addressed Lewis directly: "I want to apologize," he said. "We failed to protect you and the other Freedom Riders. In 1961, Montgomery police were not very good to you. But today, we're a better department."⁴⁶ A video taken by a member of the crowd caught Murphy's next remarks and gesture: to give his badge to Lewis.⁴⁷ He continued, "When you got off the bus in 1961, you didn't have a friend in this part. . . . And I want you to know that you have friends in Montgomery Police Department, that we're for you, we're with you. We want to respect the law and adhere [to] the law, which is what you were trying to do all along. This symbol of authority which used to be a symbol of oppression needs to be a symbol of reconciliation. Fifty-two years ago, what you stood for has made a difference. The world that we live in today, this city that I get to serve as police chief is changed for the better because I wouldn't be standing here right now if it weren't for you. And this is a token of that appreciation, Congressman, because you changed this city. You changed this state. You changed this country. And as Pastor Moore said, you changed the world. And for that we are truly grateful to you."⁴⁸

46. John M. Glionna, "Police Chief's Apology Sows Healing, Friendship," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-c1-civil-rights-friends-20140923-story.html>.

47. StoryofAmerica, "Police Chief's 'Apology Heard 'Round the World' to John Lewis," YouTube, June 18, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKBVtLn5T1k>.

48. Traci G. Lee, "Civil Rights Leader Rep. John Lewis Accepts Long-Awaited Police Apology," NBC Universal, last modified September 12, 2013, <http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/civil-rights-leader-rep>.

After a hymn, the press who had been called back to the sanctuary interviewed Congressman Lewis and Chief Murphy about the moment. Lewis noted that “I’ve been to a lot of places in the last 50 years, and this is the first chief of any place in America to issue an apology and it means a great deal. . . . I’ve accepted this apology, and I’ve accepted this badge on behalf of so many people.”⁴⁹ Murphy committed to work toward a present and future police force markedly different from the past. He said,

“I want everyone in the movement, in the struggle to know, your voices were heard. . . . We are not your father’s MPD, and that is very true we are not. We are going to move forward as one Montgomery, one MPD, and we’re going to continue to work at it. There’s still a lot of work to be done, we know that. We in the police department have to make that first move to build the trust back in our community that was once lost because . . . we enforced unjust laws. Those unjust laws were immoral and wrong, but you know what, it’s a new day, and it’s a new police department.”⁵⁰

As far as Chief Murphy was concerned, “in order to get on to a path where we are going to work together, there has to be some reconciliation.”⁵¹ He hoped the apology could be a tool of reconciliation and avoid the appearance of a publicity stunt and its pitfalls. As he rose through the ranks of the department, he had continually found that “we would come up against a wall, a wall of mistrust between the community we serve and the police department.”⁵² He believed that the mistrust largely stemmed from the fact that “the citizens of this city have been through so much at the hands of the police department, where we, at one time, enforced unjust laws.”⁵³ As the news of the event at First Baptist spread nationally and internationally, hundreds of people from around the world wrote to Murphy about the apology, including community members who had been inside the church during the 1961 siege. Murphy believes the acknowledgment helped further healing with the local community and facilitated further interactions with the public.⁵⁴ The statement also offered a form of internal reconciliation for Black officers in the department. Murphy’s chief of staff, John Brown, later told interviewers: “This organization that I love and that I’ve donated 25 years of my life to was a part of that

49. StoryofAmerica, “Police Chief’s ‘Apology Heard ‘Round the World’” (see note 47).

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Steve Yanda, “Opening Session at PERF Annual Meeting: How Police Can Build Public Trust,” *Subject to Debate* 27, no. 3 (May/June 2013), 6–7, [http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Subject to Debate/Debate2013/debate_2013_mayjun.pdf](http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Subject_to_Debate/Debate2013/debate_2013_mayjun.pdf).

segregation, was a part of that oppression. To see it put in a different light, I became overwhelmed with emotion.”⁵⁵ Murphy says that “a lot people [in the department] said that they wish that it had been done sooner.”⁵⁶

“I served as a police officer and chief for over thirty years. Since my retirement I have continued to comment and write about the need for police improvement. It is my opinion that in order to restore trust between police and the communities they serve, our nation’s police must collectively apologize, just as Kevin Murphy did. It is what we need today to begin to heal the relationships between blacks and police. It is the only way to move past events of Ferguson, Staten Island, Cleveland, and the residual effects we all have inherited from slavery, Jim Crow, and pernicious and residual racial discrimination.”⁵⁷

— David C. Couper, Former Chief of Police, Madison (Wisconsin) Police Department

Chief Murphy’s statement resulted in appearances on national television, but he insists that reconciliation statements should place the emphasis on local interaction. “I never wanted the gesture—the act of reconciliation, the apology—to ever be seen as anything but a genuine and sincere gesture,” he said. According to Murphy, it has to be clear that the statement is not an attempt to score political points.⁵⁸ In his case, simply attempting to make the act personal, even though it was recorded and then shared, lent credibility to the gesture.

Fundamentally, the acknowledgment brings the official position in line with the common community understanding of the events that transpired. A wrong did happen, and the police did not do enough to prevent or stop it. The statement unequivocally accepts blame and expresses remorse. (Contrast it with the half-hearted statement of Commissioner Sullivan on the day of the attack that “We all sincerely regret that this happened here in Montgomery. . . . It could have been avoided had outside agitators left us alone. . . . Providing police protection for agitators is not our policy, but we would have been ready if we had definite and positive information they were coming.”⁵⁹) Chief Murphy’s comments, however, also arrived in the context of a wider departmental effort to foster reconciliation and historical understanding. His leadership on departmental training and reform supplements the legitimacy of his

55. StoryofAmerica, “Police Chief’s ‘Apology Heard ‘Round the World’” (see note 47).

56. Kevin Murphy, chief, Montgomery (Alabama) Police Department, interview with Stephen Lurie, research and policy associate, National Network for Safe Communities, January 2016.

57. David C. Couper, “The Case for Apology,” *Improving Police* [blog], December 17, 2014, <https://improvingpolice.wordpress.com/2014/12/17/the-case-for-apology-2/>.

58. Murphy, interview (see note 56).

59. Arsenault, *Freedom Riders*, 156 (see note 38).

apology, adds practical weight to his pledge the offense will not reoccur, and offers a form of tangible reparation (in addition to giving his badge to Congressman Lewis). Since taking the position, Murphy had removed Confederate imagery from a departmental patch. He had also participated in the establishment of a memorial for the Whitehurst Case, another watershed moment for race and policing in Montgomery in which a police cover-up attempted to hide the police murder of a man they incorrectly suspected of a robbery.⁶⁰ Most significantly, Murphy created and instituted a new training curriculum on Policing in a Historic City: Civil Rights and Wrongs in Montgomery, which he required all police personnel, including civilians, to complete. The class provides a history of civil rights, race, and policing in the United States with particular focus on crucial cases in Montgomery history (including the Freedom Riders' visit). The curriculum, which includes a visit to the Rosa Parks Museum, is intended to provide context to officers about how the community sees them and how they can improve their dealings with community members. At least anecdotally, Murphy says that since he instituted the curriculum, he has heard fewer complaints and more compliments from citizens, and young officers have told him the course taught them context they did not know about their city.

Although Chief Murphy has now moved on from the MPD, his case offers a lasting example of genuine and holistic acknowledgment. A 50-year-old injustice remained a scar on the history of the city and the police department, particularly in communities that continued to mistrust the police. Murphy's sincere acknowledgment and apology, coupled with practical measures to educate officers and change the status quo, present a compelling case for baseline actions toward reconciliation.

Example 2. Tulsa race riots

By its very nature, the acknowledgment of historical injustices allows for flexibility in timing and preparation. While Chief Murphy's impromptu personal gesture allowed for a sincere exchange at an opportune time, chiefs can also plan public acknowledgments around relevant community events. Chief Chuck Jordan of the Tulsa (Oklahoma) Police Department (TPD) took an opportunity in 2013 to offer an apology on behalf of the TPD for wrongdoings the police had committed more than 90 years earlier during the Tulsa race riots of 1921.

The riots began when police arrested Dick Rowland, a young Black man whom a young White female elevator operator had accused of assault, setting a spark to a racially divided and tense city. A standoff between Black and White mobs outside the courthouse where police were holding Rowland led to a gunshot that set off a rampage towards the city's affluent Black neighborhood of Greenwood.⁶¹ Though restricted from interacting with greater Tulsa, the Greenwood area was a unique center of African-

60. Erin Edgemon, "City of Montgomery Unveils Marker Recognizing Police Cover-Up in 1975 Shooting Death of Bernard Whitehurst; Family Still Wants Apology," Alabama Media Group, last modified April 16, 2013, http://blog.al.com/montgomery/2013/04/city_of_montgomery_unveils_mar.html.

61. Dexter Mullins, "Survivors of Infamous 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Still Hope for Justice," Aljazeera America, last modified July 19, 2014, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/7/19/survivors-of-infamous1921tulsaraceriotstillhopeforjustice.html>.

American wealth and education in the early 20th century United States. The White mob that set off for Greenwood was headed to a beacon of Black achievement. When they got there, they looted and set fire to buildings, destroying 35 city blocks and leaving thousands of Black families without homes or possessions.⁶² In attacks on Black residents defending their homes, shootouts between Black and White groups, and other violence, an estimated 300 people—mostly Black—died.

Law enforcement and local authorities, including the police department and the Oklahoma National Guard, were instrumental in making the devastation of the riots possible.⁶³ The Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, a report from 80 years after the tragedy, concluded with respect to law enforcement during the riot that (1) “municipal and county authorities failed to take actions to calm or contain the situation” before the riot; (2) civil officials deputized White men who then “did not stem the violence but added to it;” (3) “public officials provided firearms and ammunition” to White Tulsans; (4) the “Oklahoma National Guard participated in the mass arrests of all or nearly all of Greenwood’s residents, removed them to other parts of the city, and detained them in holding centers;” (5) government agents “deliberately burned or otherwise destroyed” homes and other buildings in Greenwood; and (6) “despite duties to preserve order and to protect property, no government at any level offered adequate resistance, if any at all.”⁶⁴ The commission also concluded that in the aftermath of the riots “neither [city nor county government] contributed substantially to Greenwood’s rebuilding; in fact, municipal authorities acted initially to impede rebuilding” and that “not one of these criminal acts was then or ever has been prosecuted or punished by government at any level, municipal, county, state, or federal.”⁶⁵ The impunity and visibility of the riot, scholars believe, catalyzed the rapid expansion of Ku Klux Klan membership in the Tulsa area; the Klan “used the riot as a recruiting tool.”⁶⁶ For the most part, this particular period of history has remained obscured from public view: the Tulsa race riot only became part of the public education curriculum in the city in 2012, and the establishment of the state commission as the first public reckoning came after more than 75 years.⁶⁷

62. “1921 Tulsa Race Riot,” Tulsa Historical Society & Museum, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://tulsahistory.org/learn/online-exhibits/the-tulsa-race-riot/>.

63. Charles P. Henry, *Long Overdue: The Politics of Racial Reparations* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 82.

64. *Tulsa Race Riot: A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, 2001), 11–12, <http://www.okhistory.org/research/forms/freport.pdf>.

65. *Ibid.*, 13–14.

66. “The riot would change all of that. Beginning with what one student of the history of the Klan described as ‘the first open sign of the Klan’s presence in Tulsa’ in early August 1921, more than two months after the riot, the Klan literally exploded across the city.” *Ibid.*, 48.

67. A.G. Sulzberger, “As Survivors Dwindle, Tulsa Confronts Past,” *New York Times*, June 19, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/20/us/20tulsa.html>.

Chief Jordan expressed interest to the Mayor's Police and Community Coalition in finding an appropriate time to acknowledge his police department's role in these events. With the coalition's support, Jordan decided to deliver a statement at an event on Literacy, Legacy, and Movement Day, which the city held in its John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park, part of the Greenwood district. The chief's short remarks formed part of a choreographed and recorded program⁶⁸ and included several crucial elements of acknowledgment and apology. He said,

"I can't apologize for the actions, inactions, or derelictions of those individual officers or their chief, but as your chief today, I can apologize for our police department. I am sorry and distressed that the Tulsa Police Department did not protect its citizens during the tragic days of 1921. I've heard things said like 'Well that was a different time.' That excuse doesn't hold water with me. I've been a Tulsa police officer since 1969, and I've witnessed scores of different times, and not once did I ever consider these changing times somehow relieve me of my obligations of my oath of office and to protect the lives of my fellow Tulsans."⁶⁹

Chief Jordan explicitly accepted responsibility for the department's inaction and even dispensed with common excuses for past injustices. He went on to confirm his position by referring to the department's recent actions to find justice for the Black community.⁷⁰

"I'm also going to tell you this is not the same police department it was in 1921. I hope that the dedication and commitment that your officers demonstrated in the wake of the Good Friday killings shows our community that hate motivated crimes or any other . . . visited upon our citizens will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be brought to justice. . . . While we should never forget the crimes and injustices that occurred in 1921, you can rest assured that your police department today will never allow such an atrocity to occur. We will be at the front lines to protect your lives, your families, and your property. We took an oath to do so, and your police department today will honor that oath."⁷¹

By labeling the events with words like "injustices" and "atrocity," Chief Jordan recognized and joined victims in morally condemning both the historical and contemporary crimes against the community. He told press that he hoped collective healing from the damage of the riots would help reduce the distrust

68. David Harper, "Tulsa Police Chief Chuck Jordan Apologizes for Department Inaction in 1921 Race Riot," *Tulsa World*, September 22, 2013, http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-police-chief-chuck-jordan-apologizes-for-department-inaction-in/article_d95da515-fe21-5204-8012-6118ecd632c4.html.

69. "Police Chief Chuck Jordan's Speech and Greenwood Walk" (see note 22).

70. Jordan said in interviews that his intent was "not so much about apologizing. It was to assure them that this is not the same police department that it was in 1921." Still, the nature of the comments presents a compelling picture of both messages.

71. "Police Chief Chuck Jordan's Speech and Greenwood Walk" (see note 22).

of the police department that the community passed down from generation to generation. Though Jordan’s statement simply acknowledged a historical truth, it was unprecedented: No prior chief had ever publicly acknowledged the department’s failure.⁷² Following the remarks, local Black leaders applauded the chief for his initiative to recognize the city’s history and contribute to the continuing healing process.⁷³

In February of 2015, then Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey delivered a speech at Georgetown University titled “Hard Truths: Law Enforcement and Race.” His statements on the history of policing are among the highest-level acknowledgments of police wrongdoing by any government official.

“All of us in law enforcement must be honest enough to acknowledge that much of our history is not pretty. At many points in American history, law enforcement enforced the status quo, a status quo that was often brutally unfair to disfavored groups. . . . That experience should be part of every American’s consciousness, and law enforcement’s role in that experience—including in recent times—must be remembered. It is our cultural inheritance. . . . One reason we cannot forget our law enforcement legacy is that the people we serve and protect cannot forget it, either. So we must talk about our history. It is a hard truth that lives on.”*

* James B. Comey, remarks delivered at Georgetown University, February 12, 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/hard-truths-law-enforcement-and-race>.

72. Harper, “Tulsa Police Chief Chuck Jordan Apologizes” (see note 68).

73. Ibid.

Police Tactics and Practice

Police conduct in the service of public safety, no matter how well-intentioned, may also have created a rift between low-income and minority communities and police forces. Drug enforcement can be one example: In attempting to address the drug trade and related violence and disorder, some police enforcement strategies gained a reputation for promoting hard-handedness,⁷⁴ racial profiling,⁷⁵ and mass incarceration.⁷⁶ Many people, particularly in the African-American community, came to see police to be as harmful to their lives as the drug dealers themselves.⁷⁷ Conversely, on matters of serious crime, many have criticized police practices for negligence, pointing to low homicide clearance rates that they believe demonstrate an insufficient regard for Black lives.⁷⁸ As a result, many communities do not trust police to enforce the law without undo harm nor to adequately protect them from harm done by their fellow citizens.⁷⁹ Acknowledgment or apology can help to mark a shift away from past practices, using condemnation of past mistakes and wrongs to offer a new start for police organizations attempting a new strategy. These processes affirm that police and community have a shared goal of public safety and that the future will involve working toward that goal using mutually acceptable strategies.

Example 3. High Point crime fighting

The city of High Point, North Carolina, incorporated the process of apology into reworking their approach to high-crime areas of the city. In the mid-1990s, faced with high rates of violent crime and multiple open-air drug markets, the city of High Point and then Police Chief Louis Quijas decided to embark on a new approach to policing based on the “focused deterrence” strategies Professor David Kennedy and colleagues had developed in Boston as “Operation Ceasefire.” The status quo of policing in High Point, as in many communities, involved heavy enforcement—surveillance, stops, and arrests—in the majority Black communities suffering disproportionately from violence and the chaotic effects of open-air drug markets. In contrast to this approach, the new strategy required that the High Point Police Department (HPPD) focus on a core population—chronic violent offenders—and work with the

74. Hannah L.F. Cooper, “War on Drugs Policing and Police Brutality,” *Substance Use & Misuse* 50, no. 8–9 (March 2015), 1–7, doi: 10.3109/10826084.2015.1007669.

75. Justin Wolfers, David Leonhardt, and Kevin Quealy, “1.5 Million Missing Black Men,” *The Upshot*, *New York Times*, April 20, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/04/20/upshot/missing-black-men.html>.

76. *The Drug War, Mass Incarceration, and Race*, fact sheet (New York: Drug Policy Alliance, 2016), [http://www.drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DPA%20Fact%20Sheet_Drug%20War%20Mass%20Incarceration%20and%20Race_\(Feb.%202016\).pdf](http://www.drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DPA%20Fact%20Sheet_Drug%20War%20Mass%20Incarceration%20and%20Race_(Feb.%202016).pdf).

77. Jim Fealy, chief, High Point (North Carolina) Police Department, interview with Stephen Lurie, research and policy associate, National Network for Safe Communities, January 2016.

78. Jill Leovy, *Ghettoside: A True Story of Murder in America* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015).

79. Elaine B. Sharp and Paul E. Johnson, “Accounting for Variation in Distrust of Local Police,” *Justice Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2009), 157–182, doi: 10.1080/07418820802290496.

community to directly communicate a message of “no violence” to them, offering social services to those who wanted them and warning that groups affiliated with individuals continuing to commit violence would receive special attention from law enforcement.

As part of the shift to this radically different practice—and later efforts to apply the same approach to closing drug markets—the police department required a new connection with the community. Chief Jim Fealy, who succeeded Chief Quijas, designed a process to introduce the new strategy through a series of community meetings, often led by local clergy, where he explained the strategy and apologized for the department’s past failures. There was a widespread narrative in the Black community that police (many of them non-Black) simply intended to harass and arrest young Black men rather than to help the community become safer. Fealy believed the city needed a new footing. “There was baggage that needed to be dealt with,” he said. “The African-American community in large part didn’t trust us anymore . . . they didn’t have faith in us, they didn’t believe we were their police department, they were seeing things that were contradictory to giving us their trust and faith.”⁸⁰ Fealy believed that the department’s record was not malicious but had nonetheless driven a wedge between the police and the community. He noted that in circumstances like his, some chiefs say, “I’m not about to apologize—my people have done nothing wrong.” Even so, he says, not doing wrong is not the same as doing things right. Fealy says his message to the community started from this understanding.

“We work real hard, we put a lot of effort into what we do, but shame on us for not seeing what everyone else is seeing . . . that we’re spinning our wheels and not getting anywhere and not doing any good. And not only that, but the way we go about this, when we get more and more frustrated, what happens is we become more aggressive in our tactics, and that’s not what you want, that’s not what you’re asking for. You’re asking for the problem to be taken care of without your community being turned into a war zone by us. Shame on us for not being smart enough to realize that we needed to change gears.”⁸¹

Chief Fealy referred specifically to the failure of police to remove chronic crime problems from neighborhoods, and alienating the community, using traditional methods. He decided to make acknowledgment and apology a central part of introducing the new method. First, he took pains to instill in the department a recognition that current practices were not working. He made acknowledgment of wrongdoing part of the conversations he had with front-line officers as the new strategy began. “[They] had no problem with it,” Fealy said. “They acknowledged . . . it ain’t working.”⁸² Next, he held small conversations and acknowledgments with local leaders he already knew. From there, he began to attend community meetings in the neighborhoods where the police department was focusing its efforts

80. Jim Fealy, interview (see note 16).

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

and made sure his local officers found him an audience with people whom “the other community members actually listen to.” After being introduced by a local leader, Fealy would begin his remarks by saying “I’m sorry.”⁸³

Professor Kennedy paraphrases Chief Fealy’s message:

“I know we’ve let you down. We haven’t protected you. What we’ve done hasn’t worked. And we’ve done bad things. We did them with the best of intentions, we were trying to do the right thing, but we’ve done harm, and I’m sorry. But you’ve let us down, too. You stopped calling, you stopped holding us to a high standard. If you’ll meet us in the middle, I give you my word we’ll never leave you again. We will not abandon you. I believe there’s a much, much better way that we can do this, and I want to share it with you, and I want to know what you think and whether you’ll work with us.”⁸⁴

Following these remarks, Chief Fealy would explain the new approach and geographic focus of the police department’s efforts and ask for their help in implementing the new approach. These meetings started with 10 to 20 people, and Fealy asked attendees to spread the message throughout their community (the attendance at some gatherings eventually grew to the hundreds). Through this process—and the accompanying change in tactics—the HPPD forged a stronger relationship with the community and a solid footing for pursuing a community-based crime reduction strategy that had immediate and lasting impact.⁸⁵

Like other apologies and acknowledgments discussed here, Chief Fealy’s comments offered responsibility for past wrongs and moved definitively toward new solutions. Though in this case the chief also placed some responsibility on the community for their inaction, he explained that this did not absolve the police of their actions (and pointed out that police were often the instigator of the broken bond).⁸⁶ Frank discussion of responsibility, to Fealy, was “one of the things the community responded to

83. Trevor Stutz, “Five Police Departments Building Trust and Collaboration: Innovations in Policing Clinic, Yale Law School, High Point, North Carolina, Full Case,” BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2015), <http://bjaexecutivesessiononpoliceleadership.org/pdfs/006.2cFivePDCaseStudiesHPNCFull.pdf>.

84. David Kennedy, *Don’t Shoot: One Man, A Street Fellowship, and the End of Violence in Inner-City America* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 170.

85. “Program Profile: High Point Drug Market Intervention,” National Institute of Justice, last modified July 29, 2014, <http://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=361>.

86. Jim Fealy, interview (see note 16).

the most” during his tenure. To him, police chiefs hold immense responsibility for their departments—past, present, and future. Because he embarked on the strategy only shortly after coming to High Point, he relied on his interpretation of a chief’s responsibility:

“As far as I was concerned, the day I became the chief there I was responsible for everything that ever had happened and was getting ready to happen between the police department and the people of High Point. . . . It didn’t matter that I’d only been there a week. . . . If I’m going to be the chief of police, it’s my department, good and bad and if something’s wrong it’s up to me to fix it, and it’s up to me to try to do things that work to produce desirable results, not undesirable results.”⁸⁷

Though Chief Fealy has since retired, the HPPD continues to emphasize its intensive working relationship with community leaders⁸⁸ as part of its collaborative approach to reduce violent crime.⁸⁹

87. Ibid.

88. Greg Barnes, “Seeking Safety: High Point An Example of Community, Police Partnership,” Capitol Broadcasting Company, Inc., last modified September 28, 2014, <http://www.wral.com/seeking-safety-high-point-an-example-of-community-police-partnership/14024108/>.

89. Natalie Stewart, “Cooling the ‘Hot Spots’: Violence Decreases Amid Drug Crackdown,” *The High Point Enterprise*, February 16, 2016, http://www.hpenews.com/news/violence-decreases-amid-drug-crackdown/article_31c759b6-d4b8-11e5-95dd-d3d493d03ef3.html.

Addressing Contemporary Contexts

Though historically unjust systems and policy have created the background for strained police-community relationships, daily interactions directly influence contemporary perceptions of police. As police chiefs lead their departments through daily operations and national events, opportunities arise for them to deal head-on with recent injustices and wrongs. Chiefs around the country have recently made statements and held conversations on everything from general policing history to specific incidents in an effort to bridge the divide between their departments and their cities.

Example 4. Pittsburgh and discussing race

On New Year's Eve 2014, Pittsburgh Police Chief Cameron McLay stopped in to a coffee shop during a parade through the city. Inside, he found a group of activists making signs and engaged them in discussion about race, bias, and policing. They asked him to hold a sign that read "I RESOLVE TO CHALLENGE RACISM @ WORK" and "#END WHITE SILENCE." McLay held the sign and shared a photograph of himself with the sign on social media, engaging in the highly active national discourse around race and policing at that time. Mayor Bill Peduto saw and also shared the photo on his Facebook account. The chief and mayor, however, faced criticism from some quarters in media and among the police ranks.⁹⁰ What started as a small gesture became an opportunity for a larger conversation around policing, which McLay addressed in a letter to the department on January 2, 2015. He reaffirmed his commitment to the statement in the photograph and explained the background of his position. The letter read, in part,

"The sign indicated my willingness to challenge racial problems in the workplace. I am so committed. If there are problems in the PBP related to racial injustice, I will take action to fix them.

"To me, the term 'White silence' simply means that we must be willing to speak up to address issues of racial injustice, poverty, etc. In my heart, I believe we all must come together as community to address real world problems; and I am willing to be a voice to bring community together. . . .

"The reality of US policing is that our enforcement efforts have a disparate impact on communities of color. This is a statistical fact. You know, as well as I, the social factors driving this reality. The gross disparity in wealth and opportunity is evident in our city. Frustration and disorder are certain to

90. Michael A. Fuoco, "Mayor Supports Chief McLay's Embrace of Anti-Racism Message," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 4, 2015, <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2015/01/04/Mayor-supports-Chief-McLay-s-embrace-of-anti-racism-message/stories/201501030134>.

follow. The predominant patterns of our city's increased violence involves black victims as well as actors. If we are to address this violence, we must work together with our communities of color.

“We, the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, need to acknowledge how this reality feels to those impacted communities. Crime and disorder take us to the disadvantaged communities, which are predominantly those of color. The disparities in police arrest and incarceration rates that follow are not by design, but they can feel that way to some people in those communities.

“I know, because I have been there too. My own street drug enforcement efforts were well intended but had an impact I would not have consciously chosen. In retrospect, we should have been far more engaged with those in the communities where we were doing our high-impact, zero tolerance type policing; to obtain the consent of those we were policing.”⁹¹

In addition, Chief McLay apologized to anyone “who felt I was not supporting you,” thanked the officers for their commitment, discussed how upcoming training will “refine our policing efforts,” and announced his intent to visit all “zones and work units in the coming weeks to allow opportunity for open discussion.”⁹² McLay also decided to publish much of his original statement on his Facebook page in addition to its complete reproduction in the press, adding his public endorsement to the message.

Although the original poster and subsequent e-mail take a very different form than other examples in this study that refer to generations-old events, their direct engagement with past mistakes is a common theme. The chief’s commitment to his statement, even in the face of criticism, and his explicit goal of reconciliation give the gesture additional credibility. As part of his tenure, Chief McLay has overseen the beginning stages of implementation of a sweeping set of innovative reforms and initiatives guided by the US Department of Justice’s National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, of which Pittsburgh is a pilot city, focused on reconciliation, procedural justice, and implicit bias.

91. “Text of E-mail from Chief Cameron McLay to Bureau of Police,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 4, 2015, <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2015/01/04/Text-of-email-from-Cameron-McLay-to-Bureau-of-Police/stories/201501040204>.

92. Ibid.

Acknowledging Harm as the First Step in a Defined Reconciliation Process

The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice is a project funded by the US Department of Justice and coordinated by a consortium of research institutions led by the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to improve trust between police and—especially—marginalized minority communities. Each of the six National Initiative cities (Birmingham, Alabama; Fort Worth, Texas; Gary, Indiana; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Stockton, California) is working to implement a variety of interventions focused on three primary pillars: (1) enhancing procedural justice and police legitimacy, (2) reducing implicit bias, and (3) undergoing a process of reconciliation. Professor Kennedy and his team, including the authors of this report, are the architects of the National Initiative reconciliation process and are providing technical assistance to police, community, and city partners to put it into practice.⁹³

The core components of this process are those referenced in the introduction to this guide: acknowledgment of harm, listening sessions and narrative gathering, fact finding, and policy and practice change. So far, separate from Chief McLay's independent effort described earlier, three police chiefs of departments taking part in the National Initiative have publicly acknowledged historical harm to signal the formal beginning of their reconciliation processes. Their stories are included here.

In each of the following examples, acknowledging harm was intended as the crucial first step in the broader process of reconciliation. The concept of reconciliation emanates from the belief that there has been insufficient attention paid by criminal justice and police policymakers to the historical fact of their agencies' complicity in enforcing and compounding the American government's racially oppressive practices and that formal recognition of the impact of those practices—and the experiences that they have created for communities that trust police least—is a prerequisite to and must inform efforts to comprehensively build police-community trust. Beginning the reconciliation process with a formal acknowledgment of harm identifies that historical lens as the process's guiding framework. It also gives agency leadership the space to accept some measure of blame for the very real trust deficits faced by their departments today without laying all of that blame at the feet of their employees. The rest of the process flows from this initial acknowledgment: Listening sessions expose chiefs and rank-and-file officers alike to the experiences of living within the historical context described in the acknowledgment; narratives are gathered and facts are compiled to build a thorough record, both experience-based and objective, of the scope of harm and distrust and to understand what the community needs in order to

93. More on the National Initiative can be found at "National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice," National Network for Safe Communities, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.trustandjustice.org>.

build trust; and policies and practices designed to overcome the harm are developed and implemented in partnership with affected communities. Described in the following sections are the acknowledgments made by the National Initiative chiefs to formally begin the process outlined here.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Minneapolis Police Chief Janee Harteau faced a difficult task when she met with 22 community leaders in a YMCA on the city's predominately Black north side in June 2016. It had been less than eight months since activists had occupied the Minneapolis Police Department's (MPD) Fourth Precinct for 18 days to protest the circumstances surrounding the death of Jamar Clark, a 24-year-old Black man from the neighborhood who was shot during an altercation with two officers on November 15, 2015. Tensions still ran high; just three weeks before the meeting, Lieutenant Bob Kroll, president of the Minneapolis police union, called Black Lives Matter—members of which were involved in the occupation and subsequent protests—a “terrorist organization.”⁹⁴

The assembled community leadership included representatives of the groups that had criticized the department broadly and Chief Harteau personally: representatives from Native American, African-American, Latinx, LGBTQ+, and youth advocacy groups ranging in age from teenagers to octogenarians. Harteau, determined to get her message across, relied on a written statement she had prepared. She read aloud:

“I’ve actually written much of what I’m going to say because I want to make sure I get it right. I’m committed to this process [of reconciliation]. . . . I know that many of the things you want, I also want. Just an arrest can mark someone’s life forever, and a conviction can cause even more damage. I particularly want our students and our young people to be kept out of prison . . . but I recognize that members of the police have been part of this country’s awful and racist past. And I reject it. I am not responsible for it and I did not do it. But I can apologize for it. We know that hundreds of years of policing a racist status quo has left a legacy.”⁹⁵

Chief Harteau went on to pledge to begin this process by “listening better” to the communities—represented initially by the people at the table—most affected by this legacy of “policing a racist status quo.” These meetings, which Harteau conducted regularly with smaller groups of close-knit community advocates for months after the initial meeting, were meant to give her a better understanding of the

94. “MPD Union Leader: ‘Black Lives Matter is a Terrorist Organization,’” CBS Minnesota, last modified June 1, 2016, <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2016/06/01/kroll-blm-terrorists/>.

95. Janee Harteau, chief, Minneapolis Police Department, remarks at community meeting, YMCA of North Minneapolis, June 21, 2016.

community's unmet desires and needs with regard to the police. She also sought to build confidence in her commitment to the process by announcing changes to the department's use of force policy, including instituting "duty to intervene" and "sanctity of life" policies.⁹⁶

Though community members' responses were varied, gratitude and respect for Chief Harteau's brave public stance were common themes. Activists who had publicly decried what they saw as Harteau's neglectful mishandling of the Jamar Clark case and their neighborhoods more generally turned their attention to other perceived antagonists, namely rank-and-file officers and members of the union. Even so, nearly all of the community voices echoed a willingness to take another step in the reconciliation process that was laid out that day, especially when the chief gave reassurances that her officers would be required to participate. Given the difficult circumstances of the meeting, this incremental step was considered profound in that it opened new, albeit tenuous, space for collaboration where none had existed previously.

Birmingham, Alabama

Chief A.C. Roper, a Birmingham native who was a child during much of the city's famous and fraught civil rights era activism, sees the reconciliation process as a continuation of the work of that generation's esteemed foot soldiers. On August 15, 2016, he convened a meeting of a number of Birmingham-based leaders of the civil rights movements—friends of Dr. King including Odessa Woolfolk, Bishop Calvin Woods, and Myrna Jackson—alongside more contemporary activists from the faith community, Black Lives Matter, and LGBTQ+ and youth advocates, in a room at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. His message for the assembled was one of gratitude, hope, and sober determination: Civil rights had come a long way in his lifetime thanks to the efforts of the elders in the room, but safety and equity were still unequally distributed across the city, and he hoped to work with the "new guard" to continue to make progress.

"We think we have another opportunity to serve as a national model for good. I often talk about how we police under the shadow of the civil rights struggle. In 1963, Birmingham was the most segregated city in America. The police department was the arms and legs of the most segregated city in America. We'd chase you all over the place, beat you up, throw you in jail left and right. We're standing on the verge of history—we've done some things really well. But I know we have a long way to go. I'm committed, and my command team is committed, to being part of the solution and not part of the problem.

"Not only did we do things wrong in the 60s, we've done things wrong today. . . . It's not a reflection on the brave men and women who do our job well to say that we have a long way to go. I've been wearing a uniform for 31

96. Libor Jany, "Minneapolis Police Reveal Changes to Use of Force Policy," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 9, 2016, <http://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-police-reveal-changes-to-use-of-force-policy/389509371/>.

years now. When I look at what’s occurring in our nation and our city—the riots, the mistrust, the injustice—I know we can do better. So, we need you—because we can’t do it without you.”⁹⁷

Chief Roper also described policy changes that he believes reflect his commitment to changing the relationship by developing a policing ethic that prioritizes public safety without unnecessary contact or incarceration. He alluded to the city’s Violence Reduction Initiative, the city’s implementation of the NNSC’s focused deterrence-based strategy to coordinate police, community, and social services to strengthen community capacity to prevent crime. He described a fledgling initiative to coordinate with the courts and district attorney’s office to divert low-level drug offenses, a reduction in traffic checkpoints, and a new directive he was giving his officers to knock on residents’ doors in the aftermath of large enforcement actions in order to let them know what is going on.

The civil rights leaders were given the first chance to respond. Some were by turns effusive about the chief’s statement and frank about the department’s history of race-based mistreatment of Black communities. Bishop Calvin Woods said, “Let me say this—I appreciate the chief inviting me to come. I believe you have the spirit of Martin Luther King. . . . But in my neighborhood, people knew the police by their reputations. They wore gloves so they could smack us. Thank god for cameras. Thank god that I have one too.”⁹⁸ Others spoke more directly to contemporary conditions; one said, “I hate the police. Because all they do is mess with us. They never come for anything good. They never come for anything productive. . . . In those . . . schools, they come in to tell the kids ‘we’re here to help you.’ They hold doors open, they give little badges. But on our side of town, the ‘resource’ officers mace the kids, get in fights with them.”⁹⁹

The younger community representatives echoed the misgivings of the elders but then pledged, one by one, to continue the process as well. The overwhelming sense in the room was a willingness to work with the department to continue the process. By 9:00 p.m., janitorial staff had to insist that those assembled leave; more than 90 minutes after the session was supposed to wrap up, community members young and old still milled around waiting for an opportunity to speak with Chief Roper and with one another about what they would do next.

The following day, Chief Roper hosted a meeting each with representatives from the city’s LGBTQ+ and youth communities as part of his next round of structured listening to the communities he felt most required gains in trust with the police. At each, he gave some version of the statement he had made the

97. A.C. Roper, chief, Birmingham Police Department, remarks at community meeting, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, August 11, 2016.

98. Calvin Woods, president, Birmingham chapter, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, remarks at community meeting, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, August 11, 2016.

99. Anonymous civil rights leader, remarks at community meeting, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, August 11, 2016.

previous night with slight modifications to reflect his own rationale for pursuing a unique reconciliation track with these specific populations. For example, he framed his commitment to reconciling with the LGBTQ+ community in the context of what he described as a personal shortcoming.

“The lightbulb came on a few months ago. When something happens to my LGBTQI community, I don’t know who to call. So I designated a sergeant as my liaison, and you’ll get to know her. That was about two weeks before the Orlando tragedy. I went to a seminar to learn enough to be able to lead on this issue. I learned a lot about what we’re not doing. I’m not blind to think that just because we don’t receive a lot of complaints we’re doing well. I’m committed to leading the city to fix this problem.”¹⁰⁰

Stockton, California

Stockton (California) Police Chief Eric Jones convened his Community Advisory Board (CAB) on October 20, 2016, to begin his reconciliation process with an acknowledgment of historical harm. Though he and the CAB had been meeting for years and had discussed in great detail both the individual experiences and systemic injustices of historical and contemporary racial inequity and oppression, everyone saw the chief’s statement as leading to exciting new territory.

“We need to start. We’re in a position of power, so it’s on me. . . . There are disparities across the board, but you could argue that law enforcement disparities have the greatest impact. You might be wondering how my officers take this. Many don’t know the history. So I tell them about how officers were dispatched to lynchings, and that hits home. Outright illegal things, but also pretty specific zero-tolerance policing. We did reduce crime, but we need to do things differently.”¹⁰¹

He went on to describe a series of measures he was taking in the name of doing things differently, including a warrant amnesty program and a youth diversion program. The CAB, many of whose members had been involved in various police reform and community policing initiatives for decades, was virtually unanimous in its endorsement of the chief’s vision—and refreshed by his concision and bravery. Said one CAB member, “This is the first time I’ve been really excited to hear this kind of thing.”

A national audience: Chief Terry Cunningham, President of the IACP

When Terry Cunningham, chief of the Wellesley (Massachusetts) Police Department, decided to use the powerful platform afforded him in his role as president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to “acknowledge and apologize for the actions of the past and the role that our profession

100. A.C. Roper, chief, Birmingham Police Department, remarks at community meeting, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, August 12, 2016.

101. Eric Jones, chief, Stockton Police Department, remarks at community meeting, Stewart Eberhardt Building, October 20, 2016.

has played in society's historical mistreatment of communities of color," he was not at all sure that the reception would be warm. He had made the decision with trepidation the night before. The morning of his speech at the 2016 IACP convention, he and IACP Executive Director Vincent Talucci joked that they would write "are you sure you want to do this?" on the teleprompter; Cunningham thinks that even this slight discouragement may have changed his mind. But when he finished his brief remarks, many of the thousands of police executives in attendance rose for a standing ovation.

Chief Cunningham's decision to acknowledge harm on behalf of the profession evolved from his response to the series of tragic police and civilian deaths over the summer of 2016. In Dallas for the memorial service for five police officers who were murdered by a lone gunman at a peaceful protest march on July 7, Cunningham met with President Barack Obama. In their private conversation, Cunningham expressed displeasure at remarks Obama had made about the police shootings of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling, which he believed presupposed guilt on behalf of the officers. He felt that the president's remarks demoralized legitimate and necessary efforts at reform. Still, Cunningham was deeply affected by one point Obama made: He recalls the president saying, "Look, it's going to have to start with an acknowledgment. And unfortunately, law enforcement doesn't like to acknowledge that they've been part of history, they've been part of the problem."¹⁰²

Back at the memorial, looking at the families of the slain officers, Chief Cunningham reflected on the president's words and felt stirred to action. He felt he needed to do something soon to create the space for dialogue before he moved on from his role as IACP president: "There has to be more that I can do to make sure that we really do something to try to heal the wounds that are out there so that we can at least have a discussion."¹⁰³

For the next couple months, he grappled with the idea of making a public statement that would "move the needle" toward more productive engagement on both sides. He discussed the idea with Talucci and spoke with then FBI Director James Comey about similar remarks, also highlighted in this document, that Comey had made at Georgetown University in February 2015. By October 16, Cunningham was resolved to say something; as he would say later, "[the IACP] only had five people who said they wanted their membership back . . . but if it had been five thousand, I would've been okay with it, because it's something that needed to be said."¹⁰⁴ After he spoke, Chief Cunningham told the *Washington Post* that "We have 16,000 police chiefs and law enforcement officials gathered here in San Diego and it is an important message to spread. Communities and law enforcement need to begin a healing process and this is a bridge to begin that dialogue. If we are brave enough to collectively deliver this message, we will

102. Terry Cunningham, president, International Association of Chiefs of Police, interview with David Kennedy, director, and Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, October 27, 2016.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

build a better and safer future for our communities and our law enforcement officers. . . . It is my hope that many other law enforcement executives will deliver this same message to their local communities particularly those segments of their communities that lack trust and feel disenfranchised.”¹⁰⁵

The full statement, which immediately received national press and praise, is presented here. Chief Cunningham and Talucci report an overwhelmingly positive response from both police chiefs and some who are often critical of police actions, including the deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union and Sherrilyn Ifill, president of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. The IACP is in the process of considering how best to capitalize on the momentum for broader engagement and change generated by the statement.

Remarks of Terrence M. Cunningham, president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, at the 2016 convention in San Diego, California

I would like to take a moment to address a significant and fundamental issue confronting our profession, particularly within the United States. Clearly, this is a challenging time for policing. Events over the past several years have caused many to question the actions of our officers and have tragically undermined the trust that the public must and should have in their police departments. At times such as this, it is our role as leaders to assess the situation and take the steps necessary to move forward.

This morning, I would like to address one issue that I believe will help both our profession and our communities. The history of the law enforcement profession is replete with examples of bravery, self-sacrifice, and service to the community. At its core, policing is a noble profession made up of women and men who have sworn to place themselves between the innocent and those who seek to do them harm.

Over the years, thousands of police officers have laid down their lives for their fellow citizens while hundreds of thousands more have been injured while protecting their communities. The nation owes all of those officers, as well as those who are still on patrol today, an enormous debt of gratitude.

At the same time, it is also clear that the history of policing has also had darker periods.

105. Tom Jackman, “US Police Chiefs Group Apologizes for ‘Historical Mistreatment’ of Minorities,” *Washington Post*, October 17, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2016/10/17/head-of-u-s-police-chiefs-apologizes-for-historic-mistreatment-of-minorities/?utm_term=.d325903396a8.

Remarks of Terrence M. Cunningham, president of the IACP (cont'd)

There have been times when law enforcement officers, because of the laws enacted by federal, state, and local governments, have been the face of oppression for far too many of our fellow citizens. In the past, the laws adopted by our society have required police officers to perform many unpalatable tasks, such as ensuring legalized discrimination or even denying the basic rights of citizenship to many of our fellow Americans.

While this is no longer the case, this dark side of our shared history has created a multigenerational—almost inherited—mistrust between many communities of color and their law enforcement agencies.

Many officers who do not share this common heritage often struggle to comprehend the reasons behind this historic mistrust. As a result, they are often unable to bridge this gap and connect with some segments of their communities.

While we obviously cannot change the past, it is clear that we must change the future. We must move forward together to build a shared understanding. We must forge a path that allows us to move beyond our history and identify common solutions to better protect our communities.

For our part, the first step in this process is for law enforcement and the IACP to acknowledge and apologize for the actions of the past and the role that our profession has played in society's historical mistreatment of communities of color.

At the same time, those who denounce the police must also acknowledge that today's officers are not to blame for the injustices of the past. If either side in this debate fails to acknowledge these fundamental truths, we will be unlikely to move past them.

Overcoming this historic mistrust requires that we must move forward together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of our society must realize that we have a mutual obligation to work together to ensure fairness, dignity, security, and justice.

It is my hope that, by working together, we can break this historic cycle of mistrust and build a better and safer future for us all.

Conclusion

As the examples presented here suggest, police acknowledgment of wrongdoing can come in many forms. Statements by chiefs may address events generations old or still developing; they can be in informal opportunities, public press conferences, or private meetings; they may address specific events or general themes and vary from the hyperlocal to national and cultural. Acknowledgment is an essential public act as part of reconciliation—and apologies, as personal and situationally sensitive acts, may be offered with these acknowledgments.¹⁰⁶ There is no single method for police acknowledgment of and apology for harm. Contexts, identities, timing, and abilities all matter immensely. The examples presented here offer some ideas about the language and situations that chiefs have successfully used to move toward reconciliation in their communities—which will be applicable to other jurisdictions to different degrees. Most of all, the policing strategy of acknowledging and apologizing for harm depends on the sincerity of the execution. Former Chief Fealy of High Point is among the most experienced police executives in the country at using apology and acknowledgment for reconciliation. Asked for advice for other executives, he offered a message that echoes through the other statements studied here—that a reestablishment of trust depends, simply, on being trustworthy.

“I don’t think there’s a recipe for [acknowledgment] because each individual’s going to have to do it in a way that’s comfortable to them, because if you’re not sincere, folks will see it. If you’re not sincere, folks will root that out in pretty quick order and you’ll be in even worse trouble than you were before. So whatever you tell them, you have to mean it. Whatever you promise them, you have to live by and keep it.”¹⁰⁷

There are risks in attempting to offer acknowledgments incompletely or insincerely. If police executives fail to vet their message with the mood of their department, they risk being undercut by conflicting messages; if they do not offer substantive changes or commitments, the statements may come across as hollow; if the public deems their gestures insincere or politically expedient, chiefs risk insulting their communities further.¹⁰⁸

106. Findings from an NNSC working group on reconciliation acknowledged the necessary nature of acknowledgment while noting that apology cannot, and should not, be mandated.

107. Jim Fealy, interview (see note 16).

108. An apology in which there is no willingness to undertake any practical measures of reparation is likely to seem insincere or hollow. It may even be worse than no apology at all. . . . Because practical gestures may include efforts to improve attitudes and relationship, and need not always have a material focus, we prefer to speak of *practical amends* instead of *material amends*. For potential reconciliation between the parties and for good evidence of sincerity on the part of perpetrators, a full-fledged moral apology should include a commitment to practical amends.” Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd, “The Promise and Pitfalls of Apology,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33, no. 1 (spring 2002), 67–82, 73, doi: 10.1111/1467-9833.00124.

“Since I left policing, I have had a number of opportunities to help individuals and groups repair broken trust. I know apology is only the very first step. After apology, validating acts must occur. If the offender begins to act trustworthy, and shows concern and compassion for those offended, that which was once lost can begin to be rebuilt.”

— David C. Couper, Former Chief of Police, Madison (Wisconsin) Police Department

However, silence and inaction are also poisonous to relationships suffering from unaddressed injustices. As Professors Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd explain, the effect of an injustice echoes much farther than the incident itself: A “lack of acknowledgment” can be a “second wound of silence” to victims and constitutes a continuing “moral contempt” for the injured.¹⁰⁹ As long as there is an unaddressed injustice, victims can continue to perceive police as supporters or defenders of that injustice—and there will be no compelling reason for injured communities to reconcile with the perceived injurer.

Both immediately following and long after an injustice, police leadership need to address it head on. As police departments and the institution of policing exist beyond each generation, they retain lasting reputations but also have continuing opportunities to form new ones. The record of police-led acknowledgment and reconciliation discussed here suggests that addressing the past is fundamental to resetting the police’s relationship with a community and is a potent resource for all executives looking to forge ahead in collaborative and effective policing.

109. Ibid., 71.

Part Three.
**Case Studies of Police-
Community Reconciliation**

Case Study One: West Las Vegas, Nevada

Introduction

West Las Vegas is a historic neighborhood of Las Vegas, Nevada, with the city's highest concentration of African-American residents. Like many majority Black neighborhoods in other cities, the composition of West Las Vegas emerged from both formal and informal discrimination that kept Black residents and businesses out of other parts of the city. The segregation of the neighborhood, municipal neglect, events of civil unrest, and—later—elevated levels of serious violence likewise contributed to a deep distrust between police and the community in West Las Vegas that persisted into the 2000s. By 2006, despite the Las Vegas Metro Police Department's (LVMPD) earlier adoption of community policing, Westside residents still did not approve of the way their neighborhood was being policed. A spate of gang-involved homicides in December 2006 and January 2007, combined with the inability of the LVMPD to connect with the community to stop the violence or solve the crimes, would demonstrate how stark the divide remained.¹¹⁰

In response, a captain in the LVMPD proposed a new strategy, the Safe Village Initiative (SVI), as a comprehensive gang-related violence strategy built on a collaborative effort between police, community members, and social service providers. Behind the operational work of the SVI is an emphasis on owning—both publically and internally—the racial history that informs residents' distrust of police. Leadership emphasized and even mandated that officers needed to hear about the experiences of the community, field complaints, and work towards remedies. The captain supervising the effort canvassed the neighborhood listening to residents, scheduled community meetings, and made a point to apologize for offenses specific (we mishandled that incident) and sweeping (the city and the police have failed to protect you). He also pressured other city agencies to come to terms with historical and contemporary neglect of the area. This process of acknowledgment and explicit recognition is a core component of reconciliation and is distinct from traditional community policing efforts. This study uses the SVI to illustrate the distinction between community policing strategies and the concept of reconciliation and explores how reconciliation is a separate but complementary project for police looking to reset relationships in their communities. This case study will discuss the context of West Las Vegas, the origins of the SVI, the design of the strategy, the SVI's advanced reconciliation efforts, and the expansion of the SVI philosophy to the department at large.

110. Deborah Ann Reyes, *Safe Village: Reducing Violent Firearms and Gang Related Crime in West Las Vegas*, Submission to IACP/Motorola Webber Seavey Award for Quality in Law Enforcement (Las Vegas, NV: Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, 2011), <http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/WSPastWinnerAppExample.pdf>.

Context

West Las Vegas (also known as the Westside or “the 106” for its ZIP code, 89106) is an area of around 25,000 people¹¹¹ and has the highest proportion of African-American residents (38 percent) of any ZIP code in Las Vegas.¹¹² It is among the city’s poorest neighborhoods, with a 2012 median household income of \$27,864, second-lowest in the city and nearly 40 percent less than the median household income citywide.¹¹³ One of the few areas of the city with recent overall population decreases, the area has also seen a significant increase in Hispanic residents, who now constitute more than 40 percent of the population.¹¹⁴ Within the Westside, however, locals note that the area has become increasingly “diverse” and “integrated” but still draw a sharp distinction between the Sherman Gardens area (Black) and the Union area (Hispanic).

This diversity is particularly noticeable given the origin of West Las Vegas as a Black neighborhood created by discriminatory and segregationist practices. Starting in the 1940s, industry, public works projects,¹¹⁵ and service jobs offered Las Vegas as an alluring prospect for Black migration.¹¹⁶ By 1955, there were more than 15,000 Black Las Vegans, about 10 percent of the city’s population. They were not, however, spread across the city.¹¹⁷ So pronounced was Las Vegas’s racial segregation that it earned the inauspicious moniker “Mississippi of the West,” popularized by a March 1954 article in *Ebony* magazine titled “Negroes can’t win in Las Vegas.”¹¹⁸ In the late 1930s, city officials “refused to reissue licenses to Black businesses in the downtown area and suggested that they would issue the license if the business moved to the Westside of the tracks.”¹¹⁹ Restrictive housing covenants forced Blacks west as well, which was considered especially unfavorable because of the widespread assumption that the city’s development would track east toward the Hoover Dam.¹²⁰ Numerous requests for infrastructure in the Black areas of town went unheeded throughout the 1950s; in 1956 the city’s “slum clearance program”

111. *Demographics* (Las Vegas, NV: Las Vegas Redevelopment Agency, n.d.), http://www.census.gov/history/pdf/vegas_demographics.pdf, 8.

112. *Ibid.*

113. *Ibid.*, 10.

114. *Ibid.*, 8.

115. Joseph E. Stevens, *Hoover Dam: An American Adventure* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 176.

116. Sindre Fresdvik, “1940’s Growth of Las Vegas,” Museum of the City, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.museumofthecity.org/1940s-growth-of-las-vegas/>.

117. “Las Vegas History,” NAACP Las Vegas, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.naacpllasvegas.com/#!/projects/c21kz>.

118. James Goodrich, “Negroes Can’t Win in Las Vegas,” *Ebony* 9, no. 5 (March 1954), 44–53.

119. Claytee White, “The March That Never Happened: Desegregating the Las Vegas Strip,” *Nevada Law Journal* 5 (Fall 2004), <http://scholars.law.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1308&context=nlj>, 71–83.

120. Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930–2000* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2000), 176.

condemned large portions of the neighborhood.¹²¹ In that same year, the Westside was physically separated from the booming downtown by the building of the 12-lane Interstate-15, referred to by locals as the “concrete curtain.”

By the late 1950s, virtually all of Las Vegas’ Black residents lived in the Westside, a destitute neighborhood without “running water, nor working sewage lines, nor paved streets.”¹²² Black celebrities visiting the city to perform—such as Sammy Davis, Jr.—were not allowed the same privileges as other performers or the White guests: He described having “to leave through the kitchen with the garbage.”¹²³ Although a planned protest by the NAACP helped lead to an end of Jim Crow rules in 1960, the longtime municipal neglect, separation, and discrimination would be the backdrop for protest, riots, and violence that flared up in the following decades. In 1968, as it had in other Black communities in the United States, Martin Luther King’s assassination set off civil disturbances on the Westside. Local historian and activist Trish Geran recalled that police stood underneath the Interstate 15 overpass brandishing shotguns, “stopping Blacks from going downtown.”¹²⁴ The next year, an escalation of incidents and then demonstrations at recently integrated local high schools set off two days of rioting on the Westside.¹²⁵ Protesters sought further desegregation, increased city investment in the Westside, and an end to overbearing and aggressive policing.

These issues would linger and erupt decades later after the verdict in the 1992 Rodney King verdict. On April 30 of that year, two people were killed and 111 arrested, and police and firefighters combined to respond to nearly 10,000 calls for help during riots on the Westside.¹²⁶ That tipped off weeks of unrest for most of the next three weeks “as the police have battled crowds that have burned and looted

121. Robert McKee and Shannon M. Monnat, “Racialized Barriers and Social Action in West Las Vegas: The F Street Wall Controversy,” *ASA Footnotes* 39, no. 4 (April 2011), http://www.asanet.org/footnotes/apr11/vegas_0411.html; Earnest N. Bracey, *The Moulin Rouge and Black Rights in Las Vegas: A History of the First Racially Integrated Hotel-Casino* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2009); Robert J. McKee, *Community Action Against Racism in West Las Vegas: The F Street Wall and the Women Who Brought It Down* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2014); Kevin Cook, “The Vegas Hotspot That Broke All the Rules,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, last modified January 2013, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-vegas-hotspot-that-broke-all-the-rules-165807434/?all&no-ist>.

122. “Las Vegas History,” NAACP Las Vegas, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.naacplasvegas.com/#!/projects/c21kz>.

123. “African Americans in Las Vegas,” PBS Online, last modified July 11, 2005, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/lasvegas/peoplevents/p_africanamericans.html.

124. Trish Geran, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, April 20, 2015.

125. Eugene P. Moehring and Michael E. Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 202.

126. “King Riot’s Impact Still Questioned,” *Las Vegas Sun*, last modified April 26, 2002, <http://lasvegassun.com/news/2002/apr/26/king-riots-impact-still-questioned/>.

buildings, shot at police cars, and pulled a man from a car and beat him.”¹²⁷ Fires caused \$6 million dollars in property damage; all of the Metro substations in the Westside housing projects were destroyed.¹²⁸

Although the direct cause of the unrest lay in Los Angeles, the violence in Las Vegas represented two festering local problems. First, and the initial motivation for widespread agitation, was the resentment felt by Westside residents against an absentee or discriminatory local power structure and specifically against the police who represented and enforced these norms on a daily basis. Unhappy with repeated and unjustified stops as well as other mistreatment, people saw the King verdict as an opportunity to demand a change. Local activist Elgin Simpson claims that the riots began as a peaceful march that police prevented from proceeding downtown—police counter that they only intervened once violence had already started.¹²⁹ Either way, the LVMPD’s response to the crisis seemed to affirm many residents’ belief that the police were not there to protect them. Pastor Willie Cherry, who had moved to the Westside nearly 20 years earlier, was at the time of the Rodney King riots a middle-aged professional, married with children. He described how the police’s protection of the rest of the city, instead of stopping the violence in the Westside, encapsulated the Westside’s feeling about the police:

“It was saying to us, we don’t stand a chance. We’re always wrong, they’re always right . . . and they had tanks and everything else out there. They wanted to make sure that nobody could get from Westside to downtown through Bonanza Street, so they blocked it with tanks and all this equipment out here. It was for the people in that area—it wasn’t for the city, it was for that particular area.”¹³⁰

Meanwhile, Cherry recalled, he saw people he knew trying to protect their own property from being destroyed. Other residents also felt that the police and fire department were “going to let [the Westside] self-destruct.”¹³¹ Police countered that they were not the cause of the riots and were prevented from safely addressing them.¹³² One sergeant who responded to the unrest was incredulous at suggestions that the police had an indirect role in priming Westside residents to riot: “These

127. Dirk Johnson, “After the Riots: Mob Violence Continues in Las Vegas,” *New York Times*, May 19, 1992, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/05/19/us/after-the-riots-mob-violence-continues-in-las-vegas.html>.

128. Ibid.

129. Cathy Scott, “Rioting Led to Changes in West Las Vegas,” *Las Vegas Sun*, April 30, 1997, <http://lasvegassun.com/news/1997/apr/30/rioting-led-to-changes-in-west-las-vegas/>.

130. Willie Cherry, pastor, Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, March 2015.

131. Lynnette Curtis, “Businessman John Edmond Upset by Police, Fire Fighters Reaction in Las Vegas Riot,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 29, 2012, <http://www.reviewjournal.com/life/las-vegas-history/businessman-john-edmond-upset-police-fire-fighters-reaction-las-vegas-riot>.

132. Lynnette Curtis, “Las Vegas Police Officer Lew Roberts Remembers Chaos of Riot Night,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 29, 2012, <http://www.reviewjournal.com/life/las-vegas-history/las-vegas-police-officer-lew-roberts-remembers-chaos-riot-night>.

demonstrators set fires, beat up delivery drivers, and attacked reporters,' [Sergeant Rory] Tuggle said. 'We did not turn them back to riot on their own community. We did not put lit Molotov cocktails in their hands or give them guns to fire on residents and police.'" ¹³³

The second reason for the spread of the disturbance is widely understood to be the actions of street gangs. While many residents and police disagreed over the legitimacy of the protests and the performance of law enforcement, there was also some agreement over the role of criminal activity taking advantage of the circumstances. Yvonne Atkinson Gates, then a candidate for the Clark County Commission she would serve for 14 years, told reporters that the gangs "are taking advantage of people's emotions. . . . These are people that don't even care about the Rodney King verdict. They are terrorizing our community. And we want them stopped." ¹³⁴ But the presence of the gangs and the shootings that accompanied them also made many on the police force feel unable to intervene ¹³⁵—particularly given the inability of the LVMPD to add officers in pace with the city's growth. ¹³⁶

Regardless of the immediate cause or exacerbating factors, however, the King riots drew attention both to the neglect of the Westside and the fact that the police department was unprepared to handle such an event or to deal with the gangs on the Westside. The new attention led to new meetings, committees, and collaborations in the city. It also heralded investment and government spending on the neighborhood, particularly social services, housing, and commercial infrastructure. ¹³⁷ The police department committed to change, too, attempting to introduce community policing to the Westside after the riots. Lieutenant Cliff Davis, who was tasked with the job, recalled the LVMPD's intention: "Before the riot, police determined how we would police the public, but after the riot we listened to what the community wanted from its police." ¹³⁸ State Senator Joe Neal, who represented the Westside from 1973 to 2011, politely expressed skepticism about the LVMPD's initial forays into the community policing strategies it adopted in the aftermath of the unrest, saying they "[would] work only if police are mindful of the constitutional rights of Black folks." ¹³⁹ Indeed, even with positive changes, the results of the next 14 years would be mixed. On the one hand, as in other American cities, serious violence

133. "King Riot's Impact" (see note 126).

134. Johnson, "After the Riots" (see note 127).

135. Curtis, "Las Vegas Police Officer Lew Roberts" (see note 132).

136. Johnson, "After the Riots" (see note 127).

137. Scott, "Rioting Led to Changes" (see note 129).

138. "King Riot's Impact" (see note 126).

139. Ibid.

declined precipitously in Las Vegas¹⁴⁰ and West Las Vegas.¹⁴¹ Still, as the origin of the SVI suggests, the history of police-community distrust and serious gang violence did not disappear. By 2006, both were still critical issues for the community, and the memory of the 1990s and before had not disappeared.

Origins of the Safe Village Initiative

H and Owens Streets, often described as the heart of the Westside, burned during the riots in both 1969 and 1992. Though there has been no rioting since the spring of 1992, distrust persists between Westside residents and the local police. Officers who worked then recall homicide rates as high and clearance rates as low.¹⁴² But there was no need to measure antagonism with imprecise proxies like clearance rates—it was palpable. Lieutenant Kelly McMahon had been in the Westside only since about 2013, but as a longtime Las Vegas and career cop she knew the reputation of the 106. Describing the early 2000s, she said, “We’d be mobbed when we went in. Cops wouldn’t respond to a call without a partner because they wouldn’t leave their squad cars unattended. Tires were slashed if we left our car outside.”¹⁴³ For police working to make the community safer, the sense that they were unwanted was bewildering and, for some, infuriating.

In 2006, Gary Schofield was appointed captain of the Bolden Area Command (BAC), which oversees the Westside and was established in the wake of the 1992 riots. Captain Schofield’s first assignment on the force, in 1985, was in West Las Vegas. The LVMPD’s strategy at the time, as crack and associated violence ravaged the neighborhood, was indiscriminate and rough: “We would literally drive as fast as we could to open drug markets. My job was to run, chase, and arrest anybody that ran.”¹⁴⁴ This blitzkrieg approach did not foster close relationships with the community: “We wouldn’t turn on our overhead lights [at night], because if we did we’d get rocked and bottled.”¹⁴⁵ After time undercover for a narcotics sting, in special weapons and tactics (SWAT), and as captain of the gang unit, Schofield came to question the philosophy and tactics of the LVMPD that were clearly not working. “We’d just respond to the shooting scene and pick up the pieces,” he said. “It was like a factory line. Nothing was being done or said about ‘how do we keep this stuff from occurring?’”¹⁴⁶ He expressed his frustration to Sheriff Bill Young; Young responded by assigning him to lead the BAC. The clear implication of Schofield’s

140. Gabriel Dance and Tom Meagher, “Crime in Context,” The Marshall Project, last updated September 28, 2016, <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2016/08/18/crime-in-context#.sITKtp1HI>.

141. “King Riot’s Impact” (see note 126).

142. Kelly McMahon, lieutenant; Gary Schofield, deputy chief; and Kevin McMahon, undersheriff, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, interviews with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, 2015.

143. Kelly McMahon, lieutenant, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, March 25, 2015.

144. Gary Schofield, deputy chief, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, April 30, 2015.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid.

reassignment to one of the most violent neighborhoods in the city was that, by focusing on a neighborhood rather than the operations of a citywide task force with a relatively narrow charge and tactical menu, he would have the autonomy to be creative in his pursuit of a proactive approach to violence reduction. With bona fides in gang, SWAT, and undercover roles, Schofield also had the track record to gain the respect of the rank and file. In addition, he had personal history in the Westside. Schofield, who is biracial Japanese-American, was a student at a White middle school whose students were bused in to a Black Westside school as part of the integration effort, and tumult, of 1969. That experience initiated his understanding that race and racial anger were complicated and potent forces that needed to be addressed.¹⁴⁷

In charge of the BAC, with West Las Vegas at its center, Captain Schofield had seen how the high violence of neighborhoods mixed with high police-community distrust and how this context emerged from important racial, political, and police history. Shortly after he arrived, a series of murders in the 106 demanded he consider a new approach to these issues. By the end of 2006, there had been 14 gang-related homicides in one community of the 106; five more were killed in quick succession in January of 2007.¹⁴⁸ The crisis called for an all-hands response. Members of the West Las Vegas community, police, faith leaders, social service organizations, and government agencies began meeting to establish a new strategy built on “the recognition that not only are prevention and intervention resources needed to promote public safety, but the community and its many components are stakeholders and must become invested partners in order to transform neighborhoods in crisis.”¹⁴⁹ A series of meetings and weeks of planning led to a strategic plan for the new approach, the SVI, specifically designed to leverage community input and collaboration to reduce violent gang crime in West Las Vegas.

SVI: Open and collaborative crime reduction

The possibility of pursuing a collaborative crime reduction strategy did not arise purely out of a spike in violence: Violence had been bad—even worse—before, and the community and police had not seen each other as the solution. Establishing a new partnership required coming to terms with the history of the old relationship and gaining willing partners. Captain Schofield saw that the churches could give the LVMPD a foothold; he recognized that some pastors have the social currency, moral gravity, and access the police department needed to address the violence in the community. But given the acrimony that characterized the LVMPD’s relationship with the Westside’s residents, he understood that before

147. Ibid.

148. Reyes, *Safe Village* (see note 110).

149. Ibid., 5.

approaching the pastors to work together, police would first need to acknowledge the harms that the department had been implicated in, directly and indirectly, in the past. So he convened the leaders of more than 80 churches from the Westside and made a frank admission:

“I told them, ‘Here’s the deal. We as a police department have lied to you for almost 20 years. We told you if you put Safe Streets in, Weed and Seed, did all kinds of stuff, the violence would get better. But the reality is we don’t raise your kids, bury your kids, educate your kids—all we do is show up at crime scenes. And we need to get better. But it has to be a partnership . . . and we know people don’t want to be talking to the cops because that’s the way it works. And I get that.’”¹⁵⁰

Captain Schofield and some of the Westside residents present that day point to the novelty of a local police captain speaking so frankly to such a large group of local leaders as the foundation of their collaboration. By reaching out to Black community leaders and acknowledging some hard truths about the failures of earlier approaches to reducing violence, Schofield laid a foundation for resetting the expectations for the future. First, in recognizing the failures of the past, Schofield was assuring the community that future efforts will be different. Second and more specifically, by owning some of the failure and specifying some of the problems, Schofield started to create a clear role for the community in a violence prevention strategy. This initial statement was not a full acknowledgment of the police’s role in public safety failures or distrust—but it did open the door to initial operational work and to more dialogue that would follow from the next captain.

Operational inclusion: SVI policy and practice changes

The earliest iteration of the SVI largely focused on focusing policing efforts and conducting immediate mobilization after a homicide. In addition to narrowing down enforcement priorities to offenders, offenses, and hot spots within the SVI impact zones, the BAC also worked to coordinate and levy resources from the LVMPD and federal partners.¹⁵¹ At the same time, however, the SVI dramatically expanded operational cooperation with community partners. The LVMPD worked with residents to identify target areas and problems, communicate an anti-violence message at schools and churches, host community events, develop intervention and reach out to workers, and meet and regularly communicate and brainstorm on pressing issues.

The SVI’s immediate mobilization after homicides illustrates the close coordination between police and the community under the new approach. To address retaliatory violence that often occurs on the day or days following a gang-related homicide, police, pastors, and volunteers took action within 24 hours of a homicide. At the crime scene, police began their investigation and secured the area, while pastors arrived to comfort and offer support to the families of victims and suspects (if identified). Religious leaders then mobilized volunteers from their congregations to help them spread the stop-the-violence

150. Schofield, interview (see note 144).

151. Reyes, *Safe Village* (see note 110).

message by going door to door with flyers and leading antiviolence marches in the immediate vicinity of the shooting. A youth group set up a traveling stage in the same location, where community leaders continued to explain the toll the violence takes on the community and the legal repercussions of gang violence given the LVMPD's special attention to the issue. The SVI activation team also established its presence in hospitals. Police stood guard to deter any possible altercations or further violence directed towards the victim or associates of the victim, and the team also deployed pastors and case workers to work with victims' families to determine their needs.

In addition to incorporating collaboration and community input into operations, Captain Schofield also wanted his officers to present a friendlier front and use enforcement more sparingly. He coordinated with the Narcotics Unit to reduce the use of stop, question, and frisk practices in the neighborhood. He directed his officers to identify "hot" or "problem" areas on a map and then asked them whether they knew anyone in the homes, businesses, churches, and community centers in between. He even directed officers to wave to gang members they saw on the street. Schofield himself went to great lengths to demonstrate to both Westside residents and his own department that the Westside was their neighborhood to protect together. The city's Neighborhood Services department conducted a neighborhood needs assessment wherein community volunteers went door to door to survey residents as to their most pressing wants and needs; Schofield read it and considered how to help address the survey's findings. As he sought to demonstrate the department's renewed investment in the neighborhood, Schofield began to go further afield from the standard duties of the police, pushing for new commercial ventures and resources at local schools. Far from standing guard on the fringes of the Westside or venturing inside in the aftermath of crime, the SVI started to make the BAC and the LVMPD a part of collaborative and integrated policing efforts.

Initial outcomes

The new approach had a significant impact on serious violence: Homicides dropped 40 percent in the first year after the SVI was adopted, and gun-related crimes dropped precipitously as well.¹⁵² As leader of the BAC, Captain Schofield had succeeded in forging new partnerships with community leaders, revamping Metro's response to Westside gang homicides, and reinvigorating his officers' commitment to the principles of community policing. His work was motivated by what he had seen throughout his career in policing to that point—that enforcement would not and could not cut into violence on its own, at least not in any sustained way. He was also motivated by what he knew about the city's legacy of racial inequity—the SVI program description begins with a section that frames the Westside's blight and violence by alluding to the segregationist policies that neglected it. He directed officers to be cognizant of how their conduct would be perceived in their own neighborhoods.

Within the department, Captain Schofield found that his insistence that the police should consider the community their own was starting to catch on. After warning of the "othering" of the community with dissociative pronouns like "them" or phrases like "those people," he was struck by the powerful

152. Ibid.

attitudinal shift officers demonstrated as they began to say things such as, “Hey, somebody went and shot up *our* neighborhood.” Nonetheless, the original version of the SVI did not place trust building and reconciliation at the center of its work. While LVMPD practice certainly changed, most of the changes dealt with enforcement tactics and some cooperation rather than direct outreach as its own end. When outreach was the primary goal—such as in the team of five SVI officers established to “to earn the trust of the community and gather intelligence at violent crimes” or the quarterly information sharing at the Doolittle Community Center—these efforts suggested that trust building was a sporadic and segmented part of the LVMPD’s mission, not a department-wide commitment.¹⁵³ The fact that the SVI even ratcheted up enforcement on some lower-level offenses, pursuing traffic or curfew violations in a way that could alienate residents, did not help the perception that the transformation was piecemeal.¹⁵⁴ In 2010, Schofield was promoted to deputy chief of patrol, and in 2011 the IACP awarded the Webber-Seavey award for Quality in Law Enforcement to the SVI.¹⁵⁵ Schofield’s promotion allowed him to retain oversight of the BAC and the SVI. In that capacity, he could ensure the progress of the SVI did not stall or disappear: Its work was far from complete. In terms of reconciliation, the framework proposed in this document considers it vitally important to explicitly focus on the reasons for distrust and to frame policy and practice changes in those terms—to pursue reconciliation by communicating to community and line officers the deeper motivations for departmental changes beyond immediate crime control. Schofield’s initial statements and the SVI’s successes had opened the door for deeper reconciliation and to establish a new footing for public safety in the Westside.

Building sustainable relationships: Further reconciliation in the SVI

Kevin McMahill, the next captain overseeing the SVI, put reconciliation at the forefront of his tenure, positioning efforts to acknowledge and address harms at the center of reforms. That shift involved fully engaging communities about their history with police and internal work to increase officers’ exposure to new narratives and histories about policing, as well as changing external messaging to explicitly frame the SVI as a product of acknowledging the harm of aggressive and discriminatory policing.

Crisis and new understanding: Moving beyond community policing

In 2010, when Captain McMahill began his tenure at the BAC, he was excited by the opportunity to continue building out the SVI. Having himself transformed from a cop who considered himself “among the best in the department at hooking and booking,” he was now responsible for community policing in

153. *The Safe Village Initiative: Reducing Violent Firearms and Gang Related Crime in West Las Vegas*, 2008 Herman Goldstein Award Submittal (Las Vegas, NV: Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, 2008), <http://www.popcenter.org/library/awards/goldstein/2008/08-31.pdf>.

154. *Ibid.*, 5.

155. *IACP/Motorola Webber Seavey Award for Quality in Law Enforcement: Summary of the Top Twenty-Five Programs* (Alexandria, VA: International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2011), <http://www.iacp.org/Portals/0/documents/pdfs/Webber/WebberAbstracts2011.pdf>.

an area deeply impacted by those aggressive tactics.¹⁵⁶ He found, however, that the SVI had made an initial impact but left an unacceptable level of violence in the Westside. At the 13th homicide of his tenure—none of the previous 12 had been solved at that time—McMahill had a crisis of confidence. “It was the 13th young dead Black man in my time as captain, and I just couldn’t really understand it,” he said. “We were doing all these things with [the] SVI, and it was successful in reducing the retaliatory shootings, but it just wasn’t hitting the root cause of what the problems were.”¹⁵⁷ With so many murders and such little success in solving them—despite the best intentions of the SVI—McMahill realized SVI was not adequately dealing with the reality of violence or the extent of the community’s distrust of the police.

A commitment to listening and reconciliation

Narrative sharing: Command listening in the community

To better understand that context, Captain McMahonill went to the community to find what his constituents worried about. Beyond all concerns about buildings or antiviolence marches, conversations moved toward race. McMahonill began orchestrating those conversations all over the neighborhood. He was taken aback by the depth and historical breadth of Westside Black residents’ skepticism, anger, and fear of the police. For the first time, he was exposed to the experiences of raw discrimination that had permanently colored residents’ perceptions of law enforcement. Even the pastors, who had thrown in with the police in order to forge meaningful community partnerships, carried heavy burdens that they were not shy about sharing—accounts that were compelling because understanding would help not only to reduce further homicide but also to heal the scars of the past.

Pastor Cherry, who had spent more than three decades in the Westside, was one such partner. Residents described him to Captain McMahonill as a “no-media guy,” a term of endearment meaning his ambitions were unsullied by hunger for publicity. When McMahonill first approached him, Cherry was deeply skeptical. But he couldn’t forego that opportunity to change the LVMPD from within. So for two hours he laid into McMahonill and a few other officers about how their present practices played into the community’s experience of a long history of racial oppression.

“I was very up front with everyone, and they accepted it very well. . . . We started talking about the issues in the community. . . . Nobody’s talking about the elephant in the room. Let’s talk about the race card. We got into the real nitty-gritty, as far as the people’s view and the officer’s view is concerned.

156. Ibid.

157. Kevin McMahonill, undersheriff, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, January 20, 2015.

When you see three young Black boys walking, you stop them. You can see five or six White boys, you never stop them. Why? It's your perception that because they're Black and brown, they're doing something wrong."¹⁵⁸

Pastor Cherry reflects that when he was first asked to participate in the SVI, he spoke about police as though they were something to put up with, a bully whose ire he took special care not to provoke. He had personal experience with White officers as agents of racial discrimination and as a result had previously decided not to reach out to the police when he had been victim of racial violence.¹⁵⁹

Similarly, Pastor Robert Patterson told Captain McMahon and other LVMPD officers of his own jarring accounts of racist police brutality that still color his view of cops. In addition to being victim and witness to racial terror growing up in Florida, Patterson described how the police seemed to enforce the law only when they did so against him and other Black residents.¹⁶⁰

Pastor Patterson explained to Captain McMahon that the trauma these events caused is not confined to a discrete past but is constantly available and further inflamed by what he and other community members believe to be instances and patterns of racist policing. He also described how the police belong to the institution of policing itself as well as belonging to their division or department—many residents, for example, don't distinguish between officers of the LVMPD and the North Las Vegas Police Department. That means that in absence of clearly defining what the local police find legitimate or illegitimate policing, incidents elsewhere can still reduce residents trust in their own departments.

Similarly, in listening to religious leaders and other residents, Captain McMahon and his officers had the crucial realization that perceptions can matter as much or more than facts: They had to come understand the narratives that built residents' position towards law enforcement. In these meetings, residents often referenced the idea that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) introduced crack into their neighborhoods—an idea McMahon and his officers considered a fringe conspiracy theory, not a commonly verbalized or believed idea. Through this type of discussion, he became aware how these narratives filled the gap between the abuses and errors of police and law enforcement's history of being opaque and withdrawn from engaging the community. Thus, the community might see as racist a variety of police department actions that the police believed to be routine and justified. He observed: "The story we're telling always looked deceptive."¹⁶¹

According to Captain McMahon and a number of the community leaders who contributed their experiences and impressions to this study, he has sometimes made a point of apologizing on behalf of the department both for specific incidents of misconduct—such as an officer's inflammatory Facebook

158. Willie Cherry, interview (see note 130).

159. Ibid.

160. Robert Patterson, pastor, New Jerusalem Baptist Church, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, March 13, 2015.

161. Kevin McMahon, undersheriff, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, March 2, 2015.

post¹⁶²—and for larger historical patterns of police discrimination. He aimed to take concrete action to address the issue whenever possible. In individual cases, he could use his power to sanction officers and prevent future harm from that officer.¹⁶³ In general, however, he needed to figure out how to set a new standard of accountability and sensitivity both outside and inside the department.

Changing enforcement and creating opportunities for rank-and-file exchange

Even though the SVI was well established and had led to some positive results, Captain McMahonill wanted his officers to police with a better appreciation of the harms they and others wearing police badges had represented in the Westside for decades. Testimonials that he heard in the community convinced McMahonill that he and his department were woefully unaware of the extent of the antipathy generated in the Westside by perceptions of racist policing. McMahonill believed that the racial basis of the distrust needed to be addressed by the police in order to lock in the reforms and partnerships established through the SVI. The problem as he saw it was that his officers didn't know why the community didn't trust them—and that officers rarely interacted with Black Westside residents in ways that would change their (the residents') long-held beliefs about police intentions and motivations. To address this problem, he set out to change the circumstances in which officers interacted with residents on a daily basis and to get his officers and local residents to meet in places where residents could feel free to tell their stories.

New types of interactions

Captain McMahonill saw that officers had chances every day to use discretion and time either to alienate potential allies or to gain them—besides enforcing on serious crime issues, the SVI had a chance to use policing power in cooperative rather than coercive ways. Operationally, this mostly meant decreasing stops for petty infractions—infractions that would likely be ignored in other neighborhoods. McMahonill was characteristically straightforward in his directives to his officers.

“I told them: No bullshit tickets for trespassing or loitering—I would confront them on it. New cops would write tickets to the Nation of Islam people [for selling newspapers]. You have to win those battles, one at a time. You ask your officers: What are you accomplishing by issuing the citation? Take a leap of faith with me and let's try a different approach. We got these cops to see these folks as human beings.”¹⁶⁴

162. The post read, “Let's just get this over! Race war, Civil, Revolution? Bring it! I'm about as fed up as a man (American, Christian, White, Heterosexual) can get!” Mike Blasky, “Finding the Line: Unraveling a Difficult Charge of Racism Within the Metro Police Department,” *Las Vegas Sun*, January 12, 2015, <http://lasvegassun.com/news/2015/jan/12/finding-line/>.

163. Kevin McMahonill, interview (see note 161).

164. Ibid.

Seeing people in contexts beyond enforcement also meant understanding their wider experience of daily life, particularly in regard to government institutions. Communities with high distrust of police often also feel they have been underserved by other parts of the government. West Las Vegas, as noted above, had long been neglected or underserved by the city. Captain McMahon saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate the department's commitment to serving the community—even when that service did not involve traditional policing responsibilities.

Captain McMahon worked from residents' input to use the police department's leverage on issues that mattered to the community. After hearing residents' complaints about the housing authority and its security force, he had his officers follow up with the authority on behalf of individual residents; individual quality-of-life concerns were addressed like getting broken air conditioners fixed and cleaning up hallways. At times, he took leaders of other city agencies to task for failing to respond adequately to service requests. He used his position to coordinate with partners like graduate students at the University of Nevada–Las Vegas, the Las Vegas Valley Water District, and community residents on a number of beautification and landscaping projects.¹⁶⁵ At regular meetings, McMahon listened to the desire of business owners to get city government to support revitalization efforts in the Westside. McMahon was surprised to find that “there are so many other pieces to the puzzle”¹⁶⁶—that police practice plays an important but ultimately only partial role in addressing lack of hope and opportunity in the Westside. The SVI could do more to work with residents to address concerns that seemed beyond crime prevention, but building trust would enhance the SVI response to violence.

That type of untraditional police work could seem out of place to officers used to enforcement-only roles. To demonstrate to his officers the importance of these efforts to the Westside community, Captain McMahon coordinated a new series of community meetings and mandated line officer participation. His philosophy was simple: “You have to show up.”

Captain McMahon also believed that his officers could take a far more active role in directly engaging Westside residents—both by building relationships and by requiring them to listen to their wants, needs, and most of all their anger and sadness. All officers would be directed to emulate the SVI team's emphasis on community outreach. Determined to continue to build an understanding of residents' mistrust, he had his officers set up barbecues with live music and asked anyone who showed up to take an anonymous survey about what they wanted to change in their neighborhood.

Captain McMahon also initiated a policy of community tours where his officers would go for three days into the Westside, one partner in uniform and the other in plain clothes. They would make rounds to a series of community organizations—the Salvation Army, homeless shelters, businesses, schools. One officer's visit to a local chapter of a Black leadership organization exemplifies the type of exposure these

165. Mujahid Ramadan, community activist, interview with Sam Kuhn, field adviser, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, January 22, 2015.

166. Kevin McMahon, interview (see note 157).

tours offered.¹⁶⁷ Upon on seeing the visiting policeman, a little girl brought to the meeting asked, “Are you here to kill us?”¹⁶⁸ This type of experience demonstrated how deep distrust ran: Even when the police were invited guests in a nonadversarial situation, fear and discomfort remained deeply embedded. Even so, these tours offered officers and residents an opportunity to see one another outside of the context of crime.

In the other direction, Captain McMahon sought to offer opportunities for the community to see the jobs and lives of his officers. Pastor Jon Ponder’s Hope for Prisoners, a re-entry program, is one especially successful example of SVI programming that connects Westsiders to his officers as individuals. Hope for Prisoners is a 24-week training that begins with a prevocational leadership workshop—basic skills like effective communication, goal setting, and time management—and ends with the former offenders committing to ongoing mentoring and work with service providers. BAC SVI officers are involved in mentoring, teaching participants professional skills, and relationship building. Beyond the curriculum, this setup means that each side has to directly confront histories of distrust, fear, and anger. Ponder, who had been incarcerated himself, explains that the process can be intense, “but the cops explain that this is their job, and get them to see past the badge.”¹⁶⁹ With a population that has often had negative experiences with police, it’s powerful, Ponder recounted, when an officer says “I’m really sorry that happened to you. But that’s not us. Now let me tell you who I really am, who we really are.”¹⁷⁰ As police work with mentees, close bonds can form. More than 1,000 returning citizens have been through the Hope for Prisoners training; some have become among the LVMPD’s closest community allies. At Ponder’s request, McMahon now sits on the organization’s advisory council. McMahon changed enforcement priorities while deliberately exposing his officers to community perspectives to illustrate why priorities were changing and cement buy-in to a new type of approach. In so doing, he expanded the scope of the SVI—which was initially conceived with the narrower goal of reducing homicides in the neighborhood—to include elements of a concerted effort to change the police role in the community, officers’ understanding of their role in light of community perspectives, and the level of community trust in the police.

Result of SVI’s reconciliation efforts: Expanding the SVI philosophy to the department

As the SVI and the BAC received awards and recognition for their success and leaders were promoted within the LVMPD, the ideas and practices underpinning the approach spread to the entire department. As Captain McMahon advanced to assistant sheriff and then undersheriff he had the opportunity to bring

167. “Mission/Vision/Values,” 100 Black Men of America, Inc., accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.100blackmen.org/mission.aspx>.

168. Kevin McMahon, interview (see note 161).

169. Jon Ponder, founder, Hope for Prisoners, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, March 2, 2015.

170. Ibid.

the components of reconciliation—and the distinction from simple community policing tactics—to the whole department. That took various forms, including holding conversations about the history of policing and race with captains in the department¹⁷¹ and discussing specific examples of what happens “when police officers violate their oath and fail to protect the basic rights and liberties of citizens.”¹⁷² Through those conversations McMahill hoped to effect a philosophical shift that makes adopting programs like the SVI an organic outgrowth of a value system rather than exclusively a top-down mandate that officers experience as an imposition. He believes attitudinal shifts and the will for true reconciliation must come from the top—and must come from acknowledging that police have at times been negligent and overtly oppressive, from protecting and maintaining a racial system characterized by lynching and segregation to implementing ineffective or destructive responses to gang violence and the proliferation of drugs in urban settings: “There’s no doubt that police departments across the country have turned a blind eye to a number of those issues—and you have to have really strong leadership that consistently reinforces that” fact to the officers they supervise.¹⁷³ The captains are also responsible for conducting further discussions of the piece with the officers below them, driving home the messages and passages that McMahill introduced.

Thinking reflectively about policing allows departments to also think self-critically about their own practice. Crucially, this type of thinking is part of reconciliation processes but not necessarily part of community policing efforts. The philosophy that expanded from approaching a crime problem in the Westside led LVMPD leadership to make significant changes in how the department conducts business. Three examples illustrate this effect in different ways. First, in late 2011, when a series of reports in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* alleged that LVMPD officers had been involved in many unnecessary and unpunished officer-involved shootings, the police department invited the US Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) to review their policies and practices and produce a series of recommendations as part of a collaborative reform process. The department has been widely commended for its openness to outside critique as well as its prompt adoption of the majority of the COPS Office’s recommendations; as the final progress report put it, “The department’s introspection and genuine desire to make significant improvements and serve as a model for other departments draws praise from the assessors. The department’s commitment has produced impressive results.”¹⁷⁴ The report even specifically pointed to the department’s relationships with residents of the

171. The first discussions centered around an article that the Sherriff shared with his executive staff by Charles Ramsey. See: Charles H. Ramsey, *The Challenge of Policing in a Democratic Society: A Personal Journey toward Understanding, New Perspectives in Policing* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, 2014), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/245992.pdf>.

172. Ramsey, *The Challenge of Policing*, 5 (see note 171).

173. Kevin McMahill, interview (see note 161).

174. George Fachner and Steven Carter, *Final Assessment Report of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Collaborative Reform Model* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014), <http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P287>, 71.

Sherman Gardens housing development as uniquely favorable compared to relationships between the department and other minority communities and recommended the expansion of the SVI.¹⁷⁵ Officer-involved shootings declined from 25 in 2010 to a combined 24 in 2012 and 2013.¹⁷⁶

Second, the LVMPD made efforts to proactively share information and access with the public and with outside experts. The department works quickly in the aftermath of a shooting to share as much information as it can without compromising the investigation through social media, community meetings, and press releases—a tactic that Undersheriff Schofield had tried out when he was a captain in the Westside. Detailed shooting reports on the department’s website further aid transparency.¹⁷⁷ In addition, the LVMPD invited the Center for Policing Equity (CPE) to conduct a review of “what (if anything) further could be done to promote racial equity in the treatment of residents, in addition to LVMPD’s existing efforts.”¹⁷⁸ Dr. Phillip Atiba Goff, executive director of the CPE, and his staff used officer surveys and departmental data to understand the LVMPD’s culture, the psychological makeup of its officers, and the effects those things have on the department’s ability to deliver racially equitable policing. The CPE’s final report indicated the officers in the BAC were measured as having the lowest levels of racial anxiety (anxiety at discussing race or appearing racist when speaking with other racial groups) of any division measured at the time.¹⁷⁹ These efforts added to the department’s understanding of its officers and helped to further institutionalize a focus on the way it interacts with the community.

Third, Undersheriff McMahill moved to incorporate the reconciliatory concepts of the SVI into the institutional commitments of the entire department. To do this, he has established an Office of Community Engagement (OCE) that will oversee the development of similar strategies with the captains of each of the area commands—all explicitly based on the SVI but tailored by local commanders to the vastly different geographic, demographic, and historical factors present in each zone (and each with its own name). By placing the OCE on the organization chart, funding it, and giving it full-time staff that report directly to Assistant Sheriff Todd Fasulo, McMahill has demonstrated top LVMPD leadership’s real commitment to its success in terms that all LVMPD officers understand.¹⁸⁰ Rather than ordering by fiat a

175. James K. Stewart et al., *A Review of Officer-Involved Shootings in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department*, Collaborative Reform Model (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2013), <http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P273>.

176. Mike Blasky, “Federal Report: Las Vegas Police Shootings Down, Department Reforms Up,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, last modified May 23, 2014, <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/las-vegas/federal-report-las-vegas-police-shootings-down-department-reforms>.

177. “Statistical Data,” Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.lvmpd.com/AboutLVMPD/InternalOversightConstitutionalPolicing/StatisticalData/tabid/440/Default.aspx>.

178. Phillip Atiba Goff and Karin Danielle Martin, *Unity Breeds Fairness: The Consortium for Police Leadership in Equity Report on the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department* (Los Angeles: Center for Policing Equity, n.d.), http://www.lvmpd.com/Portals/0/pdfs/LVMPDFinalReport_2013CPE.pdf, 3.

179. *Ibid.*, 21–22.

180. *Organization Chart*, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, last modified January 2, 2016, http://www.lvmpd.com/Portals/0/pdf/OrgChart_010216.pdf.

strict adoption of SVI model and tactics, McMahonill is adamant that each captain will know how best to implement his or her own “Safe Village-esque” strategy such that it satisfies the needs of each area command’s residents. An oversight board will ensure that there is constant reporting from each of these area commands as to the progress of the strategy. McMahonill describes his captains as variously receptive to community grievances but is unflinching in his conviction that they hear them out and take them seriously: “Each area commander has a different threshold for dealing with ‘the narrative.’ Some can listen all day, others want to defend. But we make mistakes, and have made mistakes, and that’s a fact, and we have to own up to it.”¹⁸¹

Though the office is in its infancy, OCE director Lieutenant Larkin is in the process of developing a strategic plan that will seek to satisfy its vision statement: that the LVMPD will “have the most progressive, engaged and enlightened partnerships between Law Enforcement and the community in America.”¹⁸² Larkin cites two questions as central to the office’s efforts: “How do we bridge the gap between us and them? And how do we get them to take a stand in their communities?”¹⁸³ Larkin, who has worked in the BAC, believes that the SVI “definitely paved the way in a neighborhood that had to have that connection.”¹⁸⁴ Thus far, the OCE has helped the LVMPD, in a broad sense, engage productively with critics¹⁸⁵ and work with them to establish integrated police-community partnerships against violence in their communities—a model derived directly from then Captain Schofield’s original SVI activation.

As an undersheriff driving reconciliation department-wide, Undersheriff McMahonill believes that it is important to underscore that these varied efforts at building trust all emanate from the same impulse to reconcile as the initiative he championed as a captain on the Westside. He believes that drawing links between these measures—even if they are not formally related—and continuing to emphasize the successes they have wrought help reinforce officers’ commitment to avoiding the practices that led to tension in the past.

Conclusion

The development, operation, and impact of Las Vegas’s SVI showcases the role of reconciliation in forging collaborative crime reduction partnerships, changing perceptions of community and police, influencing operational policy and practice, and shifting the departmental philosophy and understanding of policing. Fundamentally, the strategy showcases the tenets of reconciliation that serve as important companions to community policing: listening, acknowledgment of harms, understanding of history, exposure to narratives, and explicit commitments to change. These are worthwhile processes in

181. Kevin McMahonill, interview (see note 161).

182. Draft strategic plan, Las Vegas Metro Police Department (see note 33).

183. Sasha Larkin, lieutenant, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, January 6, 2016.

184. Ibid.

185. Ibid.

themselves, and they can also serve as the foundation for successful crime reduction. In the BAC's winning application for the Webber-Seavey award, the role of authentic partnership and exchange, built on and through reconciliation practices, is central:

"The role and importance of all stakeholders and community partners cannot be overestimated. The initial buy-in of stakeholders who are identifiable high-level government, community, faith-based, and business leaders was critical, as was their involvement with the planning and implementation process. Resident involvement, however, has been a key component to our demonstrated successes. . . . It is our ongoing collective response to residents' needs that positively connects us to them, thereby enabling improvements in gathering intelligence, suppressing further violent crimes and gaining greater trust in the community."¹⁸⁶

As this case study illustrates, it has taken concerted effort on the part of the LVMPD to get to this point. The department was put on a trajectory toward trust building when then Captain Schofield publicly acknowledged that its failure to undermine gang violence on the Westside was related to the community's distrust of the police, spurring the development of the SVI. Under his direction, the BAC took concrete steps to involve the community in violence-reduction efforts and demonstrated commitment to building trust by advocating for solutions to residents' concerns, like school funding, that do not traditionally involve police. Though this original SVI found success in reducing violence and making inroads with members of the Westside community, it took new shape as a vehicle for reconciliation under then Captain McMahon. He did this by broadening the acknowledgment of harm to include the harm caused by disproportionately aggressive tactics on the Westside, by gathering community narratives and exposing his officers to them, and by changing enforcement priorities to respond to the narratives and perceptions he learned in this process. Using his authority as second-in-command of the entire department, McMahon worked to formalize these practices and commit the LVMPD to building trust by confronting perceived harms. These efforts have wrought stronger and more plentiful community partnerships and fostered a new awareness in the department of its role in history, in society, and in contemporary public safety.

186. Reyes, *Safe Village*, 3–4 (see note 110).

Case Study Two: Rockford, Illinois

Introduction

This study focuses on the trust-building process undertaken by the Rockford Police Department (RPD) and city religious leadership to address both the particular crime problem of open-air drug markets and the racial and general distrust between Rockford's west side community and the police. By acknowledging past harms, committing to a collaborative process for future improvement, and confronting one of the biggest contemporary threats to neighborhood safety, Chief Chet Epperson, his department, and Black leaders successfully shut down the market and laid the foundation for a sustained process of trust building. Despite pressure from the police union and the challenge of overcoming longstanding distrust from members of the public, Epperson and Pastor K. Edward Copeland¹⁸⁷ collaborated on a number of projects and initiatives that built from the spirit of collaboration and trust building used to address the drug market. Ultimately supported by the mayor's office, the partners established Connect Rockford to institutionalize a "collective impact" body ensuring that criminal justice agencies consider the perspectives of the residents most affected by their decisions.

The study proceeds in four main parts. The first part sets the stage by describing Rockford's historical racial disconnect and how Chief Epperson managed to make some headway against considerable distrust both from within his department and from the Black community at large. The second part describes the trust-building measures Epperson and his primary community partner, Pastor Copeland, developed throughout the course of Epperson's tenure. The third describes some of the challenges they faced both from within the RPD and from community leaders, some of whom had been the chief's partners before their trust was lost. The fourth section illustrates an ongoing effort to "elevate the community moral voice to the state of the art," as Copeland puts it, through Connect Rockford.

All in all, the events described in this study represent an example of the power of acknowledging harm and committing to improving practice as an initial bridge between police and alienated communities. They also clearly demonstrate that even where police and communities have very little history of collaboration and even where executives face significant pressure from within not to change standard practices, two influential partners committed to trust building can make significant progress toward reconciliation.

187. Pastor Copeland's full name is Kenneth Edward Copeland; he is known by his middle name to avoid confusion with Kenneth Copeland, a controversial White televangelist preacher.

Context: City and problems

Rockford, Illinois, is a city of around 150,000 people, situated approximately 80 miles west of Chicago.¹⁸⁸ As of the early 2000s, the city was majority White but deeply split along racial lines, with majority Black neighborhoods and a rapidly growing Hispanic population on the west side of the city.¹⁸⁹ Like other cities with stark demographic divides, Rockford had also been the site of deep discrepancies in resources and power.¹⁹⁰ The concentrated disadvantage in Rockford had even recently been found to be a result of the city's policies and priorities. From 1989 to 2002, a lawsuit against the city's school district highlighted the city's discriminatory treatment towards its minority residents, particularly on the west side. In 1993, Magistrate Judge P. Michael Mahoney found in favor of the plaintiffs and wrote a 747-page opinion detailing how the district had "consistently and massively violated the dictates of *Brown v. Board of Education*. . . . It is the story of a school district that, at times, has committed such open acts of discrimination as to be cruel and committed others with such subtlety as to raise discrimination to an art form."¹⁹¹ The city would ultimately be held liable for \$252 million in remedies to address the racial discrepancies, segregation, and underfunding of schools for the city's black students.¹⁹² The words in Mahoney's decision, according to historian Pat Cunningham, "were the most consequential, painful and controversial in Rockford history. And from the moment the community first heard them, it was at war with itself."¹⁹³ Many residents, particularly on the west side, were angry about the discrimination that had been allowed to occur; many others, often on the east side, were irate about the huge tax increases that were planned to pay for the remedy.¹⁹⁴ All told, the case represented the huge divide present in the city and disagreement about how to address it. Similarly, Rockford's mostly White police force and the minority communities it serves have historically reflected this deep-seated tension. In 2014, half as many African Americans served in the police department as would if they matched their representation

188. Chris Black, *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2012*, (Rockford, IL: City of Rockford, 2013), <http://www.ci.rockford.il.us/media/301820/RockfordCAFR1212.pdf>.

189. "Rockford's Segregation Declined Between 1970–2000," *The Rock River Rimes*, last modified July 1, 1993, <http://rockrivertimes.com/1993/07/01/rockfords-segregation-declined-between-1970-2000/>.

190. *Rockford, Illinois Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice* (Portland, OR: Western Economic Services, LLC, 2005), http://www.ci.rockford.il.us/media/6241/2005_Analysis_of_Impediments_to_Fair_Housing.pdf.

191. *People Who Care v. Rockford Bd. of Educ.*, 851 F.Supp. 905, 939 (N.D. Illinois 1994), <http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/851/905/1621925/>; Chris Green, "Black History Month: Rockford Clergy's Role Vital in History-Making 'People Who Care' Suit," *Rockford Register Star*, last modified February 16, 2014, <http://www.rrstar.com/article/20140216/NEWS/140219359/10332/NEWS?template=printart>.

192. Corina Curry, "People Who Care: It All Began 20 Years Ago," *Rockford Register Star*, last modified February 24, 2009, <http://www.rrstar.com/article/20090224/News/302249850>.

193. Jeff Kolkey, "Discrimination Lawsuit Haunts City, Schools," *Rockford Register Star*, last modified September 12, 2009, <http://www.rrstar.com/x1420198361/Discrimination-lawsuit-haunts-city-schools-20-years-later>.

194. *Ibid.*

in the community; the discrepancy is even greater for Latinos.¹⁹⁵ Religious and civic leaders described Rockford as featuring a particularly stark distrust between police and the community, having heard or been exposed to stories of police misconduct,¹⁹⁶ neglect,¹⁹⁷ and racial tension¹⁹⁸ across the city.¹⁹⁹

As in other cities, Rockford's public safety problems did not affect all residents equally. By 2006, when Chief Epperson assumed the role, not only was violence disproportionately concentrated on the city's west side²⁰⁰ but the area was also suffering from the disorder and dangers of open-air crack markets.²⁰¹ Particularly, police hoped to reduce the high levels of property crime associated with the market.²⁰² Frustrated by the department's inability to drive the crack market out despite clear knowledge of the market's location and consistent enforcement actions, Epperson attended the Problem-Oriented Policing conference in Madison, Wisconsin, in the summer of 2006. There he learned about the Drug Market Intervention (DMI), an approach that had been used in High Point, North Carolina, and "dramatically improved conditions in High Point's most troubled neighborhoods and reduced drug and violent crime city-wide. Most important, it did so in a way that addressed and repaired deep historic racial divisions in the community."²⁰³ The panelists presented data demonstrating that drug and associated offenses had remained down in the two years since they applied the intervention. Epperson was convinced, largely because "it was an alternative way to go about the drug problem instead of cuff-and-stuff."²⁰⁴

195. *Rockford (IL) Police Department Assessment Report* (Fairfax, VA: Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, 2014), <http://ci.rockford.il.us/media/429852/2014%20CALEA%20Assessment%20Report.pdf>, 3.

196. *Ibid.*

197. George Hofstetter, executive director, Rockford Reachout, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, August 20, 2015.

198. Edgardo Flores, pastor, New Hope United Methodist Church, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, August 19, 2015.

199. Kenneth Board, pastor, Pilgrim Baptist Church, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, August 18, 2015.

200. Jeffrey B. Wang and J. Maichle Bacon, *1968–2010 Winnebago County Homicide and Suicide Trends and Disparities* (Rockford, IL: Winnebago County Health Department, 2013), <http://www.wchd.org/userfiles/file/Winnebago%20County%20Homicide%20Suicide%20Trends%201968-2010.pdf>.

201. Nicholas Corsaro and Edmund F. McGarrell, *Problem Oriented Policing and Open Air Drug Markets: Examining the Pulling Levers Strategy in Rockford, Illinois* (Chicago: Violence Reduction Network, n.d.), <https://www.vrnetwork.org/Documents/Problem-Oriented%20Policing%20and%20Open-Air%20Drug%20Markets.pdf>, 5.

202. *Ibid.*

203. "High Point (NC) Police Department: Eliminating Overt Drug Markets," 2006 POP Conference Papers, Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://www.popcenter.org/conference/?presentations=2006>.

204. Chet Epperson, chief, Rockford Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, August 25, 2015.

The new approach: DMI

The DMI, however, required shifting focus to Rockford’s long neglected west side and forging unprecedented partnerships with community leaders. Chief Epperson, who had been an officer in Rockford for most of 25 years, understood how the RPD had policed for a long time: a “containment theory” of policing, where, as long as the majority of serious crime was confined to “those people” on the west side of the river, RPD leadership thought they was doing their job. Mayor Larry Morrissey, who promoted Epperson, recognized that same dynamic in announcing his vision of creating “Excellence Everywhere for Everyone” instead of what he describes as the unofficial policy of the city in the past: “Excellence for the Good Side of Town, and If We Make Enough Money, We Can Help Those Poor Bastards on the Bad Side of Town.”²⁰⁵ There had been no clear-cut community policing strategy to speak of, and now Epperson wanted to bring in a strategy that depended on community involvement.

The DMI, an approach to disrupting and permanently closing open-air drug markets, requires an integrated partnership of law enforcement, social service providers, and respected residents of the affected community to “tell dealers clearly and directly that the community cares about them but rejects their behavior, that help is available, and that continued dealing will result in immediate sanctions through the activation of existing cases.”²⁰⁶

The DMI recognizes that communities are “the most important force for setting strong standards against dealing” but that these norms are often complicated by poor relations with the police.²⁰⁷ To address this complicated and often compromised relationship, the official National Network for Safe Communities DMI Implementation Guide includes a section titled Police-Community Reconciliation that advocates for “a process of truth telling and racial reconciliation in which both parties openly acknowledge grievances” to understand their shared goals, which can serve as the basis for partnership.²⁰⁸ The idea is to establish social control of offenders on two fronts: formally via the application of law enforcement sanctions and informally in the form of residents’ power to dictate what is and is not permissible in their communities. That type of approach could reduce crime and improve relationships in a divided city. To do so, however, Chief Epperson needed to act to reset the dynamics between his department and the community he wanted to serve.

205. Larry Morrissey, mayor of Rockford, Illinois, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, October 21, 2015.

206. “Drug Market Intervention: About the Strategy,” National Network for Safe Communities, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://nnscommunities.org/our-work/strategy/drug-market-intervention>.

207. National Network for Safe Communities, *Drug Market Intervention: An Implementation Guide*, 21 (see note 9).

208. Ibid.

Initiating reconciliation work

Rockford's reconciliation grew from small-scale engagement between a few leaders rather than broad consensus. However small-scale, gaining mutual trust still required bravery and persistence by police and community leaders to establish a common understanding of the police and community's failures and possible remedies. Leaders established that foundation at first by agreeing to work with one another on the DMI.

With the new strategy in mind, Chief Epperson reached out to the African-American Minister's Fellowship to find public support for the work. Having made an effort to introduce himself to community leaders as soon as he was named chief, he thought he had a decent foundation on which to build the DMI. He presented the idea in a two-hour meeting, describing this new approach as something that would incorporate community input and minimize incarceration—but was met with silence. Epperson realized he had not fully appreciated the alienation and cynicism that Rockford's Black community felt toward the police. Nonetheless, a few of the attendees were struck by his earnest appeal for collaboration and contacted him later that week. Ralph Hawthorne, an antiviolence organizer, and Bishop James E. Washington endorsed Pastor Copeland, a former attorney who had moved to Rockford in 2001, to lead engagement with Epperson's effort—they believed Copeland's training and relatively recent move to the community would make him an open and capable partner.

Acknowledging harm and committing to improvement

Though Pastor Copeland was relatively new to Rockford, he was aware from his own experience and from the stories told by his congregants that racial inequity was a defining characteristic of the city's public safety efforts. Still, conventional wisdom held that explicitly acknowledging that fact, especially in Rockford's tense and divided racial environment, was politically untenable even where it was obvious. So he considered it a turning point when Chief Epperson, a new chief, made that acknowledgment. Copeland recalls,

“When I met him he basically gave the *mea culpa* to me. He said, ‘You know what? I don’t like the way things have been done in the past. They just built a new jail, and they’re looking to fill that jail with people that look like you, not like me, and I think that there’s a better way to do it.’”²⁰⁹

Chief Epperson's admission caught Pastor Copeland's attention, and further presentation of the strategy by David Kennedy of the National Network for Safe Communities helped prove to Copeland and other community leaders that this strategy was not just another “program du jour,” a term used by community leaders who had grown cynical of initiatives that had failed to alter the criminal and social dynamics as they had promised.²¹⁰ Specifically, the RPD was committing to working through the role of

209. Ed Copeland, pastor, New Zion Missionary Baptist Church, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, September 14, 2015.

210. Ibid.

racial injustice leading to present circumstances and confronting head-on the narratives that drive police and communities apart. Epperson, Copeland, and others would for the first time be committing themselves to addressing the police narratives suggesting that high-crime minority communities like the crime and hate the cops and the community narratives suggesting that cops are taking part in a government conspiracy to create crime and then persecute their neighborhoods. Unlike other crime reduction strategies, this approach resonated enough with Copeland that he decided to help champion the effort.²¹¹

In practical terms, too, in publicly committing to a strategy that involved less incarceration and a larger role for community-enforced social norms, Chief Epperson was breaking with the past way of dealing with crime on the west side. Still, there would be a difficult test of this commitment. Before the ministers were willing to give a final sign-off on the strategy, they told Epperson they wanted him to discipline a number of officers they believed tended to overuse force and alienate residents. Following an internal investigation, Epperson found that one of his more trusted officers had in fact demonstrated a pattern of misconduct in dealing with a west side community. His decision to discipline the officer gained him some much-needed credibility with the religious leaders who had made the request—but it also shook up some of his support base in the department. Epperson’s decision to follow up on the pastors’ request—and the aftermath of that decision—were indicative of the challenges he would face throughout this long tenure as chief. This tradeoff would serve as part of the reason for the vociferous union opposition he would face soon after establishing the DMI. Nonetheless, Epperson’s willingness as chief to take accountability for the police department’s role in racial disparities set a sturdy foundation for working together on this initiative and many more.

Implementing DMI in Rockford: Proof of a new commitment

Implementing DMI demonstrated proof that the RPD wanted to work closely with the community to address a problem neither tolerated but which they had not worked together to address: the ongoing crack dealing and associated crime on the city’s west side. The police did the initial work, conducting an analysis to identify the most problematic areas of the hardest-hit neighborhood and setting up and executing an undercover investigation to identify the dealers. In the selected neighborhood, known as ADP, they identified 12 dealers. Seven were found to have a history of serious offending and violence and were prosecuted; the other five were chosen for the next stage of the intervention, which involved inviting them to a “call-in” where they would be told that they had been identified as dealers but would not be prosecuted at that time if they ceased offending. Pastors lent credibility to the invitation by offering their own assurance that offenders would not be arrested at the call-in. Following the offender identification process, Chief Epperson called a community meeting at a school in the neighborhood to

211. Ibid.

inform the public of what the department had done so far and brief them on next steps. The RPD got the word out about the strategy and the subsequent call-in with automated phone calls to the public and by handing out printed fliers.²¹²

At the call-in, law enforcement informed the dealers of the new approach, but community members delivered the crucial message that they opposed the dealing and supported the new effort. Neighborhood residents, civic leaders, and the families of those five dealers attended the call-in meeting, where they told the dealers that they wanted to see their neighborhood safe, prosperous, and drug-free. Service providers were present to offer services and counseling to the attendees. Law enforcement emphasized that the decision to suspend prosecution was based on whether they decided to desist from dealing, not whether or not they took services.

This type of collaboration between the police and community members was unprecedented. Both police and residents affirmed that they stood together against the drug market, and were willing to work together to close it in ways that were not overly punitive but still entailed accountability.

Impact and opening for new engagement

The approach was effective. An independent evaluation of the Rockford DMI implementation found statistically significant declines in property and violent crime in the neighborhood.²¹³ Using the 11 months prior to and the 14 months after the DMI as the evaluation window, researchers found a 31 percent decrease in property crime and a 15 percent reduction in violent crime in the targeted area.²¹⁴ The intervention also appeared to have satisfied its goal of avoiding incarceration as much as possible: Four of the five dealers identified for the second stage of the DMI had not been arrested at the time of the evaluation 18 months later, and the fifth had been arrested for a nondealing offense.²¹⁵ Perhaps most powerful, though, was the anecdotal evidence of a neighborhood reclaimed by a collaborative partnership between law enforcement and community residents, who reported feeling safe enough to spend time outside again.

The successful DMI implementation made further collaboration seem worthwhile. Pastor Copeland could point to the success of the DMI—both in reducing drug dealing and in incorporating the community in communicating the strategy and driving home the call-in message—to build credibility for future collaborations between the police and larger groups of previously resistant Black community leaders. Copeland maintains that Chief Epperson’s historical acknowledgment was unprecedented in

212. National Network for Safe Communities, *Drug Market Intervention: An Implementation Guide*, 11–12 (see note 9).

213. Corsaro and McGarrell, *Problem Oriented Policing and Open Air Drug Markets* (see note 202).

214. *Ibid.*, 2–3.

215. *Ibid.*, 3.

Rockford and was particularly important in opening the way to the DMI and the first operational partnership between Rockford’s police and west side community leaders. He describes the ensuing process of broadening partnerships as a gradual expansion of credibility and trust.

“Across the spectrum of those who have influence in communities of color, there’s enough of a tipping point—everybody of influence did not believe him because it had been bad for so long, but . . . he gained enough credibility with enough of the core influencers that he was able to proceed with some new things. The way things have changed is that some of those who have been here for decades, like Bishop Washington, recognize that, OK, he’s trying to do something different and we need to support him.”²¹⁶

In the other direction, these Black leaders taught Chief Epperson how little he actually knew about the history from which their frustration with police derives. As he engaged more with the Black clergy, he was forced to look back into some of the incidents that occurred during his time in the department that had contributed to Black Rockfordians’ distrust of the police, from interference and pressure on local civic groups to police-involved killings. He realized he would also be skeptical, as the ministers originally had been, of working with the police.²¹⁷ Epperson’s deeper understanding of the dynamics that can prevent engagement helped inform the ways he could build on the success from DMI.

New attitude, new initiatives

In a city where police leadership has typically remained inaccessible to minority communities, simply engaging minority leadership can make a big difference. Bishop John Senter, another long-tenured Rockford pastor and public figure (he is founder of his church, is a professor at a local college, and was appointed by then Governor Rod Blagojevich to serve on the 2005 Illinois African-American Family Commission) is typical among Black religious leaders in his favorable assessment of Chief Epperson’s accessibility, especially compared to his predecessors. “Chief Epperson I think has been a great addition—he’s intentional at reaching out. He responds, he listens. I didn’t know his predecessor—I don’t remember his name. I didn’t have a number where I can call and reach out. Chief Epperson is visible and he’s touchable . . . he recognizes my voice.”²¹⁸

Chief Epperson considers working with minority leaders to be both a means to enhancing public safety and an end in itself. With a growing understanding of the roots of minority-police mistrust—and, in light of the successful DMI operation, the power of addressing it—Epperson has taken pains to engage Black and Hispanic leaders. He formed a Police Chief Advisory Board comprising prominent community

216. Edward Copeland, pastor, New Zion Missionary Baptist Church, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, August 13, 2015.

217. Epperson, interview (see note 204).

218. John Senter, senior pastor, Faith Walkers Assembly International, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, August 18, 2015.

volunteers, retired RPD command officers, NAACP leadership, members of the clergy, public housing representatives, a judge, local academics, and medical professionals. The board meets approximately every two months and has a dual purpose: (1) for Epperson to present police tactics, priorities, and initiatives to well-connected members of the public who can use their wide networks to help explain the chief's thinking and (2) to gain insight into the public's perceptions of police actions and "hear others outside of my sphere who have comments, recommendations, and ideas on how to improve police-community relations."²¹⁹ The Hispanic/Latino Coalition's Public Safety Committee, headed by Epperson and Rockford resident Rudy Valdez, serves a similar purpose but tailored for the particular concerns of Rockford's Latinx and Hispanic residents. In interviews, local Latinx leaders and residents said that negligence, miscommunication from a language barrier, and inappropriate immigration enforcement led to a fear and antipathy toward the police for many Latinx residents of Rockford.²²⁰ The meetings—held mostly in Spanish with Epperson using a translator—offer an opportunity for the police to affirm their interest in public safety, not in immigration status. Asked to compare Epperson's approach to engaging the community with that of the previous chiefs, Valdez, who has lived in Rockford since 1989, falters: "Prior to Chief Epperson we really didn't . . . the deputy chiefs, even lieutenants, it all seemed unapproachable. There was never anybody reaching out to us. I can't really say whether it was bad or good because it was nonexistent."²²¹ In addition, the RPD and community stakeholders collaborated to: start open monthly meetings (called RockStat²²²) to share information on the performance of the police and other city agencies; create an Explorers program to expand minority representation in law enforcement and build connections between families and police; and offer a citizen orientation training for new officers, led by Pastor Copeland, to expose law enforcement to perceptions of the police and realities of community life.

Challenges and resistance to trust-building

Even with some success in reducing crime and launching new ventures, however, changing long-held perceptions and practices is comes with risks and resistance. Progress can also be undone by traumatic events. Chief Epperson found that while he could win community support, he sometimes risked losing support of the RPD union. Even though he publicly avoided thornier issues of race and history outside of seeking partners, his commitments still made some enemies. In September 2007, citing anger at unresolved grievances about disciplinary policies and operational procedures, 276 of the 286 eligible union members voted that they had no confidence in Epperson's ability as a manager.²²³ This anger was

219. Chet Epperson, chief, Rockford Police Department, in e-mail to Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, September 4, 2015.

220. Rudy Valdez, Edgardo Flores, and others who requested anonymity, interviews with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice.

221. Ibid.

222. "RockStat," City of Rockford, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://www.ci.rockford.il.us/rockstat.aspx>.

223. Isaac Guerrero, "Overwhelming Vote of No Confidence in Top Cop Epperson," Rockford Register Star, last modified September 15, 2007, <http://www.rstar.com/article/20070915/NEWS/309159964>.

widely understood to be related to Epperson's commitment to working with the community to change police practice. Mayor Morrissey, however, rejected the union's challenge and defended his chief: "I think the citizens have spoken. Citizens are seeing the results of an administration working with a chief who gets it, who understands that you have to connect into the community, and it means a change in culture."²²⁴ Other disputes—over hazard pay²²⁵ or intervening on behalf of NAACP leader Lloyd Johnston following an incident at his home in 2013²²⁶—became flashpoints in an uneasy relationship between Epperson and his officers.

Meanwhile, his backing of an officer in a 2009 shooting of an unarmed civilian, Anthony Barmore, led to Chief Epperson losing community allies.²²⁷ Though he later softened his backing of the officer's actions, some prominent Black religious leaders have never forgiven him. At the same time, criticism led Epperson to feel that attacks on the department's investigative response to the shooting were valid, so in August 2011 he signed on to a new plan to ensure some measure of objectivity in police use of force cases. The task force requires neighboring law enforcement agencies to investigate officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths when chiefs of participating departments request it.²²⁸

Despite efforts by Chief Epperson to meet with small groups of rank-and-file officers as well as union leadership in order to identify common interests and opportunities for compromise, tensions remained high following the vote of no confidence. In the midst of the investigation over the Johnston incident, the *Rockford Register Star* counseled Epperson to resign "for the good of the city" despite "declining crime rates" because of the distraction caused by the "bickering" between the chief and the union.²²⁹

The challenges Chief Epperson faced point to the larger personal, political, and systemic obstacles that stand in the way of reconciliation and community trust-building efforts and suggest that special attention should be paid to internal attitudes prior to or in combination with bold external engagement. Nevertheless, important and positive lessons can be drawn from the critiques Epperson faced. Epperson and Pastor Copeland remained close partners throughout Epperson's tenure and were able, in spite of detractors on both sides, to implement a number of productive programs that created opportunities for

224. "Police Union Ready for Openness After No Confidence Vote," *Rock River Times*, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://rockrivertimes.com/wpapp/archives/1993/07/01/police-union-ready-for-openness-after-no-confidence-vote/>.

225. Corina Curry, "Rockford Police Union President: Hazard Pay to Stay on Table," *Rockford Register Star*, last modified July 12, 2012, <http://www.rrstar.com/article/20120712/NEWS/307129867>.

226. Jim Hagerty, "Police Union Calls for Independent Probe of Incident at Home of NAACP Official," *Rock River Times*, last modified November 30, 2014, <http://rockrivertimes.com/wpapp/happening-now/2013/11/20/police-union-calls-for-independent-probe-of-incident-at-home-of-naacp-official/>.

227. "Illinois City Settles for \$1.1m in Fatal Police Shooting of Unarmed Black Man," *The Guardian*, last modified December 16, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/dec/16/rockford-illinois-settlement-police-shooting-mark-anthony-barmore>.

228. Kimberly Brown, "Winnebago Integrity Task Force Officially Created," *CBS 23/WIFR*, last modified August 20, 2010, <http://www.wifr.com/home/headlines/101128944.html>.

229. "Our View: Rockford Police Chief Chet Epperson Needs to Resign For Good of City," *Rockford Register Star*, last modified July 13, 2014, <http://www.rrstar.com/article/20140713/OPINION/140719808>.

police-community exposure, built trust, and enhanced public safety. Further, while union interests can oppose and complicate chiefs' efforts, public support and other actors can counteract those interests to a certain extent. For example, Mayor Morrissey was instrumental in helping Epperson weather a number of attacks. Regardless of the challenges they faced, Epperson and Copeland were ultimately unable to convey to a number of their police and community partners the importance of their mission to reconcile, and it appears that they never pursued any formal effort to describe the overarching motivation for many of their trust-building efforts. Carefully and consistently articulating their commitment to establishing relationships of trust to improve upon past practice and describing the many advantages of pursuing a new way forward rooted in an acknowledgment of historical harms might have broadened support and impact.

Connect Rockford: Collective impact with community input

Developing a collaborative policy and practice body

The pressure Chief Epperson faced from the department and the important but fragile connection he forged with many community leaders served as a reminder that while individual efforts are crucial, they are also vulnerable to changing circumstances. In response, Pastor Copeland turned to the question of developing an infrastructure to sustain the progress they have already made. The chief's retirement added a measure of urgency to Copeland's planning. Aided by working sessions with the National Network for Safe Communities and the COPS Office about the role of "community moral voice" and reconciliation, Copeland focused in on the challenge of finding how to "operationalize the community moral voice component and bring it to the state of the art in the same way that we brought the law enforcement and these other components together" for the DMI.²³⁰ Copeland seized on the idea that institutionalizing the community's perspective and creating avenues for its strength would never quite follow the law enforcement model, but that something along the lines of a collective impact organization could impose some order on the "messier" community piece by institutionalizing its input in criminal justice decisions.

The path forward on some type of institutionalized approach to community crime prevention, Pastor Copeland saw, could follow the precedent set by Alignment Rockford. Alignment Rockford is a hallmark local partnership that aims to affect a turnaround in Rockford's public schools on issues as wide-ranging as truancy, minority achievement gaps, and graduation rates and test scores as the model for a coordinated public safety initiative that could advance police-community reconciliation. Alignment Rockford was founded in 2009 on the premise that Rockford's schools needed to change drastically but that teachers and the school district could not create that change without a coordinated effort by political, corporate, religious, and civic leaders. Drawing heavily from Alignment Nashville, a similar initiative, Alignment Rockford has a well-established governance structure with high-level buy-in and dozens of sponsoring organizations and individuals. Working committees meet at least monthly to

230. K. Edward Copeland, quoted in "Leadership Group Working Session: Community Moral Voice," John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY, September 27–28, 2011.

design and implement solutions to problems articulated by the school district and community members, following a strict process of “tactical planning,” “community engagement,” “implementation and evaluation,” “scaling up,” and “institutionalization.” Though Alignment Rockford’s emphasis on widespread community participation, transparency, and outcome assessment surely has an impact across the city, addressing the district’s legacy of discriminatory spending in minority schools is a clear target of the initiative.

Based on this model, Pastor Copeland wrote in the *Rockford Register Star* about the collective impact public safety initiative he envisions. Calling it “Connect Rockford,” Copeland describes the initiative as seeking to map the lessons from Alignment Rockford onto strategies to confront the city’s violent crime problem. He explains that “Collective impact is a strategic way of thinking about and attacking complex systemic problems . . . it can transform spears of implicit bias and explicit animus into pruning hooks of human flourishing.”²³¹ Further, he argues, collective impact institutionalizes communal decision making in a way that can ensure progress beyond officials who “may or may not be in office five years from now.”²³² In practice, Copeland hopes to establish sustainability and local input in much the same way that Alignment Rockford relies on community perspectives to shape its education projects and community resources to supplement official governmental efforts. The organization will unite a wide range of law enforcement and governmental agencies—the police department, the sheriff’s office, probation, parole, the county board, the chief judge, the mayor’s office, and others—with leaders from Black and Latinx churches and community groups as well as other city and county power brokers. Initiatives like RAVEN will be subsumed, maintained, and improved under the Connect Rockford network. Copeland sees this body as addressing reconciliation through power by giving power to the people most affected by law enforcement, community can become more equal partners in public safety efforts.²³³

Amanda Hamaker, as project manager, has been developing the Connect Rockford organizational plan and governance structure. Her plan, which is still in draft form pending broader stakeholder approval, envisions four core action areas within Connect Rockford, each encouraging collaboration between law enforcement and communities and bolstering the centrality of community perspectives in shaping policy and practice: Youth Prevention & Intervention, Adult Prevention & Intervention, Enforcement & the Law, and Community & Policy. These areas attempt to reduce incarceration as a crime-control tool, elevate police-community collaboration to the level of more traditional crime prevention goals, build understanding within the community of its role in creating safety, scrutinize and challenge legal and financial structures to ensure justice, and engage community and law enforcement in transparent, healing dialogue. Hamaker’s plan also provides for representation from the communities most affected by public safety initiatives at all three levels of Connect Rockford’s governance structure. The governing board combines official leadership, including the mayor and the heads of Rockford and regional law

231. K. Edward Copeland, “My View: The Case for Connect Rockford,” *Rockford Register Star*, last modified October 3, 2015, <http://www.rrostar.com/article/20151003/OPINION/151009783/14261/OPINION/>.

232. *Ibid.*

233. *Ibid.*

enforcement institutions, with social service providers, religious community representation, and an as yet undetermined number of strategically selected community partners chosen to serve as members at large. Four strategy teams, one for each action area, are orchestrated by a group representing similar constituencies as the governing board. And implementation is run by project teams, each of which is led by a member of one of the four strategy teams but hosted by community organizations or individuals vetted and selected through an open call for proposals. Crucially, at this operational level Hamaker envisions a special community moral voice role filled by Rockfordians with a stake in the process.”²³⁴

Pastor Copeland’s longstanding mission to elevate the community moral voice to the state of the art as a means to racial reconciliation is evident in this formulation. For her part, Hamaker notes that she and the other drivers of Connect Rockford are heavily preoccupied with coming up with ways for the biggest public safety decision makers to understand the racial history and implications of the policies and practices they implement and oversee. Conceiving and developing a standing body of criminal justice decision makers that will automatically incorporate perspectives from the communities that are historically most impacted by law enforcement policies represents a bold step toward sustaining reconciliation efforts.

Conclusion

Asked to evaluate the state of relations between Rockford police and minority residents today, Pastor Copeland is guardedly optimistic, describing the current moment as “a turning point.” Ten years ago, before Chief Epperson and Copeland began taking incremental, pragmatic steps to strengthen relationships between the police and community of Rockford, there was reason to believe that the city was poised on the brink of tumult and poisoned relationships similar to other historically segregated cities. The city had been forced to stare down official government negligence of its minority communities in the \$250 million school segregation settlement a few years earlier. Later, in 2009, the police-involved Barmore shooting drew national attention and condemnation and upset some of the progress that had been made in connecting police and Rockford’s Black community. Even so, many residents, including these faith leaders and—anecdotally—many of their congregants and neighbors feel that relations between police and minority communities have improved noticeably since 2005. Any number of macro factors may have contributed to better relations—economics, politics, and so on—but the progress in Rockford has a much simpler explanation, backed by the testimony of locals.

The real force driving reconciliation, far more obvious and mundane, is a few leaders—one from each side of the police-community divide and the mayor to provide them political cover—who understand the volatile history that has alienated their constituencies from one another and who have worked hard to build trust where disengagement has been the norm. Chief Chet Epperson made unprecedented acknowledgments of failure and commitments to change; Pastor K. Edward Copeland embraced the

234. Amanda Hamaker, project manager, Connect Rockford, to Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 10, 2015.

opportunity for collaboration and brought along new community partners. Together they created an unprecedented partnership to implement the Drug Market Intervention (DMI) strategy and dramatically reduced the impact of open-air drug markets on the city's historically Black west side.

Their collaborations are wide-ranging and often innovative, but they are mostly framed as efforts with traditional, tangible goals: closing drug markets, reducing violence, interrupting cycles of recidivism, improving community health. Privately, though, they draw from a deep, mutually acknowledged appreciation of the importance of overcoming the race-based discord that has undermined meaningful collaboration and public safety improvements in Rockford for generations. This commitment to building mutual trust—in a city perhaps most remarkable for its ordinary American socioeconomic and racial dynamics—makes their efforts compelling. Now, nearly 10 years since they first met, they are on the verge of establishing a collective impact organization that aligns the public safety efforts of law enforcement agencies with the perspectives of the minority communities most affected by their work, all based on the premise that everyone involved has a common stake in trust and safety.

Case Study Three: Watts (Los Angeles), California

Introduction

The Watts neighborhood of southern Los Angeles is most widely known as a symbol of urban unrest. As the site of the Watts Riots of 1965, an epicenter of the crack epidemic in the 1980s and 90s, and often host to violent gang disputes, the perception of the community has long been defined by the gap between law enforcement and residents. Given the fraught history between a Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) with a record of scandal and this lower-income minority community, the latest incidents of police-involved shootings and resulting upheaval would make a combustible mix for the Watts of popular imagination. Yet when only two days after Michael Brown was shot and killed in Ferguson, Missouri, Ezell Ford—an unarmed Black man with a mental illness—was killed by LAPD officers less than a mile away from Watts, the neighborhood did not erupt. In fact, community members asked protestors to avoid coming to the neighborhood: They had their own relationship with their police to consider.²³⁵ After decades of turmoil— police brutality and racism, pervasive gang violence, and even periodic armed conflict between police and gang members—by 2014, Watts had already become a national exemplar of something else: strong police-community collaboration and greater safety than at any time since the 1960s. How did this happen?

The central reason for the shift has been the adoption of an approach to public safety that institutionalizes resident input, places a premium on public trust, and engages local history and organizing efforts. The strategy at the center of this relationship-based policing philosophy is the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), a joint project of the LAPD, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), and the Advancement Project and Urban Peace Institute (Los Angeles-based nonprofit organizations). Watts residents worked with these entities to develop and implement the CSP, which is founded on the principle that trust, rather than a complement to violence reduction, has the power to directly reduce crime and improve neighborhood perceptions of law enforcement. The CSP built on efforts by the Watts Gang Task Force to foster collaboration and engage in honest and difficult conversations about policing, using that groundwork to establish a new approach to policing that encourages unprecedented community involvement in maintaining public safety.

235. Jennifer Medina, “Watts, 50 Years On, Stands in Contrast to Today’s Conflicts,” *New York Times*, August 10, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/11/us/50-years-after-watts-riots-a-recovery-is-in-progress.html>.

The course of the LAPD's transition in Watts and elsewhere has required a top-down reconsideration of the department's operations and ethos as well as a bottom-up infusion of community input. That such a model took root in one of Los Angeles's most violent and alienated neighborhoods is testament to both a long arc of reform and as well as a concentrated and ongoing effort to address specific local challenges.

This study begins by situating Watts in the turbulent history of policing and race in Los Angeles and the decades-long institutional reform movement within the LAPD and then moves to the specific transformation of police-community relationships in Watts itself. Several common elements of police-community reconciliation come to the fore on the citywide and local scale: reflection on past incidents and practices, openness to criticism and engagement, and conscientious efforts at practical and lasting change. Focusing closely on Watts and the CSP, this study will present how collaboration, a commitment to openness and airing of grievances, and specific trainings and protocols can establish a community partnership that can both reduce violence and increase trust even in historically challenging contexts. As the success of the CSP grows and its strategies are exported to other Los Angeles neighborhoods, it offers an important view in to the challenges and successes of one approach to reconciliation.

Los Angeles and the LAPD

The history of race and policing in Los Angeles is marked as much by a series of high-profile chiefs of police as by the periodic scandals they presided over, events that showcased to the broader public the department's nagging problems. Over the second half of the 20th century, the LAPD both took marked steps towards professionalization and improvement and reeled from the deep prejudice and antagonism towards the public that often defined it.

William H. Parker

William H. Parker, chief from 1950 to 1966, embodied both ambition and adversarial posture. On the one hand, Chief Parker is considered the architect of the modern LAPD in large part because of the steps he took to create a paramilitary discipline organization, drawing on his tenure as a captain in the US Army in World War II. Corruption and unprofessionalism violated Parker's concept of the superior cop, so he made sure to pay his officers well enough to attract capable professionals. He rooted out officer corruption with newly established divisions and resisted any outside criticism that would undermine his mission—stated in his first month as chief—to “make this department the most respected police force in the United States.”²³⁶ He implemented new data-driven measures for performance review, overhauled

236. Josephine Oakley Milbauer, “The Bright Badge of the LAPD,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1960.

training and recruitment, and established more rigid command hierarchies and internal accountability.²³⁷ In important ways, Parker wrought a police department that officers could feel proud to be a part of, an institution they would fervently protect against almost any outside criticism.

At the same time, however, Chief Parker's racial bigotry and dismal view of humanity were intertwined with his plans for his department. On a local television show, for example, Parker said that "It is estimated that by 1970, 45 percent of Los Angeles will be Negro. If you want any protection for your home and family . . . you're going to have to support a strong police department. If you don't, God help you."²³⁸ Beyond his prejudice towards Los Angeles's minority communities, his views about humans, in general, were marked by a deep cynicism. Parker was pessimistic about civilization without rigid controls, considering humans "the most predatory of all in the animal kingdom" and the United States "the most lawless nation on Earth."²³⁹ Therefore, he believed, it was the role of the police to maintain order by holding a "thin blue line" against the forces of chaos and evil. To that end, Parker's drive to professionalize seemed crucial: to him, police needed to be above and separate from the masses. Given the opportunity to contribute to the casting of a television show about the LAPD, according to Joe Domanick's history of the department, Parker demonstrated exactly what he would want as his "American model cop—white, clean-cut, athletic, with a moral code far superior to the people he policed."²⁴⁰ This elitism matched the form of Parker's department, too, as a relatively low level of local investment meant that "[b]y necessity, Parker's L.A.P.D. became a highly mobile strike force, whose operational signature was aggressiveness. Its officers intervened first, and asked questions later."²⁴¹

Accordingly, Chief Parker had little patience for external oversight, moving to make the department as independent as possible,²⁴² resisting or lashing out at anyone—from local government to the IACP to Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover—that stepped on, or toward, his turf.²⁴³ Partially because of this insulation, "horror stories of black Angelenos stopped, verbally abused, unlawfully detained, or beaten by the police" did not muster sufficient outside pressure to change the department.

237. Alisa Sarah Kramer, "William H. Parker and the Thin Blue Line: Politics, Public Relations, and Policing in Postwar Los Angeles," PhD dissertation, Department of History, American University, 2007, <https://books.google.com/books?id=naLJ6hDG5P4C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

238. Domanick, *Blue*, 11 (see note 32).

239. *Ibid.*, 29.

240. *Ibid.*

241. Peter J. Boyer, "Bad Cops," *The New Yorker*, May 21, 2001, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/05/21/bad-cops>.

242. Domanick, *Blue*, 29 (see note 32).

243. John T. Donovan, "I Have No Use for this Fellow Parker: William H. Parker of the LAPD and His Feud with J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI," *Southern California Quarterly* 87, no. 2 (summer 2005), 171–198, <http://scq.ucpress.edu/content/87/2/171>.

Chief Parker's militarized approach to policing coupled with a dim view of the people they policed were on full display in the Watts Riots in 1965, one year before he would die in office. Though the riots expressed Watts residents' anger at several forms of municipal neglect, the poisoned relationship between law enforcement and the community both sparked and contributed significant fuel to the event.²⁴⁴ The riots, escalating from a traffic stop,²⁴⁵ in part expressed the community's resentment at ongoing police brutality and no recourse from "one of the most racist and most brutal departments [in the world]."²⁴⁶ Law enforcement responded in force, with 13,900 national guardsman and 2,000 LAPD officers and deputies eventually deployed to the area. Fires, looting, and other damage destroyed 200 buildings and damaged more than 600, while more than 1,000 people were injured and 34 were killed over the course of a week. Law enforcement killed 23 people; the LAPD was responsible for 16 deaths, all ruled justifiable homicides.²⁴⁷ Parker insisted that the upheaval was not caused by legitimate grievances but rather by an unruly population "who have lost all respect for the law."²⁴⁸ It might not have started, Parker said, if "police hadn't been handling Negroes with kid gloves."²⁴⁹

Daryl Gates

Chief Parker's preferred style of heavy-handed and independent policing would not end with the 1965 riots in Watts or his death in office a year later. The next major leader of the department, Daryl Gates, had been protégé of Parker's and an inspector in charge of patrol in Watts during the riots.²⁵⁰ During his ascent and then tenure as chief, Gates embraced Parker's outlook that his officers were part of an elite force that did not have to answer to anyone but the department itself.²⁵¹ Gates's tenure, spanning the height of the crack epidemic and the intensification of the war on drugs, was most significantly defined by a push to further militarize the department. He moved the LAPD further towards specialized tactical units instead of patrol, having helped launch the first SWAT team before he had become chief,²⁵² and

244. James Queally, "Watts Riots: Traffic Stop Was the Spark that Ignited Days of Destruction in L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-watts-riots-explainer-20150715-htmlstory.html>.

245. The California Highway Patrol conducted the initial stop. The LAPD later arrived at the scene.

246. Valerie Reitman and Mitchell Landsberg, "Watts Riots, 40 Years Later," *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 2005, <http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-watts-riots-40-years-later-20050811-htmlstory.html>.

247. *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?* (Sacramento, CA: Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, 1965).

248. Doug Smith, "Stunned by the Watts Riots, the L.A. Times Struggled to Make Sense of the Violence," *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 2015, <http://graphics.latimes.com/watts-annotations/>.

249. Kramer, *William H. Parker and the Thin Blue Line*, 290 (see note 237).

250. "Daryl Gates Obituary," *The Guardian*, April 22, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/22/daryl-gates-obituary>.

251. Joe Domanick, "Daryl Gates' Downfall," *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/apr/18/opinion/la-oe-domanick18-2010apr18>.

252. Paul Clinton, "Daryl Gates and the Origins of LAPD SWAT," *Police: The Law Enforcement Magazine*, April 16, 2010, <http://www.policemag.com/blog/swat/story/2010/04/daryl-gates-and-the-origins-of-lapd-swat.aspx>.

attempted to “expunge all social service components from policing and to focus exclusively on crime and territorial control.”²⁵³ The crack epidemic and a serious gang problem served as ready enemies for the military analogy. Gates described his department’s operations with military analogies and terminology. At his end-of-year address in 1986, he described how his officers should try to overcome the gang threat: “It’s like having the Marine Corps invade an area that is having little pockets of resistance. We can’t have it. . . . We’ve got to wipe them out.”²⁵⁴

This promise would come to fruition in 1988, following the killing of a suburban teenager caught in gang crossfire, when Chief Gates declared “war” on Los Angeles gangs and accelerated operations of his “Operation Hammer,” led by the department’s “most notorious antigang unit,” the Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH) unit.²⁵⁵ That strategy consisted of massive raids and roundups, predominantly carried out in Black and Latinx neighborhoods, resulted in 50,000 suspects arrested but only a small proportion ever charged. In one weekend in April 1988, Gates sent more than 1,000 officers to South Los Angeles and arrested more than 1,400 people;²⁵⁶ only 103 cases were eventually filed.²⁵⁷ Though some residents welcomed a challenge to the gangs’ grip on their neighborhoods, many residents alleged that the concentrated enforcement was a product of discrimination and rife with abuses.

The Dalton Avenue Raid in August 1988 embodied the worst of the strategy. Searching for drugs, 88 LAPD officers entered and searched a pair of apartment buildings in southwest Los Angeles and “smashed furniture, punched holes in walls, destroyed family photos, ripped down cabinet doors, slashed sofas, shattered mirrors, hammered toilets to porcelain shards, doused clothing with bleach and emptied refrigerators. Some officers left their own graffiti.”²⁵⁸ After arresting dozens of residents, beating some, and leaving several homeless, the LAPD had found less than seven ounces of drugs.²⁵⁹ In recalling the incident, Todd Parrick, a rookie officer and enthusiastic participant in the raid, showed how pervasive Chief Gates’ mentality was in the department: “We weren’t just searching for drugs. We were delivering a message that there was a price to pay for selling drugs and being a gang member. With that mentality, 39th and Dalton was born. I looked at it as something of a Normandy Beach, a D-Day.”²⁶⁰ As with the hundreds of shootings by LAPD

253. Donna Murch, “Crack in Los Angeles: Crisis, Militarization, and Black Response to the Late Twentieth-Century War on Drugs,” *Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (June 2015), 162–173, 165–166, <https://academic.oup.com/jah/article/102/1/162/686732/Crack-in-Los-Angeles-Crisis-Militarization-and>.

254. Domanick, *Blue*, 19 (see note 32).

255. Murch, “Crack in Los Angeles,” 165 (see note 253).

256. *Ibid.*, 168.

257. Domanick, *Blue*, 65 (see note 32).

258. John L. Mitchell, “The Raid that Still Haunts L.A.,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 2001, <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/mar/14/news/mn-37553>.

259. *Ibid.*

260. *Ibid.*

officers during the 1980s,²⁶¹ there was little accountability for the Dalton raid: A few officers were fired, other suspended, but only three charged with misdemeanors and eventually acquitted.²⁶² Meanwhile, complaints against the department increased by 33 percent between 1984 and 1989.²⁶³

Many see the Dalton raid as a precursor of what was to be Gates's last saga: the Rodney King beating and riots of 1992. The King case would epitomize a department driven by a combat mentality, lacking external accountability and deeply unpopular among minority residents. Twenty-seven officers (21 from the LAPD) were present when King was beaten in April 1991, and the 55 baton blows and six kicks administered were captured on videotape. King emerged from the incident with a fractured cheekbone, 11 broken bones at the base of his skull, and a broken leg.²⁶⁴ Many in the LAPD reform movement thought this beating, the video of which was played repeatedly for audiences around the world, would be the event to reveal the urgent need for change to the city's decision makers. In response, then Mayor Tom Bradley appointed the prominent local lawyer Warren Christopher to head a blue ribbon commission charged with conducting a "full and fair examination of the structure and operation of the LAPD."²⁶⁵ On July 9, 1991, the Christopher Commission laid bare the department's excessive use of force practices and consistent unresponsiveness to complaints about offending officers, despite its clear knowledge of allegations and offenses as well as the racism, sexism, homophobia, and antisemitism evident in reams of transcripts of recorded officer radio communication. It called for Chief Gates to resign and sought to impose limits on some of the departmental autonomy that Chief Parker had built and guarded so diligently, including establishing term limits for the chief of police and an inspector general to oversee the department on behalf of the Police Commission.²⁶⁶ The first state jury trial over the King beating, which contained no African-American jurors, did not deem the LAPD's actions as troublesome: On April 29, 1992, the jury acquitted all four officers of assaulting King.²⁶⁷

261. Domanick, *Blue*, 66 (see note 32).

262. Mitchell, "The Raid that Still Haunts L.A." (see note 258).

263. Dave Zirin, "Want to Understand the 1992 L.A. Riots? Start With the 1984 L.A. Olympics," *The Nation*, April 30, 2012, <http://www.thenation.com/article/want-understand-1992-la-riots-start-1984-la-olympics/>.

264. "The Rodney King Affair: Shortly After Midnight on March 3, LAPD Officers Converge on a White Hyundai Stopped After a Short Pursuit," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1991, http://articles.latimes.com/1991-03-24/local/me-1422_1_king-s-injuries-officer-laurence-m-powell-beating.

265. Tom Bradley, charge to the Special Independent Commission, April 1, 1991, quoted in "Los Angeles: The Christopher Commission Report," Human Rights Watch, accessed May 26, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/police/uspo73.htm>.

266. Connie Rice, *Power Concedes Nothing: One Woman's Quest for Social Justice in America, from the Courtroom to the Kill Zones* (New York: Scribner, 2012).

267. Hiroshi Furukai, Richard Krooth, and Edgar W. Butler, "The Rodney King Beating Verdicts," in Mark Baldassare, ed., *The Los Angeles Riots: Lessons for the Urban Future* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 73–102, <https://people.ucsc.edu/~hfukurai/documents/RodneyKing.pdf>.

Almost immediately after the news broke, riots started in South Central Los Angeles, the area used to the massive police presence during Operation Hammer, a gang-control program that began in 1987. But unlike most other days in that period, police presence was sparse: After responding to initial calls, the LAPD largely withdrew from the growing unrest.²⁶⁸ Chief Gates was at a fundraiser as the riots erupted. The six days that followed resulted in 58 dead, 2,300 injured, and more than \$1 billion in property damage. Four thousand federal troops had been deployed to the area—and six thousand people were arraigned for their actions during the riots—by the time calm was restored.²⁶⁹ Following the failure of the LAPD to adequately respond to the crisis—and because of its role in fomenting such discontent in the first place—there was intense condemnation of the department. Gates left the department months later.

All told, Chief Gates's policing strategy and Operation Hammer in particular did not live up to crime control priorities, failing to reduce violence or undercut the crack trade in any meaningful way. Homicides dropped from 812 to 736 in Operation Hammer's first year but then surged to more than 1,000 every year between 1991 and 1993.²⁷⁰ Juvenile crime increased by 12 percent over the same span, while crack continued to ravage the same neighborhoods.²⁷¹ At Gates's retirement in June 1992, 81 percent of Los Angeles disapproved of the job he was doing.²⁷²

Bernard Parks

Following the findings of the Christopher Commission and Chief Gates's departure, a number of chiefs came and went, the longest tenure of which ended after Chief Willie Williams was dismissed by the Police Commission after five years for failing to institute "reform to the extent that was possible or required."²⁷³ Chief Bernard Parks presided over the next major episode for the LAPD, a scandal rooted in the militaristic approach and enforcement units passed down from Chiefs Parker and Gates. By 1998, the CRASH unit that had spearheaded Operation Hammer and the Dalton Avenue raid had amassed a series of misconduct complaints. The conduct of CRASH and other officers in the Rampart Division, in

268. Jim Newton, "The Night the LAPD Failed," *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 2012, <http://www.latimes.com/la-oe-newton-police-failure-at-riots-20120429-column.html>.

269. "The L.A. Riots: 24 Years Later," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 2016, <http://timelines.latimes.com/los-angeles-riots/>.

270. Shawn Hubler, "Homicides in 1992 Set Record for L.A. County: Violence: 2,589 Killings in 1992 Represent an 8% Rise Over Previous Year. Cultural Changes and Accessibility of Guns Cited as Factors," *Los Angeles Times*, January 5, 1993, http://articles.latimes.com/1993-01-05/local/me-819_1_los-angeles-county.

271. Radley Balko, "Raid of the Day: The 39th & Dalton Edition," *Huffington Post*, last modified February 5, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/05/raid-of-the-day-the-39th-n_2621763.html.

272. Frank Clifford and Louis Sahagun, "The Times Poll: 81% Critical of Gates; Police Reform Backed," *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1992, http://articles.latimes.com/1992-05-15/news/mn-2226_1_police-department.

273. Board of Police Commissioners, *In the Course of Change: The Los Angeles Police Department Five Years After the Christopher Commission* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Police Department, 1996), vi.

particular, led Parks to establish the Rampart CRASH Task Force in May of that year.²⁷⁴ The preceding months had seen Rampart officers beat a handcuffed suspect until he vomited blood, participate in a bank robbery of \$722,000, and misplace six pounds of cocaine from Rampart evidence (later deemed stolen and resold by Rampart CRASH officers).²⁷⁵ When the task force found new evidence that one officer, Rafael Perez, had stolen cocaine from evidence at least 11 other times, prosecutors struck a plea deal with Perez to inform on the extent of misconduct in the CRASH ranks. Prosecutors initially hoped Perez would assist in the investigation of two shootings and three other CRASH officers; after nine months of interviews and review, however, Perez had implicated about 70 LAPD officers for various forms of misconduct—planting guns and evidence, fabricating charges, stealing and selling cocaine, beatings, and shootings—and identified 91 specific “bad” arrests. Superiors, Perez testified, maintained willful ignorance of the specifics of arrests, preferring not to flag “questionable” incidents and instead reiterated their support for the good work the division was doing to root out what they believed to be the worst criminals on the street. Nearly 100 convictions were later overturned as a result.²⁷⁶

As the legal process continued, Chief Parks established an internal Board of Inquiry (BOI) comprising LAPD command staff to gather facts about the Rampart incidents, determine their relationship to the LAPD’s systems, and offer recommendations for reforms. The department’s conclusions and Parks’s administrative actions reflected the tension between the institutional culture Parks had inherited and the unavoidable need for self-criticism. Parks, like his predecessors considering himself a disciplinarian, found the acts unacceptable, writing in the BOI report that the Rampart episode needed to be a “life-altering experience for the Los Angeles Police Department” which “as an organization provided the opportunity” for the scandal. Nonetheless, the ultimate conclusion of the BOI investigation was that “the Rampart corruption incident occurred because a few individuals decided to engage in blatant misconduct and, in some cases, criminal behavior.”²⁷⁷ While Parks would disband CRASH and the LAPD discipline some officers, neither Parks nor the BOI fully investigated or recognized the systemic problems in the department.

Unlike the aftermath of the Watts riots or the Rodney King beating, however, further reviews sought to press the issue once and for all. Former Assistant Chief David Dotson, who had been a trusted inside source on the LAPD since his central role in the Christopher Commission report, took to the *Los Angeles Times* op-ed page to dismiss the LAPD board’s conclusion: “The problems at the LAPD’s Rampart Division are cultural in nature, the result of an institutional mindset first conceived in the 1950s. . . . Unless this

274. “Frontline: Rampart Scandal Timeline,” PBS.org, accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/lapd/scandal/cron.html>.

275. Ibid.

276. Ibid.

277. *Board of Inquiry into the Rampart Area Corruption Incident* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Police Department, 2000), http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/boi_exec_summary.pdf.

police culture is overthrown, future Rampart scandals are inevitable.”²⁷⁸ A report conducted by University of Southern California law professor Erwin Chemerinsky, at the behest of an unlikely alliance of the police union and civil rights advocates,²⁷⁹ amply broadened the scope of blame, alleging that “the Board of Inquiry Report fails to recognize that the central problem is the culture of the Los Angeles Police Department, which gave rise to and tolerated what occurred in the Rampart Division and elsewhere.”²⁸⁰ At issue was what it referred to as the department’s “bunker mentality,” “looking for trouble patrol culture,” and “silence” in response to investigations of officer misconduct.²⁸¹ The Chemerinsky report recommended the adoption of a number of disciplinary and use of force policies, a more robust independent review process, and the appointment of a permanent special prosecutor to investigate police misconduct. A month later, in November 2000, the Police Commission published its own report slamming the “structural issues” of the department, particularly a lack of any meaningful external oversight from civilians or the Inspector General.²⁸² Finally, in the same month, the city of Los Angeles entered into a consent decree agreement with the US Department of Justice (DOJ), which had been investigating the LAPD since 1996 for civil rights violations related to the use of excessive force.

Having determined that the LAPD had failed to achieve the reforms demanded of it by the Christopher Commission and subsequent progress reports, in May 2000 the DOJ’s Civil Rights Division filed suit against the city mandating that the city either go to trial against the Federal Government or submit to a consent decree, overseen by US District Court Judge Gary Feess, to “eliminate the pattern or practice of misconduct” the division had observed.²⁸³ Ironically, the authority to root out “pattern or practice” violations had been established for the first time by the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 in response to the beating of King.²⁸⁴ Nearly a decade later, the city that inspired Congress to formally expand DOJ authority was committed to at least five years of oversight by a federal judge. Chief Parks would not be nominated for reappointment and departed in 2002.

278. David D. Dotson, “A Culture of War,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 2000, <http://articles.latimes.com/2000/feb/27/opinion/op-3041>.

279. Rice, *Power Concedes Nothing*, 229–231 (see note 266).

280. Erwin Chemerinsky, “An Independent Analysis of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Board of Inquiry Report on the Rampart Scandal,” *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* 34 (2001), 545–655, 559, <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/llr/vol34/iss2/4>.

281. *Ibid.*

282. David A. Sklansky et al., *Report of the Rampart Independent Review Panel* (Los Angeles : Rampart Independent Review Panel, 2000), <https://law.stanford.edu/publications/report-of-the-rampart-independent-review-panel-a-report-to-the-los-angeles-board-of-police-commissioners-concerning-the-operations-policies-and-procedures-of-the-los-angeles-police-department-in-th/>.

283. “LAPD Notice of Investigation Letter,” letter from Bill Lann Lee, Acting Assistant Attorney General, US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, to James K. Hahn, City Attorney, City of Los Angeles, May 8, 2000, <http://www.justice.gov/crt/lapd-notice-investigation-letter>.

284. Matt Stroud and Mira Rojanasakul, “A ‘Pattern or Practice’ of Violence in America,” *Bloomberg*, last modified May 27, 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-doj-and-police-violence/>.

In the end, the city faced more than 140 civil suits related to the Rampart scandal that resulted in between \$75 million and \$125 million in settlements.²⁸⁵ Beyond that financial impact, the human impact of Rampart-style policing is difficult to calculate. Officer morale was in tatters as the department was simultaneously turned against itself and bristling at the outside world. But perhaps the most significant result of the Rampart scandal was that no one—including the police who helped put together the Chemerinsky report—could ultimately deny the necessity of a cultural overhaul to the department. With the consent decree adopted by the city council, the department would be forced by law to reconsider its culture and its relationship with the public, fundamentally challenging the style that had been dominant since Chief Parker’s reformation of the LAPD.

Reform in the wake of scandal: The Bratton years and the modern era of the LAPD

In 2002, Bill Bratton assumed the mantle of chief, tasked with overseeing the LAPD’s climb back from public disgrace. Bratton, who had overseen organizational transformations in Boston and New York, had also served on the federal monitoring team for the consent decree.²⁸⁶ Whereas Chief Parker had sought to reduce corruption by insulation from politics and isolating the department as a professional elite, Bratton began by reaching elsewhere and opening the LAPD to new scrutiny and new ideas.²⁸⁷ In addition to the consent decree, Bratton brought his own “turnaround playbook” that, for the first time, aimed to take on the cultural and systemic problems in the LAPD. He ordered a “cultural diagnostic” by consultants, introduced the CompStat management system, and elevated the responsibility and scrutiny on the top managers in the department.²⁸⁸ In 2004, Bratton, with Mayor James K. Hahn and President of the Police Commission David S. Cunningham III, published a comprehensive plan of action for Bratton’s

285. Low-end estimates from Maeve Reston and Joel Rubin, “Los Angeles to Pay \$13 Million to Settle May Day Melee Lawsuits,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 2009, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/feb/05/local/me-lapd-settlement5>; high-end estimates from Rick Young, “The Outcome of the Rampart Scandal Investigations,” *Frontline*, PBS, last modified July 2008, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/lapd/later/outcome.html>.

286. Al Baker and J. David Goodman, “Bratton, Who Shaped an Era in Policing, Tries to Navigate a Racial Divide,” *New York Times*, July 25, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/26/nyregion/william-bratton-new-york-city-police-commissioner.html>.

287. For a comparison of Parker and Bratton’s reform plans, see John Buntin, “Did Bill Bratton Succeed in Changing LAPD’s Culture?” *Governing the States and Localities*, last modified August 31, 2009, <http://www.governing.com/topics/public-justice-safety/Did-Bill-Bratton-Succeed.html>.

288. Ibid.

current and future LAPD.²⁸⁹ Bratton was eager to reestablish stability not only because he believed in accountability and acknowledging grievances, but also because disruption and uncertainty meant that units were not where they should be in his strategy: in neighborhoods, making stops or making allies.²⁹⁰

While he set to work on the daily challenges of the department—not without resistance from rank and file officers—Chief Bratton also decided to appoint a Blue Ribbon Rampart Review Panel to get to the bottom of the “underlying causes” of the scandal and point a way forward. The Blue Ribbon panel, launched in 2003 and concluded in 2006, was meant to fully acknowledge, for the first time, the extent of the harm done to public trust and police morale and own the institutional culpability for Rampart.²⁹¹ To lead the project, Bratton selected civil rights activist Connie Rice, along with the leadership of the Police Commission and the inspector general, who agreed to the job after Bratton approved a series of conditions that ensured the panel would be able to freely and independently conduct its work.²⁹²

The panel was important both for the informational report it produced and because of the relationships formed and groundwork it set in the process. The report catalogued the organizational failures of the LAPD and the prosecutorial agencies to monitor conduct and reign in misconduct.²⁹³ The document also identified the post-scandal reform of the Rampart division as a case study for possible reform—a positive vision for policing—describing the new emphases on community engagement, collaboration with the private sector, proactive supervision, integration of data and technology, and improved coordination with gang intervention workers.²⁹⁴ Charlie Beck, then the commanding officer of the Rampart division, had made sure his officers were meeting local residents and business owners and that they were working closely with city and social service agencies that could help address some of the

289. James K. Hahn, David S. Cunningham III, and William J. Bratton, *LAPD: State of the Department: Plan of Action for the Los Angeles That Is and the Los Angeles That Could Be* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Police Department, 2004), http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/poa_web.pdf.

290. “The haunting and the devastating effect of that, however, was that for months, our gang units were not on the street, and the gangbangers were just doing what they wanted. And when the gang units were reconstituted, in greatly weakened form, they had all new people who had to make all new relationships.” He went on to describe in detail how his gang officers and local captains would be actively encouraged to develop the important relationships that reduce serious crime in the neighborhood as quickly as possible. Joe Domanick, “The Reformer, on Honeymoon,” *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, January 19, 2003, <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/jan/19/magazine/tm-bratton3>.

291. Blue Ribbon Rampart Review Panel, *Rampart Reconsidered* (see note 26).

292. These conditions included (1) independent funding; (2) access to the Police Commission’s subpoena power; (3) access to all records, including those from Internal Affairs; (4) all Rampart archives; (5) sign-off from the Police Protective League’s board of directors; (6) total independent control over writing and staffing; and (7) indemnity against litigation against the panel. Rice, *Power Concedes Nothing*, 250 (see note 266).

293. Blue Ribbon Rampart Review Panel, *Rampart Reconsidered*, 46–80 (see note 26).

294. *Ibid.*, 12–15.

vagrancy and other difficulties that would likely have previously been either ignored or treated as serious crimes. As he told Rice, “Search and destroy wasn’t working. . . . We had to try something else that didn’t make the community hate us.”²⁹⁵

The process of interviewing, fact finding, and airing of grievances demonstrated that Chief Bratton’s LAPD could be receptive to meaningful engagement with outside partners—even civil rights activists. Bratton embraced the findings of the Rampart report and lauded the work of the panel.²⁹⁶ That report previewed a number of high-profile outside reports that would echo the blue ribbon panel’s emphasis on “decentralized community police and crime reduction strategy” and drill down on a new vision for gang violence reduction. In fact, just six months later, Rice’s Advancement Project presented a report commissioned by the Los Angeles City Council laying out the failure of past gang suppression strategies and the dysfunctional relationship between criminal justice agencies and offering a comprehensive, integrated, and neighborhood-sensitive approach to gang violence.²⁹⁷ City Controller Laura Chick followed in 2008 with her own report, which added criticism to existing gang efforts, singled out the failure of approaches to youth, and requested an office be created in the mayor’s office to centralize new work.²⁹⁸ Bratton’s endorsement of concepts from these reports made them politically and practically viable.²⁹⁹

Most significantly, the LAPD’s collaboration with outsiders—Rice, Chick, and other law enforcement and gang interventionists—contributed to the momentum needed to get then Mayor Anthony Villaraigosa to help establish and fund two bedrock tenets of the new vision: a gang-interventionist training academy and a violence reduction coordinating center in the mayor’s office (the Gang Reduction and Youth Development Program, or GRYD).³⁰⁰ As Domanick writes, “The LAPD, other city departments, and some of Los Angeles’s most liberal philanthropic organizations were now working together to reduce gang and youth violence.”³⁰¹ In July of 2009, Judge Feess released the city from the consent decree, even pointing to the monitor’s finding that the LAPD had become “the national and international policing standard for activities that range from audits to handling of the mentally ill to many aspects of training to risk assessment of police officers and more.”³⁰² Before Chief Bratton passed off his post to Chief Beck one month later—who had been playing a pivotal role in coordinating relationships with community partners since his performance in Rampart³⁰³—plans were set for a public safety approach worlds apart

295. Ibid., 262–263.

296. “Chief Bratton Reacts” (see note 29).

297. *A Call to Action* (see note 30).

298. Los Angeles City Controller, *Blueprint* (see note 31).

299. Domanick, *Blue*, 315 (see note 32).

300. Ibid., 310.

301. Ibid., 310–11.

302. *Final Report* (Los Angeles: Office of the Independent Monitor of the Los Angeles Police Department, 2009), http://fr.kroll.com/media/pdfs/LAPD_FINAL-REPORT_06-11-2009.pdf.

303. Rice, *Power Concedes Nothing*, 285 (see note 266).

from Parker’s institutional legacy. At his retirement ceremony, Bratton gave his close collaborator Rice a replica of his four-star LAPD Chief of Police badge with her name on it—a dramatic acknowledgment of the importance of a longtime critic and civil rights activist in transforming the department. At Beck’s acceptance speech, marking the installation of the first new chief since the department’s overhaul, he described himself as someone who understands “the ghosts and the glory” of the LAPD.³⁰⁴

Exercising a new style: The Watts transformation

Since Chief Parker’s modernization of the department, the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles had felt the full effects of the LAPD’s strategic decisions and often served as the epicenter of the city’s crime and community crises. As Chiefs Bratton and Beck ushered in a new chapter for the LAPD, Watts would also be a natural if challenging site for a radically different approach to public safety.

Starting in the 1960s, Watts had been nearly entirely Black, a function of the thousands of African Americans who sought wartime manufacturing jobs from the American south during World War II³⁰⁵—moving in to the massive Nickerson Gardens, Jordan Downs, and Imperial Courts public housing developments—White flight to the suburbs, and discriminatory housing covenants.³⁰⁶ The poverty, unemployment, and subpar municipal services and schools in Watts and other Black neighborhoods were often compounded by legal and political discrimination against the people who lived there. At the same time, Watts had dynamic civil society in step with national movements for class and race consciousness. For example, when the Watts Riots, or Watts Rebellion, erupted from long festering discontent with law enforcement and socioeconomic conditions, it was preceded by years of demonstration.³⁰⁷ Chief Parker, however, dismissed the grievances thus: “One person threw a rock and then, like monkeys in a zoo, others started throwing rocks.”³⁰⁸ The McCone Commission report on the causes and solutions for the 1965 riots offered a host of recommendations for improving the lot of Watts and other neighborhoods. The requisite attention and investment did not follow—revisiting the report two decades later, experts testified that “the conditions are as bad, or worse, in South Central Los Angeles today as they were 19 years ago.”³⁰⁹ Watts exemplified the challenges the faced by Los

304. Ibid., 318.

305. “The History of Watts,” History of Watts, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://thewattsnc.com/history-of-watts/>.

306. “History of Civil Rights and Racial Integration in South Los Angeles,” The City of Los Angeles, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://usp100la.weebly.com/civil-rights-and-segregation.html>.

307. Robin D.G. Kelley, “Watts: Remember What They Built, Not What They Burned,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0811-kelley-watts-civil-society-20150811-story.html>.

308. Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 55.

309. *McCone Revisited: A Focus on Solutions to Continuing Problems in South Central Los Angeles. Report on a Public Hearing Jointly Sponsored by the Los Angeles County and City Human Relations Commissions* (Los Angeles: City Human Relations Commission, 1985), http://eec.lacounty.gov/Portals/EEC/Reports/129_McConeRevisitedLACountyandCityHumanRelationsCommissions.pdf.

Angeles's poor neighborhoods during this period and into the 1990s: the crack epidemic and gang violence on the one hand and repressive law enforcement on the other. From 1990 to 1994, there were 150 gang-related homicides in the neighborhood, which encompassed approximately 30,000 residents at the time.³¹⁰ Meanwhile, the LAPD's hard-nosed efforts like CRASH and Operation Hammer alienated large parts of the communities they were supposed to protect—epitomized by the cause and consequences of the 1992 riots. Though the details of these initiatives and their effects have been described above, it should be reiterated that Watts was the exact type of focal point of this invasive policing and community discontent. Moreover, gangs entrenched in the neighborhood's housing complexes continued violent disputes kept Watts among the most dangerous Los Angeles neighborhoods into the 2000s, even as the demographic composition changed drastically. By 2000, Watts was majority Hispanic,³¹¹ but victims of homicide remained disproportionately Black.³¹² By the mid-2000s Watts was averaging 23 homicides per year, which would make its per capita homicide rate many times the city average and on par with the most lethal cities in the United States.³¹³

In 2005, however, a series of new practices would build on the stage set by the long ideological transformation of the LAPD. The combination of these strategies to put into practice an agenda of reconciliation and authentic public safety coordination would be accompanied by a dramatic reduction in serious violence and marked increase in public trust in the police, and police trust in the community. The major initiatives described here—the Watts Gang Task Force and the Community Safety Partnership—demonstrate the culmination of an organizational transformation in a specific operational setting. Though somewhat organically unfolding, the chain of events here followed directly from principles of reconciliation, transparency, and the community's role in crime prevention embraced by the new LAPD.

Watts Gang Task Force: Creating an opening

In late 2005, a spate of seven gang-related killings prompted local community members, including ex-gang members, to approach their councilwoman, Janice Hahn, and demand that she do something about the violence. Hahn called a meeting with the community the next week and arrived with Philip

310. Joao H. Costa Vargas, *Catching Hell in the City of Angels: Life and Meanings of Blackness in South Central Los Angeles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

311. "Watts," *Los Angeles Times*, n.d., <http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/neighborhood/watts/#ethnicity>.

312. George Tita and Allan Abrahamse, "Gang Homicide in L.A., 1981–2001," *Perspectives on Violence Prevention* (Sacramento, CA: California Attorney General's Office, 2004), https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/cd_rom/solution_gang_crime/pubs/GangHomicideinLA19892001Feb2004.pdf.

313. This calculation is based on the 2004–2006 year average, the population figure from the 2008 projection, and context from the *Los Angeles Times*' interactive Homicide Report tool, <http://homicide.latimes.com>; "Watts" (see note 311); "Are There a Lot of Homicides in Los Angeles?," The Homicide Report, *Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 2007, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/homicidereport/2007/03/are_there_a_lot.html.

Tingirides, the captain of the Southeast Division of the LAPD.³¹⁴ At the time, this choice was so controversial it “almost killed the effort;” many, including the ex-gang members who called for the meeting, were irate that Hahn would invite an entity they found to be wholly untrustworthy.³¹⁵

Grievances and acknowledgment

With the LAPD at the table, Watts residents took advantage of an unprecedented opportunity to voice their concerns to the department. Though the goal of the initial meeting was to figure out what to do practically about the violence in Watts, the first period of what would become the Watts Gang Task Force involved crucial grievance sessions in which LAPD representatives were confronted with the ire of the assembled residents, who felt as though they had been abandoned to deal with the violence in Watts on their own. Donny Joubert, a gang interventionist who pushed for the initial meeting, remembers that the relationship between the LAPD and Watts residents was not just bad before the Watts Gang Task Force was founded; “There was no kind of relationship at all.”³¹⁶ Once the task force meetings at Hahn’s office began, he says, “We spent month after month battling, going at each other, trying to figure out what was going on in the community. . . . It wasn’t easy at first, but I knew that we had to try to find a way to build a relationship.”³¹⁷ Captain Tingirides’ attendance at the initial meeting consisted of absorbing the scale of the frustration that had built up in Watts. Nina Revoyr, who represented the social service agency Children’s Institute at early meetings, noted that “[w]hen Captain Tingirides came in, he took the time to sit and take it on the chin and listen to the years and years of frustration and develop the empathy to kind of understand how people felt being policed the way they were being policed.”³¹⁸ According to Tingirides, this was not always easy, but it did produce the opportunity for a different type of dialogue:

“What was initially me getting verbally beat up every single week has now turned into more of a dialogue. . . . I listened, I acknowledged, I apologized in very general terms. But the bigger thing [was] even acknowledging, ‘Hey, we didn’t do a very good job. What do we need to do to move forward and what can we do to make things better?’ and hearing those things.”³¹⁹

314. Leighton Woodhouse, “50 Years After the Riots, Watts Projects and LAPD Learn to Co-Exist,” Gawker, last modified August 11, 2015, <http://gawker.com/50-years-after-the-riots-watts-projects-and-lapd-learn-1723326136>.

315. Jessica Mendoza, “Fifty Years After Riots, Watts Builds a Bridge for Minorities, Police,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 12, 2016, <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2016/0912/Fifty-years-after-riots-Watts-builds-a-bridge-for-minorities-police>.

316. Donny Joubert, member, Watts Gang Task Force, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 23, 2015.

317. Ibid.

318. Nina Revoyr, chief operating officer, Children’s Institute, Inc., interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 18, 2015.

319. Phillip Tingirides, commander, Los Angeles Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, December 9, 2015.

Sergeant Emada Tingirides, who is married to Captain Tingirides and was a community resource officer in the Southeast Division in the mid-2000s, observed how this process opened the door to a new relationship.

“He got yelled at and beat up and more conversations occurred. But after a while of listening and understanding and hearing, we were able to create this relationship and not make excuses but apologize and ask for forgiveness and reconciliation. And then once we did that, it broke down the barrier a little more and we began to create these relationships and talk—and after a while of them holding us accountable, we then began to ask them to work on some things and hold them accountable.”³²⁰

Watts residents complained of their treatment by Southeast officers and the LAPD’s tactics and history—stops, use of force, shootings—and the LAPD representatives attempted to listen instead of justify their or the department’s actions. As Sergeant Tingirides put it, they came to understand that even actions the police felt were justified could also be immensely painful or damaging to the community. “It doesn’t matter [if it’s justified], it’s tragic, and it’s okay to say I’m sorry that that happened,” she noted. “And I think that after a while of just listening . . . I remember a couple of times saying, ‘I know you guys are angry, not at me, but you’re angry because of this uniform and the badge and what it represents. I’m sorry that things in the past weren’t so good.’”³²¹ Given that prior LAPD administrations were known for abuses, scandal, or neglect compounded by disdain towards the people hurt by this misconduct, a proactive recognition of wrongdoing was a radical opening for trust. That opening in turn allowed the LAPD to push community members on what they perceived to be the neighborhood’s willingness to ignore crime and unwillingness to assist police in investigations.

Neither of the Tingirideses remembers any one defining breakthrough; rather, they and a number of the attendees of the task force meetings recall a long process by which the police came to understand why the community was so scared and angry, which was ultimately crucial to further progress in the development of a partnership founded on trust. The grievance sessions represented the first step toward a new operational partnership in Watts. The Watts Gang Task Force meetings were a forum for the community to express its anger, fear, and distrust and for the police to listen. By sincerely listening week after week for months and years, the Tingirideses and others demonstrated a clear commitment to understanding the experiences driving Watts residents’ distrust; they also expressed regret at the police department’s role in creating that distrust and promised to improve practice as much as they could.

320. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 17).

321. Ibid.

Impact on community safety and police-community trust: Bringing the rank and file along

As the tenor of the meetings improved and trust grew between the parties, the Watts Gang Task Force eventually became an invaluable forum for both police and members of the community to solve problems and clear up misinformation. The effects of the task force fall broadly in two categories: law enforcement practices and collaborative strategies and interventions. Revoyr, writing about her experience in the *Los Angeles Times*, gave an overview of the task force's process:

“Each week, representatives from law enforcement report on crime and give updates on investigations in progress. Community problems are raised and resolved. The meetings have also become a clearinghouse of sorts, with the task force board—made up mostly of founding members—connecting residents, who often come looking for help, with resources right there in the room: employment training for men who are looking for work; a mobile medical program for parents to immunize their kids; grief counseling for a mother who's just lost her child.”³²²

As the meetings grew, the attendees broadened to include representatives from other law enforcement agencies, local government, the housing authority, school district, and religious communities.

Law enforcement practices

For law enforcement, the task force meetings set a precedent for and expectation of transparency. In addition to regularly updating the community on crime prevention efforts, the meetings offer a chance to promptly address events that can easily destabilize police-community relationships, such as officer-involved shootings. As Sergeant Tingirides put it, “If there's a controversial shooting, well, that Monday, everybody knows it's going to get talked about.”³²³ The discourse ends up being much more about clarification than accusation. The local captain will lay out the facts to the extent permissible by the inspector general's investigation of the use of force. In one case, in 2009, Captain Tingirides shared as much as he legally could about the case and then brought in the inspector general and the Force Investigation Division to discuss their mandates and what would happen next. After time, community members have a much better sense of the investigatory protocols in the aftermath of such an event because they have been briefed by their police partners in the task force. These presentations help prevent misinformation, offer a direct venue for community frustration, and help solicit leads that may be needed for an investigation.

322. Nina Revoyr, “How Watts and the LAPD Make Peace,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 6, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-revoyr-lessons-from-watts-gang-task-force-20150607-story.html>.

323. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 17).

The formal opportunity for communication has also been important for establishing significant informal, cultural expectations and practices among LAPD officers in Watts. Captain Tingirides recalls that one of the biggest changes he made was to offer his cell phone number to everyone he met at Watts Gang Task Force and encourage them to call—which they did, often as incidents were occurring on the street. Captain Tingirides worked hard to demonstrate to residents that his officers were invested in the prosperity of the neighborhood. He began holding more informal meetings with local residents the day after the Watts Gang Task Force meeting every week so they could discuss the state of crime in the neighborhood and the department’s plans to confront it. He started bringing members of the community into LAPD roll calls so that they could lay out their expectations for the police in light of their shared and difficult past with the LAPD. As he describes it, “I realized I had to go about humanizing the community to the cops and the cops to the community.”³²⁴

Captain Tingirides also found room within existing practices to make police operations reflect the value Watts officers placed on the lives of the community. A key measure, he says, was to introduce unprecedented urgency to reach homicide scenes and pursue homicide investigations. Captain Tingirides drew on an experience of his own from the 1980s in which he arrived to the scene of a homicide only a few minutes after dispatch, but by then the body had been in the street for an hour and hundreds of angry Watts residents had gathered. The result, he said, is that the “picture is getting painted where, [to the] LAPD, we don’t mean anything, we get shot and they just stroll up, they don’t care—nobody cares about us.”³²⁵ In the era of the task force, Captain Tingirides tried to instill the idea that “every single shooting matters. Every single person that gets shot matters. Have a sense of urgency with these things. . . . Every time there was a shooting I would rush out of the station, or from wherever I was at, and I would go to the scene.”³²⁶ The purpose was to dispel the sense—common among detectives and officers in many high-violence neighborhoods—that homicide victims could be just another gangster dead in the street. The increasing interaction between police and community through the task force bolstered this commitment.

Recognizing and rooting out a very real cynicism that many officers held about the neighborhood’s prospects for improvement and the community’s capacity for helping reduce violence was essential for embracing a new style of policing. Combined with an emphasis on professional and respectful demeanors (discussed in the sidebar on page 113), community members recognized the changes occurring at crime scenes. Tips became more common. Residents who liked what the police had become began insulating them from known rabble-rousers at crime scenes. Captain Tingirides believes rapid and aggressive investigation of a series of retaliatory gang shootings in 2008³²⁷ helped change how the community saw the police—that they actually cared about the lives of people in Watts.

324. Philip Tingirides, interview (see note 319).

325. Ibid.

326. Ibid.

327. Dina Temple-Raston, “Cops Target L.A. Gangs’ ‘Shot Callers,’” NPR, last modified June 2, 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=91004288>.

Navigating Cultural Transformation

Captain Tingirides was careful to hold his officers to the high standard he set while also recognizing that officers' mindsets were often deeply influenced by long experiences of officers needing to "put out fires" and run from call to call. The roots of distrust were cultural, personal, tactics-based, and systemic—bias, miscommunication, and inefficacy all compounded one another to create a vicious circle of mutual animosity.

"Officers, especially officers who had been there a while, their perception was that everybody there was bad. Because even the so-called 'good people' were in our face—because of all the dysfunction, because of all the anger, because of the lack of hope, because of the oppression. Even the so-called 'good people' didn't like us. And so I think from the human instinct standpoint, you just presume that everybody's bad and so you treat everybody badly."*

Captain Tingirides used direct communication with the community and with his officers to hear where they were coming from. Cell phone check-ups with officers when misconduct was alleged by community members helped him demonstrate his commitment to maintaining accountability, transparency, and neutrality. He and others report that his strict but fair approach to discipline was initially unpalatable to his officers but that most eventually came around—first because they recognized that he was an unflinching and nonarbitrary disciplinarian when his philosophy mandated it and second because the respect his leadership garnered in the community was paying off. Still, he remembers, "probably the most difficult thing to do was [to find] the balance between the support of the community and the support of the police. . . . It was a change for the cops."[†] Captain Tingirides would observe officers' interactions with residents and offer feedback: "You know what, you probably shouldn't have talked to somebody like that. You probably should've talked to him like this. And, if you came toward me like that, I think I'd be angry too. So I think you need to change your demeanor. . . . This is their neighborhood. We'll talk to them."[‡] Officers who failed to adjust their attitudes—particularly at the crime scene during the sensitive period for both community trust and crime solving—were consistently critiqued, while courteous officers whom the community saw as trustworthy received plaudits. Most critiques were verbal, though there were instances in which Captain Tingirides sought the transfer of officers who failed to comport themselves respectfully. Officers who grasped his message were commended at roll call and in written reviews.

* Philip Tingirides, interview (see note 319).

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

Collaborative strategies

The meetings also grew over time to include representatives from other community organizations, gang intervention workers, and staff from the Watts housing developments. Social service providers like Revoyr work with the police department to find jobs and health resources for young mothers and young men on the verge of serious offending. Revoyr describes one instance that captures the cross-cutting collaboration and goals of the task force, which now seeks to combat violence further “upstream” before the need for crisis interruption by law enforcement and gang interventionists. In responding to an instance in which some local juveniles broke into a Head Start office in the Jordan Downs housing development, the Children’s Institute and Head Start were “able to work with Shield, a local social service provider, and the housing authority . . . and Emada . . . both to identify the kids but also to get them into a diversion program . . . so that there would be some consequence but it wouldn’t send them to the criminal justice system. All of those relationships are fostered and built by those weekly contacts” at the task force.³²⁸ Betty Day, one of the group’s founders, meets with a board of organization representatives monthly to coordinate resources—though a lot of the work occurs between meetings, often via text message. Task force participants are also responsible for supporting a “safe passages” program to get kids safely to and from school, and started a first-of-its kind gang-injunction list removal service—neither of which would have been possible without coordination across police-civilian lines.³²⁹

In 2008, then Mayor Villaraigosa’s new GRYD office, which had spun out of Rice and Chief Bratton’s collaboration, selected Watts as one of 12 GRYD Zones where investment would “address the problem of gang crime and gang violence in Los Angeles in a comprehensive, collaborative, and community-wide manner.”³³⁰ GRYD programming was meant to build on existing efforts in violence prevention and intervention strategies in Los Angeles’s most challenged neighborhoods. In Watts, GRYD added case management services, counseling and therapy, sports leagues, field trips, formal gang intervention structures and training (a legacy of Chief Beck and Rice’s work), and increased coordination with the LAPD over crime data and gang unit operations.³³¹ The new representatives from GRYD were incorporated into the Watts Gang Task Force meetings, adding extra capacity and endorsing the local

328. Revoyr, interview (see note 318).

329. Watts Regional School Safety Collaborative, *Vision Plan for a Safe and Healthy Watts* (Washington, DC: Advancement Project, 2015), <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/place/docs/Advancement%20Project%20Watts%20Vision%20Plan%20FINAL%20March%202015.pdf>.

330. Terry Dunworth, David Hayeslip, and Megan Denver, *Y2 Final Report: Evaluation of the Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2011), http://www.urban.org/research/publication/y2-final-report-evaluation-los-angeles-gang-reduction-and-youth-development/view/full_report.

331. Terence Dunworth et al., *Evaluation of the Los Angeles gang Reduction and Youth Development Program: Final Y1 Report* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2010), <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412251-Evaluation-of-the-Los-Angeles-Gang-Reduction-and-Youth-Development-Program-Final-Y-Report.PDF>; Dunworth, Hayeslip, and Denver, *Y2 Final Report* (see note 330).

initiative that had started as an airing of grievances during a time of crisis. Even as relationships between police and community had drastically improved and the city was finally investing significant resources in Watts, reducing the violence in Watts still proved difficult. In 2010, there were still as many homicides—21—as there had been a decade earlier.³³²

The Community Safety Partnership

By 2010, Captain Tingirides and the LAPD had used the Watts Gang Task Force to make unprecedented inroads into creating a functioning partnership between law enforcement and the residents of the Watts neighborhood. That year, the Advancement Project and Urban Peace were commissioned by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) to study the violence in the Watts developments that kept Watts among the most dangerous Los Angeles ZIP codes.³³³ After surveying residents and conducting other research, the report found that, despite the Watts Gang Task Force and all GRYPD's efforts, 71 percent of those surveyed reported gang violence as "often" or "always" a problem in the neighborhood. Further, Latinos—now the neighborhood's majority population³³⁴—felt that their voices were unheard in shaping community safety initiatives, a problem the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) would set out to address. Finally, the survey found that the majority of residents trusted neither law enforcement nor HACLA. The day the report offered its conclusions, members of a Korean-American family moving in to Nickerson Gardens were the victims of a gang assault, robbery, and attempted rape. The finding that violence had improved since the 1980s and 90s but still posed a significant hardship in the community, combined with this attack, pressed the Advancement Project, the LAPD, and HACLA to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) committing to a bold and collaborative public safety plan.³³⁵ The resulting strategy, the CSP, expanded and formalized the trust-building efforts already underway in Watts, committing significant resources and structure to a philosophy of relationship-based policing. The partners set out this principle as "a law enforcement practice that relies on community trust and partnership, and authentic police legitimacy based on procedural justice to achieve community safety."³³⁶ Under the strategy, officers would be expected to "intentionally develop relationships with community members, to seek out partnerships with community stakeholders, such as service providers

332. *Los Angeles Times'* interactive Homicide Report tool (see note 313); "Watts" (see note 311); "Are There a Lot of Homicides in Los Angeles?" (see note 313).

333. *Community Safety Scorecard: City of Los Angeles 2011* (Los Angeles: Advancement Project, 2011), <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/55b673c0e4b0cf84699bdffb/t/55b855d1e4b08482a6669ae5/1438143953716/Community+Safety+Scorecard+FINAL+LowRes+10-25-11.pdf>, 41.

334. "Neighborhoods of the City of Los Angeles: Population & Race 2010 Census," Los Angeles Almanac, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.laalmanac.com/population/po24la.htm>.

335. Constance Rice and Susan K. Lee, *Relationship-Based Policing: Achieving Safety in Watts* (Los Angeles: The Advancement Project, 2015), <http://advancementprojectca.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/imce/President's%20Task%20Force%20CSP%20Policy%20Brief%20FINAL%2002-27-15.pdf>.

336. *Ibid.*, 5.

and other public sector entities, to work with schools to coordinate safety strategies, and to take a problem solving approach to community safety concerns rather than a suppression-only (e.g. arrests) approach.”³³⁷

In addition to this aspirational message, however, the MOU included specific commitments, most notably dedicating 10 officers and one supervisor per Watts housing development to be deployed in an independent chain of command under one sergeant. HACLA would help the LAPD attract applicants with money for a raise, and the Advancement Project would provide training and technical assistance to guide the partnership. Rice (Advancement Project), Susan Lee (Urban Peace), Rudy Montel (HACLA), and Chief Beck and Deputy Chief Pat Gannon (LAPD) would lead the design and implementation of the project. Working in formal coordination, these entities set out to finally turn Watts away from lingering gang violence and distrust—and a painful history—and into a prototype for a new model for policing. Unlike past LAPD strategies, the CSP would build on the findings of the Advancement Project report that tapped the actual needs of the community and grow from constant exchange with the community it served. As the Watts Gang Task Force had set the stage for reconciliation over the LAPD’s past—and probe what the department could be doing better—the CSP became an affirmative commitment to a different future.

Finding and setting expectations for the rank and file

Because the CSP model would focus on interpersonal relationships, the architects set out to find and train candidates who would be able to excel in a different type of policing role. The demand for the 45 open slots exceeded expectations: 250 officers attended an information session about the CSP, and nearly 400 ended up applying.³³⁸ Although there was an incentive of a raise in joining the unit, it was also a fact that CSP officers would be stationed in some of the traditionally most antagonistic and violent areas of the city. CSP officers would also have to commit to serving five years in the program and take on unorthodox responsibilities, such as addressing quality of life and housing issues with HACLA and working on school Safe Passage detail.³³⁹ Ultimately, current CSP officers said, there was also an intense desire to try something different where traditional enforcement measures had failed.³⁴⁰

In selecting officers, Sergeant Tingirides—tapped to lead CSP—sought a diverse cohort of individuals with excellent communication skills, high cultural literacy, and a willingness to adapt their methods as they learned from and about the community. Management wanted the CSP to hail from varied personal

337. Ibid., 5.

338. Pat Gannon, deputy chief, Los Angeles Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, December 23, 2015.

339. “LAPD’s Community Safety Partnership Program NR15021SF,” news release, Los Angeles Police Department, last modified January 22, 2015, http://www.lapdonline.org/newsroom/news_view/57887.

340. A common refrain in interviews with CSP officers conducted by Sam Kuhn was that previous enforcement strategies had failed to curb the violence and disorder in Watts and that they saw the CSP as an opportunity to improve on that model.

and policing backgrounds, and ultimately selected, in Sergeant Tingirides’s words, “a bag of Skittles:” men and women, racially diverse, and hailing from units as varied as gang, narcotics, and community relations officers.³⁴¹ All, however, were selected based on their ability to resolve conflicts and solve problems without resorting to force until it was absolutely necessary—completely rejecting the emphasis on force of the CRASH days.

Once the officers were selected, they went through an intensive training period, the basics of which were outlined in the three-way MOU. The Advancement Project and Urban Peace delivered 40 of the 100 hours of training, the LAPD led another 40 hours, and HACLA finished with the final 20. The first phase focused on the fraught history and context of Watts, engaging both the historic oppression and neglect by the LAPD and the individual and community effects of violence on health and wellbeing. It also attached these concepts to real data, narratives, and connections to contemporary Watts. The second phase, led by the LAPD, focused on officer conduct and practice in light of Watts’s history and engaging the community to listen to and meet needs (“understanding who your client is”).³⁴² This phase also refreshed fundamental policing skills while challenging officers to think about how to foster the community’s own “informal social control” that would make enforcement skills less necessary. Finally, in the third phase, training by HACLA exposed officers to the nuances of policing in a housing development and information on the specific mechanisms and resources of the Watts housing complexes, such as graffiti removal procedures or referrals to support agencies.

Reflections on this training reveals that, as transparency and honest conversation is built in to training, those essential values of reconciliation can filter down to the rank and file. One officer, Asuncion Plascencia, explained that the training taught her to comprehend the impact of the past on the community’s reception of her as a police officer in the present and gave her a foundation on which to build trust and do her job more effectively: “I began to actually ask people . . . to be truthful about how they felt about my uniform . . . thank you for allowing me to listen to what you’re saying.”³⁴³ By taking the time to process residents’ experiences with and biases against the police, she said, CSP officers can see how deeply felt residents’ anger is without taking it personally. Once that perception is recognized, she suggests, there is no acceptable response for a good cop but to work to change it.

Another officer—a former Marine who has worked in Watts since 1997 and went through his fair share of doors in “the bad old days”—found the training difficult but believed that it ultimately helped him reflect on the different frames of reference in policing encounters. Through the training he came to understand, for example, how a warrant sweep could feel like retaliation toward the community rather than an effort to help, given the different information available to police and communities and the

341. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 17).

342. *Ibid.*

343. Asuncion Plascencia, officer, Los Angeles Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 24, 2015.

context each group is aware, or not aware, of. Indeed, broadly, preparing officers to be CSP officers involved a rethinking of the way policing in Watts committing to a relationship where CSP officers worked with rather than against residents.

Keeping promises: Acting on new intentions in Watts

The first CSP officers began work in Watts in 2011. Despite the thorough training, the theory of relationship-based policing did not immediately present officers with a daily practice. After all, the CSP presented a formal, officially sanctioned and encouraged policing model that overturned more than 50 years of departmental practice and culture. While officers knew they were supposed to build relationships rather than make petty arrests, Sergeant Tingirides noted that many officers were asking “What are we supposed to do?” because “there wasn’t a manual, there wasn’t a blueprint.”³⁴⁴ Similarly, community members held mixed perceptions of what the role of the CSP would be. Some feared the project would mean more police doing just what they’d done before: surveil the neighborhood, serve warrants, and make arrests. Indeed, early on, some former gang and narcotics officers did engage in foot pursuits for small amounts of narcotics before supervisors redirected their activities. To get everyone on the same page, CSP focused on the emphasis of their training and the focus of existing initiatives in Watts: open dialogue and exchange.

Input gathering and dialogue

As part of the unit’s stated mission, CSP officers are tasked with seeking community input on public safety and quality of life issues. This work includes informal and formal job responsibilities. As is the case outside the CSP, a large part of CSP work involves individual conversations, exchanges, and interaction with Watts residents. Whether through joining a basketball game or visiting an elderly resident, CSP officers are supposed to build rapport and hear where resources could best be deployed. In addition, formal opportunities for dialogue—attending meetings of the neighborhood’s numerous civic organizations and the regular Resident Advisory Council meetings of each housing development—are crucial components of CSP officers’ work. In fact, it is part of their job description. These groups, particularly the Watts Gang Task Force, offer CSP officers a structured way to engage with community members and contribute towards shared public safety goals. Adding the CSP did not change the format of the Watts Gang Task Force meetings: Attending officers still address all shootings, homicides, and other serious crimes but also add an update on any specific enforcement measures or projects the CSP may be taking or working with other LAPD units to take.

Even with the growing trust in the task force, however, new CSP officers still had to earn personal trust by introducing themselves, making a case for collaboration, and ultimately becoming useful, integrated partners. At the same time, the Watts Gang Task Force has changed in certain ways since—if not because of—the launch of the CSP. Rather than grievance sessions laying the groundwork for future

344. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 17).

collaboration, the meetings moved towards dialogue that moves toward resolution or an action plan. Officers learn to listen first without presenting counterarguments or excuses and then to work in dialogue to “understand the injuries, the symptoms” and solve the problem.³⁴⁵ As one officer put it, “It’s definitely a huge stage for us to be seen. That is our biggest endorser for the voice that is active here in Watts. All of your leaders attend. Sometimes people just have to vent, but the beauty of it is when you win the community over” by listening attentively and following up on the issues residents raise.³⁴⁶ Further, the Watts Gang Task Force is the primary forum for discussing violent crime and responses to it, whereas other community meetings focus more on quality-of-life issues. In addition, police and residents have grown more comfortable in being self-critical: Officers have apologized for the way they have responded to complaints, and residents have been willing to push back against what they see as unfair allegations made by other residents. This type of forum, according to participants, allows the community and police to tackle difficult issues and to avert further escalation after an incident.³⁴⁷

Responsive projects and demonstrating commitment

Based on the input and information from the community, the CSP demonstrates its commitment by following through with concrete actions. If words crack the door open for trust, actions are needed to open it wide enough for real exchange to occur. Indeed, the first major project conducted by the CSP significantly reduced community skepticism and bolstered the mandate of the unit. After introducing themselves to residents and soliciting ideas for what could be done to improve the community, CSP officers cleared and cleaned an alley in the Jordan Downs complex that had been a center for drug sales, drug use, and prostitution. That project served as a testament to the CSP’s intentions. Later need-responsive CSP projects have included bringing in preventive medical care and procuring bifocals for elderly residents and computers for local schools.³⁴⁸ To finance these projects, CSP officers have mobilized existing city resources, used some of the HACL budget allocated to programming, or in rarer cases raised money independently. More often than not, they found they could build trust without spending extra money; there was funding to support some programming, and there were plenty of ways to build trust without spending anything extra, as when some officers brought teenagers who had never seen the ocean to the beach just miles to the west of Watts.³⁴⁹ These ad hoc and informal commitments help to overcome the long-held perception that police are there to control or intimidate or aren’t around at all—both lived experiences of Watts residents from the Hammer operations to failure to respond adequately to the 1992 riots. These projects provide proof that CSP officers are actually there to serve as well as protect.

345. Plascencia, interview (see note 343).

346. Ibid.

347. Nina Revoyr, chief operating officer, Children’s Institute, Inc., interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 12, 2015.

348. Woodhouse, “50 Years After the Riots” (see note 314).

349. Joel Rubin, “Community Policing Reaches Youths,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/aug/01/local/la-me-lapd-pals-20110802>.

CSP community programs

Developing programs that engage the community, serve residents' needs, and build trust by humanizing the police is a central tactic of the CSP. CSP supervisors encourage their officers to be creative and ambitious in conceiving and implementing programs, which are generally funded—when extra funding is necessary—by a combination of private donations and money that HACLA earmarks for the purpose. Captain Tingirides told the management of CSP that he wanted officers to have a wide berth to help residents “to start up programs that have a meaning to them.”³⁵⁰ After some initial trepidation, CSP officers have run with this mandate. Among the many initiatives that have come out of CSP, a few stand out. Officers started and currently run the first Watts Girl Scouts of America chapter. The Watts Bears football team draws nine- to eleven-year-old boys from developments with historic gang rivalries together on a team, where they play as well as receive mentoring and supervision from CSP officer coaches. CSP also established or help run multiple tutoring programs with local universities, mentoring and scholarship programs, family health and wellness initiatives, employment and training services, and community-wide programming such as Summer Night Lights.³⁵¹ Although much of the CSP programming focuses on children and adolescents, that does not limit the focus on overall outreach. CSP leadership recognized the potential for building community trust through children early on and has worked closely with Watts schools to develop a number of programs that help connect officers to parents through relationships with their kids. Anecdotally, Captain Tingirides thinks the results are clear: “We saw people who wouldn’t talk to us before, who we would try to have a conversation with and they wanted no part of it . . . now we’re focusing on their kids, we start to see them say, ‘Hi,’ and help out.”³⁵² While many of these efforts and strategies are present in other community policing settings, what sets CSP apart is the fact that these efforts are a central job responsibility. Moreover, officers are encouraged to continue to monitor community needs and start new programs where necessary.

As the CSP sergeant of the Avalon Gardens and Gonzaque Village housing developments explained, she sees programming as essential to the overall mission of ensuring that the officers under her command know as much about the residents of their housing developments as possible. “I ask officers what they can contribute” to building engagement with the community; once they present an idea, as one officer did recently with a proposed youth soccer league, the sergeant gives them strict deadlines to realize their vision. Thus, the unit remains purpose-driven despite its broad and non-traditional purview.³⁵³

350. Phillip Tingirides, commander, Los Angeles Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 20, 2015.

351. “Our Programs,” Community Safety Partnership Program, accessed March 8, 2017, <http://www.lapdcsp.org/programs>.

352. Phillip Tingirides, interview (see note 319).

353. CSP sergeant, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 11, 2016.

Evolving enforcement responsibilities: Discretion and public safety

Though trust-building programming is a cornerstone responsibility of the CSP, officers have enforcement responsibilities as well. The same Avalon Gardens and Gonzaque Village sergeant described four components of the Community Safety Partnership: (1) critical enforcement; (2) Safe Passages, the initiative to ensure that students can get to and from school safely; (3) programming; and (4) partnerships with service agencies and neighborhood groups.³⁵⁴ Critical enforcement involves close, data-driven analysis of crime trends with an eye toward serious crimes and violence—a direct extension of the initiative’s roots as a new response to pernicious violence in a traditionally dangerous neighborhood.

Even in enforcement, however, CSP emphasizes practices that will treat residents fairly while promoting public safety. The CSP has operated since its inception on the premise that the metrics for officer success had to be drastically different from conventional policing metrics, which meant that officers would not be measured based on arrest or enforcement quotas (either formally or tacitly). According to Rice and Sergeant Tingirides, officers were to be “measured based on the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law.”³⁵⁵ In practice, this requires officers to use their discretion over how they want to handle situations that do not require mandatory arrest under the law. In addition, Sergeant Tingirides stresses that she doesn’t tell officers “that you can’t make arrests. I’m telling you it’s about the quality of arrest. I’m telling you it’s not what you do, it’s how you do it.”³⁵⁶ This emphasis on process aligns with the literature on the link between procedural justice and perceived legitimacy of authority of police,³⁵⁷ if the officers act courteously, appear neutral and transparent, and give residents voice, they are much more likely to be seen as legitimate. Except in critical situations where enforcement is legally required or someone is in danger, CSP officers may choose to mediate a dispute or refer someone to services in lieu of arrest. Further, as one CSP officer assigned to the Avalons Gardens and Gonzaque Village area put it, “I’m not saying if it’s not bothering anyone I don’t touch it, but I give a lot of warnings” to residents whose behavior could be grounds for citation or arrest but is not dangerous or threatening to others.³⁵⁸

On a daily basis, CSP officers now act as the primary police contacts for the neighborhood, walking and driving the neighborhood, conducting visits, and staffing the Safe Passages program to usher kids safely to school across gang lines. CSP officers work in two shifts: 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.. Overnight, traditional police patrol the communities covered by CSP officers, though when shootings occur in off hours Captain (now Commander) Tingirides and other CSP leadership are often on

354. Ibid.

355. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 17).

356. Ibid.

357. Craig Fischer, ed., *Legitimacy and Procedural Justice: A New Element of Police Leadership* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 2014), [http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free Online Documents/Leadership/legitimacy%20and%20procedural%20justice%20-%20a%20new%20element%20of%20police%20leadership.pdf](http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free%20Online%20Documents/Leadership/legitimacy%20and%20procedural%20justice%20-%20a%20new%20element%20of%20police%20leadership.pdf).

358. CSP sergeant, interview (see note 353).

hand. In recent years, the CSP has taken on more enforcement activities as calls for service have increased and time needed to establish community programs has decreased. Officers attribute higher calls for service to the fact that residents feel more comfortable aligning with the police against criminal behavior now than they would have felt previously. They report regular service calls and tips to their department-issued cell phone numbers, which they are encouraged to give out to residents, about locations of drug houses or other criminal activity. Still, enforcement is driven by, as one officer put it, focusing on residents' needs rather than on "wins" and "losses." Often, this entails working with residents to resolve violations of the developments' strict parking rules. But when more serious enforcement is required, CSP officers work closely with the units responsible for responding to gangs, narcotics, and domestic violence to provide information. For example, if numerous residents complain to CSP officers about drug dealing from a specific corner, CSP officers will brief narcotics officers on the issue. Narcotics then proceeds with its investigation, giving periodic briefs to CSP officers in the area. When the investigation moves into readiness for enforcement, the enforcement team works with CSP to ensure that CSP officers can communicate back to the affected community—immediately after the fact and on an ongoing basis—what the enforcement action that just occurred was and why it came about. Numerous officers cited the fact that they are not expected to run from call to call and can therefore take time to explain their actions and listen to the concerns of the community as a primary reason for the successes of CSP.

CSP officers also closely monitor gang feuds with the help of gang interventionists, some of whom regularly attend Watts Gang Task Force meetings. When groups of gang-affiliated teens congregate in groups on the street, often in a precursor to violence, CSP officers approach and—because they often know the young people—warn that they will notify their specific probation officers via speed dial of any indiscretions. CSP officers also know their communities well enough to be able to identify when out-of-towners with gang connections in the developments drive to the neighborhood, and they use the information they glean from everyday interactions with residents to determine whether trouble might occur, when, and how best to respond. Other agencies also now depend on CSP as a resource, such as the narcotics units referring a victim of violence to CSP officers, who can connect them with counseling and help them relocate if they remain at risk of victimization.

Policing in Watts has changed significantly to adhere to the CSP's commitment to relationship building without compromising its enforcement functions or failing to serve traditional crime control goals. Officers are taught to police with an understanding of the animosity and distrust some residents hold, and they seek to serve the community's identified public safety priorities rather than going after minor violations that pose lesser threats to safety but hold greater potential for alienating residents.

Results: Successes and remaining challenges

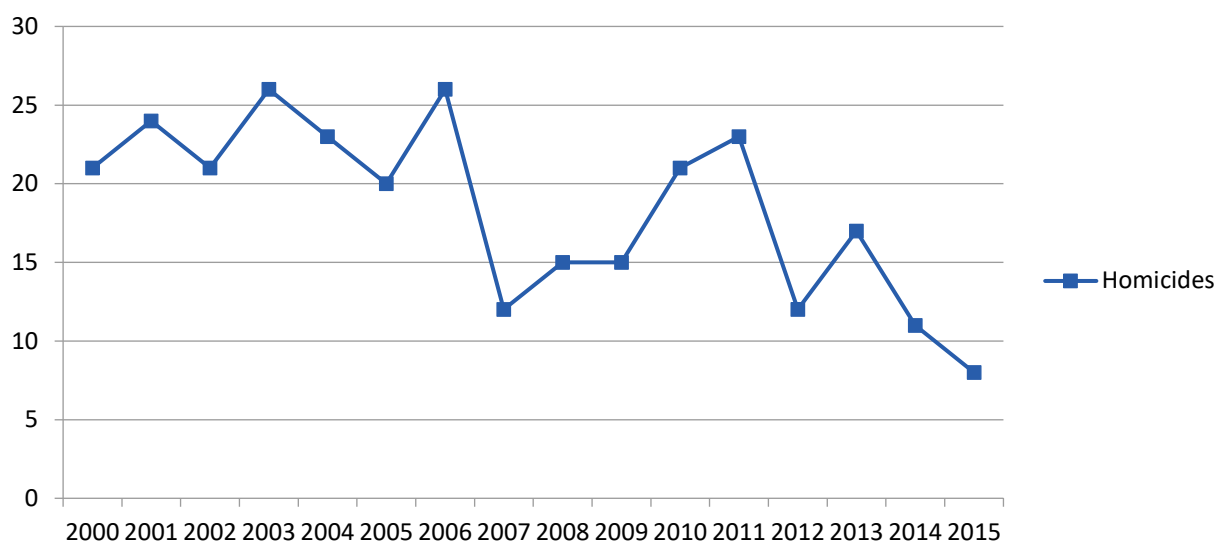
Public safety and enforcement

Violence in the Watts neighborhood was a major influence in how the LAPD treated the community in its modern era through the 1990s and then a driving factor in reevaluating and reforming the city's approach to public safety. The combination of reforms brought in by Chief Bratton, the creation of the

Watts Gang Task Force, and the implementation of the CSP—not to mention many other variables—do not allow for easy causal explanations for levels of violence. Nonetheless, there has been a clear and significant improvement in public safety that coincides with the LAPD’s reconciliation and reform in Watts. From 2000 to 2006, as shown in figure 2, homicide in the Watts neighborhood bounced between 20 and 25 per year. As the WGTF started in early 2006, followed by the CSP in 2011, the numbers have trended downward. In 2015, there were 8 homicides in Watts, a third of the total from a decade prior.³⁵⁹ As for the housing complexes within Watts, where the CSP is based, the change has been even more significant.

Perhaps most striking has been the precipitous decline in homicides in the housing developments in which the CSP operates. The three most violent—Nickerson Gardens, Jordan Downs, and Imperial Courts (leaving out the safer Ramona Gardens development)—recorded a combined 70 homicides between 2001 and 2011. In the four years from late fall 2011 through November 30, 2015, there were just eight homicides in these three developments combined.³⁶⁰

Figure 2. Homicides in Watts, 2000–2015



Source: *Los Angeles Times*’ interactive Homicide Report tool (see note 313).

Homicides have also been solved quickly. Commander Tingirides said that, of the eight homicides that have occurred in Watts since the beginning of the CSP, almost all have been solved—either with a suspect in custody or known but at large—in less than two weeks. In one instance, a community

359. *Los Angeles Times*’ interactive Homicide Report tool (see note 313); “Watts” (see note 311); “Are There a Lot of Homicides in Los Angeles?” (see note 313).

360. “Year End Crime Statistics 11 November 2011–2015,” provided by Emada Tingirides, sergeant, Los Angeles Police Department, to Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, January 4, 2016.

member called a CSP officer on his cell phone and gave the perpetrator's name—an unusual disclosure that numerous officers cited as indicative of residents' growing trust in the police. On a general level, clearance rates can be a proxy for community trust, as cooperation from witnesses is a key component of solving serious crimes.

Meanwhile, the focus on violent crime has been coupled with a decrease in arrests compared to before the 2000s. The combination of reduced violence and reduced arrests demonstrate that incarceration and heavy-handed enforcement is not necessary for public safety—and serves as evidence for the value of relationship-based policing.

Community revitalization and support

The reforms of Chief Bratton, the Watts Gang Task Force, and the institutionalization of relationship-based policing in the CSP have all been crucial for resetting the dynamic between police and Watts residents and have allowed residents the opportunity and exposure needed to expand and bolster community institutions. CSP officers and external reports testify to the changes. Officer Manuel Sanchez reports that the difference in community reception between his time in Watts as a gang unit officer and now as a CSP officer are “night and day”—“I used to go in there on weekends . . . we'd have our helmets on, a minimum of two cars, most of the times it'd be an assistance call because we'd be taking rocks and bottles. Even the little two- and three-year-olds would flip us off.”³⁶¹

Now, people wave at the CSP and children aren't afraid to approach them. The Advancement Project reported in 2015 that “Community members now see police officers as individuals committed to the overall health and well-being of the community, not just the reduction of crime statistics through suppression-only police tactics. This sense of shared goal, particularly about improving the future for the children and the young people in the community, lays a solid foundation for trust and relationship-building.”³⁶²

According to Lee, that also means the community is willing to authentically engage and listen to LAPD officers, like Commander Tingirides, even when “he may be criticizing them.”³⁶³ Accepting criticism, as the LAPD did in initial grievance sessions and since then, is a crucial part of trust-filled relationships and for continual improvement. In the most extreme example of this new relationship, the Bounty Hunter

361. Manuel Sanchez, officer, Los Angeles Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, December 1, 2015.

362. Rice and Lee, *Relationship-Based Policing* (see note 335).

363. Susan Lee, executive director, Urban Peace, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 16, 2015.

Bloods in Nickerson Gardens offered to protect the Tingirides family when a former LAPD officer had made threats towards them during a 2013 rampage.³⁶⁴

Police, residents, and public social service providers credit the public safety gains with opening Watts to new investment and renovation. As Watts has become safer, private funding has helped expand mental health, medical, and welfare programs like Head Start and Children’s Institute, Inc. The architect Frank Gehry is designing, pro bono, a \$35 million campus for the Children’s Institute that will serve 5,000 Watts children and their family members annually.³⁶⁵ The city of Los Angeles and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development have approved a plan to redevelop the Jordan Downs complex as a “mixed-income, mixed-use development with residences, restaurants, parks, and shops.”³⁶⁶ Arts and sports programs, counseling and education,³⁶⁷ and commercial and community spaces have already seen new investment or await bold redesigns.³⁶⁸ Many of these opportunities are routed through partners that coordinate thanks to the Watts Gang Task Force or the CSP. While these public safety strategies did not necessarily cause these investments, they certainly played a role in creating space for the community to reclaim its public space and for outsiders to see in Watts a neighborhood on the rise. The resetting initiated by reconciliation between the LAPD and Watts residents has allowed civic institutions and organizations to claim and grow into space at the center of life in Watts.

Internal departmental support

Despite the complex mandate and close supervision of CSP officers, many CSP officers report high morale within the unit and strong support from supervisors. Since launching, there has been limited turnover—mainly because of promotion—and officers remain invested in their five-year commitments.³⁶⁹ One officer credit the “relationship-based policing within the department”—an internalization of the philosophy the unit uses with the community—for giving the CSP a favorable supervisory culture.³⁷⁰

364. “Video: Gang Offered to Protect LAPD Capt. From Dorner,” *Police Magazine*, last modified February 19, 2013, <http://www.policemag.com/channel/gangs/news/2013/02/19/video-gang-offered-to-protect-lapd-capt-from-dorner.aspx>.

365. Colleen Egan, “Frank Gehry Unveils Pro Bono Design for Children’s Center in Low-Income L.A. Neighborhood,” *Architectural Digest*, last modified February 21, 2015, <http://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/frank-gehry-watts>.

366. “Jordan Downs,” *Curbed Los Angeles*, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://la.curbed.com/places/Jordan-downs>.

367. Kate Guarino, “L.A. Clippers and City Year Invest \$3 Million in Watts’ Elementary Schools,” *University of Southern California Annenberg Media Center*, last modified September 22, 2015, <http://intersectionssouthla.org/story/l-a-clippers-and-city-year-invest-3-million-in-watts-elementary-schools/>.

368. “Our Scope,” *Watts Re:Imagined*, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://wattsreimagined.org/#our-scope>.

369. Multiple CSP officers, interviews with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November and December 2015.

370. Plascencia, interview (see note 343).

In addition, the LAPD management continues to be highly supportive of the CSP, both in Watts and by expanding the model to four other public housing complexes in Los Angeles. For their work from 2011 to 2015, Chief Beck recommended that the Watts CSP receive the Police Commission Unit Citation from the Board of Police Commissioners.³⁷¹ Other officers have taken note: The CSP continues to draw far more applications than it has spots, including a notable increase in applicants from gang units. This development suggests, as one applicant explained to Sergeant Tingirides, that the perception of the CSP started to change when results demonstrated that the initiative many LAPD officers thought of “like a Mickey Mouse job” was working to stop shootings and improve relationships in the hardest areas of the city.³⁷² Likewise Commander Tingirides suggests that part of the change in “hardcore enforcement” cops’ attitudes toward the CSP is that they are starting to see that “the gang members got so much power from our bad relationship with the community”—and that efforts to improve that relationship have directly undercut some of that power.³⁷³ Given the opportunity to try something radically different—and getting results—has allowed the CSP to become a proof of concept for the department. As it grows, it will not only bring more officers in to CSP roles but also influence the style of the department at large.

Remaining challenges

Though contemporary Watts is a far cry from the neighborhood of 1965 or 1992, the area still faces significant public safety and community challenges. Although overall violence is down, when homicides do occur they can demonstrate that the gains in trust can be fragile. After a March 2015 homicide in Jordan Downs, the first in four years, many residents expressed frustration and fear and questioned why the police in the area in the time hadn’t prevented the killing.³⁷⁴ In setbacks like this, however, Sergeant Tingirides says she understands the dissatisfaction but points to the progress: The complaints are voiced and heard, rather than pent up to become destructive.³⁷⁵ Likewise, though retaliatory violence still occurs, there have also been high-profile instances of ex-gang members encouraging people to let the police handle the matter instead of taking up arms.³⁷⁶ At the same time, officers still report difficulty in engaging the population most likely to commit serious violence: young men.³⁷⁷

371. Charlie Beck, chief, Los Angeles Police Department, memorandum to the Honorable Board of Police Commissioners, May 24, 2016, http://www.lapdpolicecom.lacity.org/052416/BPC_16-0163.pdf.

372. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 17).

373. Phillip Tingirides, interview (see note 319).

374. “After Years of Calm, a Brazen Shooting Has Jordan Downs On Edge Again,” The Homicide Report, *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2015, <http://homicide.latimes.com/post/brazen-shooting-jordan-downs/>.

375. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 17).

376. Carla Hall, “Jordan Downs—A Look Inside an Evolving Urban Village,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/opinion-la/la-ol-jordan-downs-watts20150817-story.html>.

377. Multiple CSP officers, interviews (see note 369).

Overall, however, there is a different demographic feature that presents the largest challenges for Watts: the rapid transition of Watts from a majority Black to majority Latinx neighborhood. As a result, many of the civic and political structures in the neighborhood are still managed and staffed by African-American residents but are responsible for a neighborhood that is nearly three-quarters Latino. Compared to their share of the population, there is relatively little Latinx representation on resident and community organization boards or in local government. There is a perception among many residents that the Latinx and African-American communities are just that—separate blocs competing for resources or receiving differential treatment.³⁷⁸ The CSP and the Watts Gang Task Force, however, have offered one avenue to connect Latinx and African-American leaders and enlarge the presence of the Latinx community and civic life. Urban Peace established the Watts Latino Leadership Institute, which trains residents with leadership potential to advocate effectively on the Watts Gang Task Force board, the Resident Advisory Council, and other community organizations. Task force meetings have started including Spanish–English interpreters. Arturo Ybarra, founder of the Watts Century Latino Organization, said that ethnic tensions have declined over the years and points to a number of factors, including a higher incidence of interracial marriages and a growing understanding of the two groups’ common histories and needs. Less homicide overall has also meant less killing between Black and Latinx gangs. Still, he sees a number of areas for improvement. He would like for a greater share of CSP officers’ training to be about Latinx cultural norms and history with law enforcement in the United States and elsewhere.³⁷⁹ Establishing cultural competence and engaging history would not be a new project for CSP, but it will require a shift away from the focus on the long history of African Americans and policing in the neighborhood.

On the other hand, however, there is reason for the CSP and LAPD to continue to focus its violence prevention work in the African-American community in Watts. In 2015, seven of the eight homicide victims in Watts were Black. The change in overall neighborhood demographics but concentration of serious violence poses a challenge for a community policing unit like CSP: It must be responsive to the entire population and focus on the needs of the most vulnerable. In coming years, the CSP in Watts will have to figure out how to balance these needs, drawing on the resources of other LAPD units as well as refiguring some of its traditional focuses. Overall, however, the remaining crime complaints have shifted drastically, too. Nowadays, Sergeant Tingirides says, “the biggest complaints are quality-of-life issues and holding other agencies accountable for what they’re supposed to be doing in the community, which is just crazy for me”³⁸⁰ considering the rampant gun violence and overenforcement that used to characterize life in Watts.

378. Esmeralda Bermudez and Paloma Esquivel, “Latinos Now Dominate Watts, But Some Feel Blacks Still Hold Power,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/local/wattsriots/la-me-watts-riots-latinos-20150809-story.html>.

379. Arturo Ybarra, founder, Watts Century Latino Organization, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, December 3, 2015.

380. Emada Tingirides, sergeant, Los Angeles Police Department, interview with Sam Kuhn, field advisor, National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, November 24, 2015.

Looking ahead

The future looks bright for the CSP as local leaders remain committed to its sustained growth and others seek to replicate the strategy. The CSP has gained national attention as a model for community-police relationships, including a 2015 honor at the White House.³⁸¹ The LAPD, HACLA, and Urban Peace renewed the initiative for another five-year term through June of 2019, at which point CSP units will be active in eight housing developments. Other areas of the city that do not have large public housing developments have expressed interest as well. Sergeant Tingirides³⁸² and Lee believe exporting the CSP model to those areas is possible, granted the officials and leaders are committed to relationship-based policing and that there is some sort of central geographic anchor for the strategy.³⁸³ Since CSP is largely defined by its organizational style and approach, it does not rely on significant outside resources: mainly, it recommits existing resources in a different way, and works to coordinate existing community efforts. Likewise as a community becomes safer, as it has in Watts, outside investment can grow to fill in the direct start-up costs involved with launching CSP projects. The bigger investment, participants say, is of time and patience—in hearing the community out and committing, day after day, year after year, to change.³⁸⁴ That requires bold and resilient leadership from both community members and the police to withstand resistance within the neighborhood and the ranks.³⁸⁵

The growth of CSP style policing, however, is not limited to the new units that are created, but also includes how the project affects the LAPD as a whole. Lee sees making CSP a “norms-creating vehicle within the department” as one of her primary challenges for the future and plans to work with the LAPD to create institutional incentives and instituting promotional criteria that would serve that goal.³⁸⁶ Sergeant Tingirides “would like to see this grow into a division or a bureau”³⁸⁷ with a captain presiding over it. As CSP continues to serve as a proof-of-concept for the LAPD, lessons from the area can be absorbed into the larger organization and departing and promoted personnel can spread relationship-based policing principles throughout the city.

Conclusion

The Community Safety Partnership did not emerge as an isolated or independent project but rather as an outcome of the long and intentional process of reconciliation that occurred in Los Angeles and in the Watts neighborhood. It exists in reference to a history of tactics, culture, and scandals that defined the

381. Lindsay Holst, “Meet Captain Phillip C. Tingirides, a Guest of the First Lady at the State of the Union,” White House Blog, last modified January 19, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2015/01/19/meet-captain-phillip-c-tingirides-guest-first-lady-state-union>.

382. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 380).

383. Lee, interview (see note 363).

384. Revoyr, interview (see note 318).

385. Joubert, interview (see note 316).

386. Lee, interview (see note 363).

387. Emada Tingirides, interview (see note 380).

LAPD for nearly a half century and was built upon reforms that tackled this history. The LAPD's centurion culture, forged under Chief Parker and adapted by Chiefs Gates and Parks, emphasized a unilateral model of policing and eschewed accountability to the public. This style alienated hundreds of thousands of minority Angelenos and set the stage for some of the most egregious police abuse scandals in modern American history.

From this inauspicious history rose a new way to engage the public. Under Chief Bratton, the department undertook to understand the police culture that gave rise to these scandals and to implement sweeping changes. The independent blue ribbon panel report he commissioned and the concrete changes he committed to afterwards set the department on a new trajectory—one that understood the crucial importance of public trust both as a means to crime control and as an end in itself. At a crucial moment in police-community reconciliation, he made several important steps forward:

- He acknowledged the significant harm the department had caused.
- He sought to collect the narratives both within the department and in alienated communities that drove mistrust.
- He encouraged his captains to identify and work with community representatives who could help build trust and drive down violence.
- He articulated to his officers and the public how policing should look in Los Angeles.
- He committed to leveraging the consent decree process to hold the department to a number of policy and practice changes to address the distrust the community faced, from new accountability measures to leading the charge for a new, integrated law enforcement-city-community approach to reducing gang violence.

At the center of this resetting in Watts, the Watts Gang Task Force undertook a project of authentic dialogue that allowed for airing of historical and continuing grievances. It was and continues to be the site of many crucial elements of the reconciliation process: explicit acknowledgments of historical harms; owning the institution while considering the role of other institutions in creating mistrust; identifying natural, authentic community partners; listening at length to community perspectives; recognizing the roots of those perspectives, both factually accurate and inaccurate but historically and personally rational; articulating police experiences and perceptions while recognizing that they may be rational but, at least in part, factually inaccurate or incomplete; describing expectations and standards for police actions; bringing the rank and file along to understanding how community narratives figure into police mistrust and the department's response to that mistrust; and committing to actual policy and practice changes, including changes in enforcement discretion, collaborations with service agencies and gang interventionists, and changes in officer accountability. From this basis, officers and community members started to work together to confront public safety issues, consider grievances, de-escalate tension, plan events, respond to residents' concerns, and much more.

As the consent decree ended and power shifted to Chief Beck, the department formalized its commitment to local trust building and relationship-based policing recommended by the blue ribbon panel report and other crucial reports. Building on partnerships Chief Bratton had established with department outsiders like Rice and the new Watts Gang Task Force, the LAPD, HACLA, and the Advancement Project/Urban Peace developed an innovative new approach to policing organized around the idea that building relationships of trust with historically alienated communities would help reduce seemingly intractable threats to public safety. The result, the CSP, has built meaningful relationships between police and Watts residents and drastically reduced violent crime. Since the CSP began, police and community members have begun to see some indications of what the reconciliation process described in this guide is designed to produce: police who recognize the narratives that inform community mistrust and the importance of building relationships with community members by addressing those narratives; a sustained commitment to working together to improve police practice, build trust, and improve public safety; and resetting community norms against violence so that enforcement is increasingly de-emphasized in favor of powerful informal social controls. That, ultimately, is the lasting result of the Los Angeles and Watts transformation: public safety that comes from the people rather than from enforcement imposed upon them.

About the National Network for Safe Communities

The **National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC)**, a project of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, was launched under the direction of criminologist David M. Kennedy and John Jay College President Jeremy Travis. The NNSC focuses on supporting cities implementing proven strategic interventions to reduce violence and improve public safety, minimize arrest and incarceration, strengthen communities, and improve relationships between law enforcement and the communities it serves.

The NNSC supports cities actively implementing a range of interventions aimed at homicide, gun violence, drug markets, and intimate partner violence and at reforming a range of criminal justice practices and institutions. The NNSC also seeks to develop and enhance communities of practice through the Institute for Innovation in Prosecution and the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice.

Please visit www.nnscommunities.org for detailed information on the NNSC's mission, strategies, research findings, media coverage, events, and membership.

Lack of trust between police and the communities they serve undermines the safety and well being of all. To overcome distrust between police and the community, improve communication, and clear the way for collaboration, the John Jay College for Criminal Justice has developed this comprehensive collection of case studies and lessons learned in reconciliation efforts. It is composed of three parts, the first of which is a guide that provides practical steps for working toward reconciliation with consideration given to the needs and sensitivities of both the community and the police. The second part includes the key elements in practice of acknowledgment. The third part provides real life examples of police departments and communities using reconciliation to rebuild relationships.



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