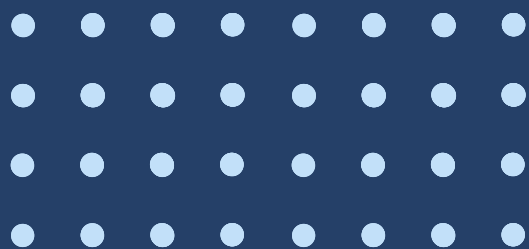
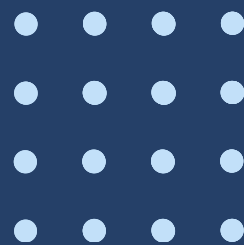


COMMUNITY  
PERSPECTIVES ON  
COMMUNITY POLICING:  
**SYNTHESIS OF FOCUS  
GROUPS WITH  
COMMUNITY  
REPRESENTATIVES**



APRIL 2025



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Civic Consulting Alliance is a nonprofit organization that provides *pro bono* consulting services to public and social sector clients. The organization's unique model brings together government, social impact, and corporate leaders to advance systems-level solutions that make the Chicago region a great place for everyone to live in and work. [www.ccachicago.org](http://www.ccachicago.org)

# Introduction

In January 2024, Chicago Police Department (CPD) Superintendent Larry Snelling rearticulate his goal for every CPD officer to be a community policing officer<sup>1</sup>. As part of the effort to operationalize this vision Department-wide, Civic Consulting Alliance (CCA) collected input from community bodies with formal advisory / oversight / advocacy roles with CPD.

This document provides a synthesis of those inputs, and is divided into four sections:

## 1. Methods

- Interviewees
- Interview questions

## 2. Key themes

- Current state: CPD behaviors respondents would like to see less of
  - Adversarial approaches (e.g., threatening body language and tone)
  - Fragmented community policing processes
  - Lack of meaningful follow-up on community problems and concerns
- Future state: CPD behaviors respondents would like to see more of
  - Relationship building with community outside of crises
  - Equitable treatment across neighborhood and individual demographics
  - Meaningful incident follow-up and input mechanisms to inform CPD's strategy
  - Timely and proportionate responses to calls for service
  - Methodical collaboration between formal community bodies and CPD
- Opportunities for CPD
  - Share user-friendly and up to date data, especially about use of force
  - Provide member wellness support and training, especially de-escalation and trauma-informed practices
  - Develop collaborative, comprehensive resource guide(s) of internal and external resources for members to leverage in interactions with community

## 3. Summary of input from CPD Advisory Bodies

- District Advisory Council (DAC) Chairs
- Community Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) Members

## 4. Summary of input from External Bodies

- Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (CCPSA)
  - Commissioners
  - District Councilors
- Consent Decree Coalition member organizations

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ccpsa/GOALS/2024%20CPD%20Goals%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

## Section 1: Methods (interviewees and interview questions)

### CPD advisory bodies

- **District Advisory Council (DAC) Chairs**
  - 15 DAC Chairs
  - Virtually via Zoom during standing quarterly meeting on August 8, 2024
- **Community Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) Members**
  - 9 members
  - In-person during standing quarterly meeting on June 4, 2024

<b>Current state assessment questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How would you explain community policing at CPD right now?</li><li>- What works about the way that CPD approaches community policing right now?</li></ul> <p>Where do you see opportunities for improvement in the way that CPD approaches community policing?</p>
<b>Future state vision questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How would you define community policing?</li><li>- What would it look like to everyone to be a community policing officer?</li></ul> <p>What would this vision look like in practice? What would be different from how things work today?</p>

### External bodies

- **Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (CCPSA)**
  - Two Commissioners via individual Zoom interviews (January 6, 2025 and January 13, 2025)
  - 15 District Councilors representing districts 001, 002, 004, 005, 006, 007, 009, 011, 014, 016, 017, and 019 provided feedback via:
    - CCA-led focus group (December 16, 2024)
    - CCPSA staff-led Zoom session (December 19, 2024)
    - Written feedback submitted to CCPSA staff
- **Consent Decree Coalition member organizations**
  - Four representatives from Consent Decree Coalition organizations
  - Virtually via Zoom focus group on February 26, 2025 and via written feedback

<b>Focus group and interview questions<sup>2</sup></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How do your constituents describe police presence and interaction with residents in your district? Is there too much, too little, not enough? Why?</li><li>- What behaviors and actions do your constituents want to see more of out of police in your district? Is this different if police are responding to a call or other enforcement activity? How so?</li><li>- What behaviors or actions do your constituents want to see less of out of police in your district? Is this different if police are responding to a call or other enforcement activity? How so?</li><li>- What other ideas would your constituents like to see implemented in your district to ensure that police are approachable, easy to communicate with, and interactions between police and community residents are positive?</li><li>- What types of information would you like to see the police share with residents to improve transparency? How would you like them to share this information?</li><li>- What ideas do you have to foster better relationships and trust between law enforcement and the community?</li></ul>

<sup>2</sup> These questions are consistent with questions developed by community-based organizations for citywide community engagement (<https://www.chicagopolice.org/community-policing/community-engagement-project/>)

## Section 2: Key themes

Current state	
<b>CPD behaviors that participants would like to see <u>less</u> of...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adversarial approaches (e.g., threatening body language and tone)</li> <li>- Fragmented community policing processes</li> <li>- Lack of meaningful follow-up on community problems and concerns</li> </ul>

Future state	
<b>CPD behaviors that participants would like to see <u>more</u> of...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relationship building with community outside of crises               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Long-term assignments to a particular geographic area / beat integrity</li> <li>o Visibility (e.g., members walk the beat; conduct bike patrols; officers - not just community policing members - attend community events; etc.)</li> <li>o CPD events address public safety concerns and are well attended by Department members and community</li> <li>o Substantial and positive interactions with community members who do not conventionally engage with CPD</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Equitable treatment across neighborhood and individual demographics</li> <li>- Meaningful incident follow-up and input mechanisms to inform CPD's strategy</li> <li>- Timely and proportionate responses to calls for service</li> <li>- Methodical collaboration between formal community bodies and CPD</li> </ul>

Opportunities for CPD shared by participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share user-friendly and up to date data, especially about use of force</li> <li>- Provide member wellness support and training, especially de-escalation and trauma-informed practices</li> <li>- Develop collaborative, comprehensive resource guide(s) of internal and external resources for members to leverage in interactions with community</li> </ul>

## Section 3: CPD Advisory Bodies (DAC and CPAP) input summary

*Respondents were asked questions to understand their perceptions of the current state of community policing and their vision for the future state.*

### **Current state: How participants describe community policing at CPD right now...**

#### *Leadership*

- Community policing strategy and priorities change based on who's in charge
- High-up people do not attend events unless there is a photo-op
- Siloed from Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS)

#### *Officers*

- Less police and loss of beat integrity makes it so that officers are not approachable and response times are too long
- Officers do not attend beat meetings
- Beat officers perceive CAPS as a desk job responsible for all community policing

#### *Community*

- Challenging to get community members to show up to beat meetings due to the stigma against the police or safety concerns
- Disconnect between advisory groups

### **Future state: What participants want to see out of...**

#### *Leadership*

- Community policing culture is ingrained and internalized throughout the Department, regardless of current leadership
  - “Warm handoff” of resources and relationships between outgoing and incoming Commanders
  - Centralized structure of internal and external community policing information
- Department metrics meaningfully represent people, not just numbers (qualitative and quantitative data)

#### *Officers*

- Have an active role in the community; not just a reactive one
  - Engage in formal (e.g., DAC, beat meetings, etc.) and informal (e.g., walk the beat, bike patrol, etc.) relationship building
    - Meet frequently with a range of community partners and leaders to share resources, especially faith communities
- Apply a social service lens to interactions with community members
- Training includes community policing and exposure to community programs

#### *Community members*

- Have built a positive working relationship with CPD by engaging outside of crisis. They trust the police and know how to work with them when problems arise.

## Section 4: External Bodies (CCPSA Commissioners, District Councilors and Consent Decree Coalition members) input summary

*Respondents were asked questions developed by partnering community-based organizations to gather community feedback on policing in their communities.*

### Behaviors that participants would like to see more of...

- Responses that are proportionate to the severity of the call, especially related to mental health crises
  - De-escalation of heightened situations
  - Faster response times
- Relationship building; members know community outside of crisis. CPD members are:
  - Visible (e.g., beat officers, not only CAPS members, attend community events, engage residents organically through foot and bike patrols, etc.)
  - Assigned to the same geographic area (beat integrity)
  - Host meaningful events that are well attended by CPD and community
  - Equally respectful to all community members
  - Responsive to quality of life issues (e.g., approach businesses, address blighted properties, etc.)
  - Enabled with time and resources to follow-up with community members about their concerns

### Behaviors that participants would like to see less of...

- Repetitive community input streams, both in content (e.g., questions asked) and mechanism (e.g., events) that do not bring about meaningful change
- Traffic stops / traffic enforcement
- Adversarial approaches (e.g., threatening body language (including guns drawn) and tone)
  - Members in extremist groups

### Opportunities

- Develop and distribute resource guides (e.g., City / community organizations to call for specific issues, how to leverage alternate responses like 211, 311, self-reporting, CARE teams, etc.)
- Publicize data on an intuitive dashboard that includes transparent case status and officer accountability
- Use SMART goals and engage with community on relevant and measurable District Strategic Plan priorities
- CPD trainings include:
  - CAPS members provide academy training
  - Recruits receive targeted community policing training
  - Courses in mental health, trauma, and de-escalation