

# APD Use of Force Advisory Council



Final 45-Day Report and  
Strategic Recommendations



JULY 2020



Photo: Luca Farfedi

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# Letter from the co-chairs

## Dear Honorable Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms,

We are honored to serve as Co-Chairs of the Police Use of Force Advisory Council. We share your commitment to ensuring that our communities are safe and healthy and appreciate your recognition that this requires an examination of how to improve policing in our city. Atlanta has earned a reputation for being at the forefront of the nation's struggle for civil and human rights. Today, the national spotlight focuses on how law enforcement agencies interact with communities of color. As jurisdictions across America turn their attention to this aspect of the criminal justice system, we hope that Atlanta will serve as a model for police reform. We are excited for the opportunity to be a part of that.

Over the past several weeks, the world has erupted in protests over several highly publicized encounters in which police killed Black Americans. In fact, within days of forming this Council, Rayshard Brooks was shot in the back just two miles from City Hall. We are well aware that the unnecessary use of force in these killings is connected to a broader system in which communities of color are disproportionately policed and criminalized. To compound the problem, far too many challenges plaguing marginalized communities—from substance abuse to mental illness to lack of quality education to homelessness—are addressed through the criminal legal system.

Police violence is not the result of one or two wayward police officers and the issue is not unique to the Atlanta Police Department. We must examine the culture of policing that subjugates Black communities through highly disproportionate uses of force.

As a Council, we have been asked to propose recommendations to address some of the most obvious symptoms of this culture. We have worked hard to come up with a list of proposals that can be implemented right away. We are mindful, however, that to truly get at the root of this cultural challenge, Atlanta will need to couple these reforms with an explicit commitment to reimagine the current approach to policing. This Council worked diligently to couple reforms that immediately address some of the more visible challenges with a recommendation, and set of guiding principles, that the city begin the hard work of investing in long-term, cultural transformation.

If the past several weeks have taught us anything, it is that we have a lot of work to do to realize transformative change in Atlanta. We are grateful to you, Mayor Bottoms, for your willingness to take this first step in that direction.

Again, we are honored to have been invited to serve in this role on this critical journey.



**Jonathan Rapping**

Atlanta's John Marshall Law; Gideon's Promise



**Tiffany Roberts**

Southern Center for Human Rights

# Our team



## Advisory Council

**Jonathan Rapping** Atlanta's John Marshall Law School; Gideon's Promise (Co-Chair)

**Tiffany Roberts** Southern Center for Human Rights (Co-Chair)

**Rafiq Ahmad** NOBLE (Georgia Chapter)

**Kenneth Alexander** Antioch Baptist Church

**Shar Bates** My Vote is Hip Hop

**Maya Beatty** Youth and Resident

**Nelson Boyce** Google

**J. Cannon Carr** Rotary; CornerCap Institutional

**Mawuli Davis** Bozeman Davis Law Firm

**Johnathan Davis** Covenant Community

**Marissa Dodson** Southern Center for Human Rights

**Miguel Dominguez** Criminal Justice PAWG; Morgan & Morgan

**Jauan Durbin** Youth Advocate & Resident

**Michelle Falconer** Bailey & Hunter, LLC

**Maya Hadley** Youth and Resident

**Jestin Johnson** City of Atlanta

**Alvin Kendall** Kendall Law Group

**Yonasda Lonewolf** Hip Hop 4 Foundation

**Bryant Marks** Morehouse College

**Toni-Michelle Williams** Solutions NOT Punishment Collaborative (SNaPCo)

**Suzanne Wynn Ockleberry** AT&T

**Rashad Richey** Radio Personality

**Joyce Sheperd** Atlanta City Council

**Brian Spears** G. Brian Spears, P.C.

**Lovette Karbo Thompson** Black Alliance for Just Immigration

**Shean Williams** Cochran Firm

**Joycelyn Wilson** Georgia Tech

## City of Atlanta

**Jerome Jordan**

**Jade Martin**

**Ryann Pritchett**

**Maria Rios**

**Amber Robinson**

**Maria Russo**

**Jacob Tzegaegbe**

**Sheryl Ude**

## Our Partners

Boston Consulting Group

BrightHouse

# Seizing the Moment



“ ”

The gravity of this Advisory Council’s actions and recommendations—and their potential to fundamentally transform the relationship between law enforcement officials and those they serve—cannot be understated.

*Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms*

There is pain within our communities—the traumatic effects of a damaged relationship between our black and brown communities and the police officers who took an oath to serve all. Police nationwide have shot and killed nearly 1,000 people annually since 2015. Although half of the people shot and killed by the police are white, black Americans are twice as likely to be killed despite comprising 13% of the US population.

Georgia is no exception, including 181 shootings over the same time period.

The heightened awareness of these troubling statistics have not only called in to question the use of force policies and procedures but also the efficacy of our policing institutions more broadly.

These questions have inspired and promoted thought leadership and new perspectives on how to re-imagine policing.

While each community has its own challenges, the broader context and high level drivers are not unique to the City of Atlanta. Leveraging best practices highlighted in reports such as former President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and models for positive change implemented across the country can inform a way forward that crystallizes the role of the APD and strengthens its ties to the community.

To that end, in addition to her broader campaign to address criminal justice reform, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms has established a community-led Advisory Council to make legislative and operational recommendations focused on improving use of force policies and procedures.

## Review

our police use of force policies.

## Engage

the community on solutions informed by national expertise and appropriate to Atlanta context.

## Report

the findings of our review to our community and seek feedback.

## Reform

our community’s police use of force policies.

Source: Washington Post [“Police Shooting Database”](#) (2020)

# A summary of our efforts



The mandate of this Use of Force Advisory Council is to offer changes to Atlanta’s Use of Force policies and procedures. To accomplish this objective, we are offering a set of recommendations to not only drive immediate impact but also support the broader, long-term ambitions of APD.

To begin our effort, we conducted a sprint to develop an initial set of high-impact 14-day recommendations to adopt immediately—many of these have already been actioned by Mayor Bottoms, while others have served as focal points for continued effort by the Advisory Council and other stakeholders.

For the remainder of the 45-day effort, the group shifted to building recommendations concentrated around 5 focus areas, selected by the Advisory Council as a high-impact and feasible set within the scope of our mandate. We believe our targeted recommendations within each of the focus areas will drive outcomes that support the ambition for positive change:

- **Vision, Mission, and Values:** Ensuring the ambition is captured adequately and promotes the desired culture

- **Standard Operating Procedures:** Revisiting policies and procedures that shape police conduct
- **Governance:** Ensuring mechanisms are in place and empowered to enforce accountability measures
- **Community Partnership:** Strengthening ties with the community partners to support public safety
- **Reporting & Transparency:** Embedding sustainable change and transparency through metrics and advanced analytics

It is critical that our recommendations provide momentum for a more sustained effort to make lasting change, and we acknowledge that there are wider considerations to action that are beyond this Advisory Council:

- Ensuring the work continues with energized stakeholders—from APD, the City, and the community
- Looking holistically at the breadth of policies, practices, and incentives that drive police behavior
- Considering the broader implications of public safety and criminal justice reform on policing
- Addressing the need for reconciliation and revitalization as an essential part of the reform and healing process.

Invested over 6 weeks

2,500+

collective hours of meetings

600+

meetings and discussion forums

50+

stakeholders engaged

40+

recommendations for action

# As a community institution, the APD has reshaped its role so Atlanta can flourish

**APD has evolved twice already—there is an urgent need for a 3rd evolution**

## 1940s

Population: 330,000

**“Atlanta is a city too busy to hate.”**

William Hartsfield

## 1970s

Population: 1,760,000

**“We stand, as a gateway to a new time, a new beginning for the cities of our land.”**

Maynard Jackson

## 2020s

Population: 6,000,000

**“My vision for Atlanta is One Atlanta—a city with thriving neighborhoods, communities and businesses, and residents who are equipped for success.”**

Keisha Lance Bottoms

## Atlanta Police Department role

The APD is more than a department of local government, it is an essential community institution. **Because the APD dared to integrate the force in 1948, to model unity in the face of opposition, the City survived and remade itself** in an era of unprecedented change.

The role of the APD has evolved as the City has needed—through population booms, economic waves; as contributors to bold visions for the City. **Because the APD committed to fight crime and promote safety, the City could think big and grow bigger**, into an international metropolis.

We now ask Officers to make another shift in the role they play as part of the community. **If the APD is willing to examine its role and serve with a renewed understanding of what the community needs from it, the Department can promote and maintain a shared peace for the City to flourish.**



# Together we can transform the department's role in the community

We are stronger as a city when the Officers who patrol our neighborhoods are embraced as part of the community, and do not operate apart from the community.

## Mindset Guides the Approach

Transition from the vigilant Warrior **to the protective Guardian.**

Traumatic experiences on the job, along with training that hones survival reaction, can reinforce an “us vs. them” mindset.

By embracing a Guardian mindset, Officers will seek to promote the peace as much as safety, and the community will embrace them in turn.

Expand focus beyond enforcement **to enable communities to flourish.**

Equating safety only to law enforcement can give APD a narrow focus that does not strengthen bonds with residents.

When APD sets its sights on safety and beyond—it can enable citizens to do the same—cultivating vibrant, healthy communities.

## Approach Determines the Outcome

Officers are more than agents of government, **they must be neighbors, first.**

Due to the nature of the work, Officers very often enter communities with the intent to uncover and address wrongdoing.

When Officers befriend the neighborhood, they grow roots in communities, and we see each other as humans with shared expectations.

Robust training in process and procedures **must build trust and promote transparency.**

Officers can at times fall back on training as an explanation for what we might see as cases of brutality.

APD can commit to capturing and sharing data that makes it more effective and ensures the effort to make this City better is shared.



# Overview



Photo: Luca Fandi

Photo: Luca Fandi

# Advisory Council Process Overview

Established on June 10th, the Advisory Council was mandated to present its findings within 45 days

## June 10, 2020

Advisory Council first convenes to benchmark and align on high value initiatives to address inappropriate Use of Force instances by the Atlanta Police Department

The council engages a range of stakeholders representing a cross-section of Atlanta's citizens and topic experts: activists, community leaders, lawyers, members of the APD, City of Atlanta representatives, and private citizens

Building off national initiatives such as '8 can't wait', the council reconvenes weekly to prepare an initial set of recommendations to be released within 14 days

## June 24, 2020

The Advisory Council publishes an initial set of 10 recommendations to be considered by the Mayor's office for immediate action, covering a range of topics across Law and Policy, Culture and Mindset Shift, and Community and Partnerships

The Council aligns on 5 high impact topics to focus on for the remainder of their mandate, these are:

- The APD's Mission, Vision, and Values
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) changes
- Governance
- Community Partnerships
- Reporting and Transparency

## July 24, 2020

Building upon the 14-day recommendations and ensuing actions taken by the Mayor's office, the Advisory Council publishes its final report comprised of 33 recommendations across all focus areas

These recommendations are comprised of tactical actions to be considered immediately by the city and broader strategic recommendations to be acted upon through a continued partnership between the citizens of Atlanta and the APD over the coming months



## Multiple workstreams progressed in parallel throughout the effort

- 1 Weekly advisory council meetings**  
Group discussions with the entire Advisory Council reviewing progress across focus areas, identifying additional input needs, and refining recommendations
- 2 Weekly focus group working sessions**  
Topical deep-dives sessions with subsets of the Advisory Council focused on reviewing elements of the fact base in order to craft and refine recommendations
- 3 Topical experts interviews**  
Q&A sessions with experts on a wide range of topics—including policy, policing alternatives, and community engagement—leveraged to form and expand focus group fact bases
- 4 Proven best practices from other U.S. metropolitan areas**

# In the 31 days since our 14-day report, many of our interim recommendations have been the focus of immediate or continued action



- ★ Commit to revising the Use of Force continuum in Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to increase specificity and align with best practices
- ★ Ensure that changes taken under the Mayor's Administrative Orders 2020-18 align with best practice policy changes from other cities and continue measures for accountability
- ✓ Commit to identifying policies to improve officer compliance and public transparency of captured body worn camera footage
- ✓ Create a centralized repository for witness footage of use of force by officers
- ! Mandate immediate drug testing for officers when a use of force incident resulting in serious injury or death occurs

- ★ Commit to re-evaluating and revising mission, vision, core values, and oath of the Atlanta Police Department
- ! Conduct additional screenings—including mental health and implicit bias assessments—for all applicants during the recruiting process, and on an ongoing basis for all officers
- ! Require more exhaustive background checks with attention to record of complaints from other agencies, previous applications to police departments, and social media sentiment
- ✓ Recommendations already actioned by Mayor Bottoms
- ★ Expanded 45-Day recommendations
- ! Recommendations currently under review by administration

- ✓ Extend powers and community awareness of Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB), including:
  - ★ Mandated 3rd party audit of misaligned recommendations in use of force incidents
  - Increased funding to improve ACRB outreach, awareness, and program effectiveness
- ★ Begin to evaluate policies, procedures, and partner organizations for least harm approach to reduce the likelihood of use of force long-term, including:
  - Evaluate partnership model, resourcing, and legal framework for non-law enforcement officials to respond to community
  - Expand and incentivize adoption of Pre-Arrest Diversion program across additional zones

Source: [City of Atlanta "Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms Takes Immediate Action Upon Receiving Use of Force Advisory Council's 14-day Recommendations" \(2020\)](#)

**Focusing on the desired role of the APD, the Advisory Council aligned on a set of foundational building blocks to frame the recommendations**



**Key questions this Advisory Council has begun to address**

- PURPOSE**
  - What role does APD play within the community?
  - How do we ensure APD’s expectations are aligned with the community?
- VISION, MISSION AND VALUES**
  - What is the ambition for the future?
  - What is the core competency and function of the APD?
  - What values capture how this organization should behave?
- STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**
  - Which policies and procedures should be in place to ensure guidance is prescriptive, unambiguous and supports the vision of the department?
- GOVERNANCE**
  - What oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure accountability?
  - Are these processes effective? If not, how can they be improved?
- COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**
  - What is the scope of services APD should support within the community?
  - How can partners within the community support public safety efforts?
- REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY**
  - What information is most relevant to inform strategy and drive decision making?
  - What systems and processes are required to increase and maintain transparency?

33

Total  
Recommendations

# 45-Day recommendations summary

## Vision, Mission, and Values

- 1 Convene a working group that will be responsible for the reimagining of the vision, mission, and core values of the APD
- 2 Require the working group to prioritize seven guiding ideals during the development of the newly reimagined vision, mission, and values
- 3 Create a forum to hold community reconciliation meetings between APD and the Atlanta community
- 4 Perform an annual culture audit that will highlight where APD stands regarding progress in achieving newly reimagined vision, mission, and values

## Standard Operating Procedures

- 5 Lead Use of Force SOP with principles/values to set tone for Use of Force policies, incorporating additional principles consistent with APD's emerging vision, mission, and values
- 6 Create de-escalation requirements, outlining specific examples/tactics and creating a requirement to consider vulnerable populations when deciding to use force
- 7 Strengthen Use of Force continuum with clearer definitions for levels of subject resistance and force to ensure proportionality
- 8 Further restrict use of deadly force/firearms, including designation of deadly force as a "last resort" and outlining requirements before use, including de-escalation
- 9 Add peer duty to intervene and complementary non-retaliation and reporting requirements

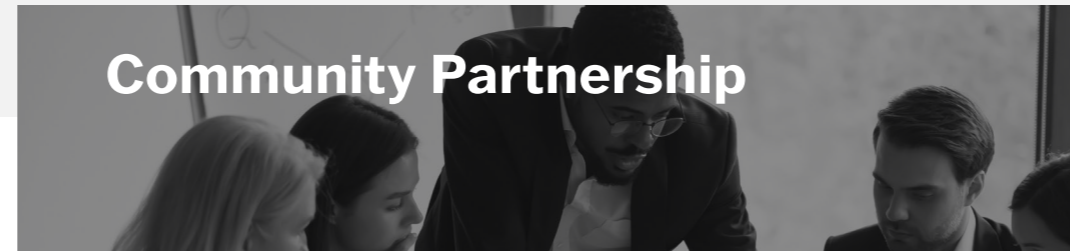


# 45-Day recommendations summary



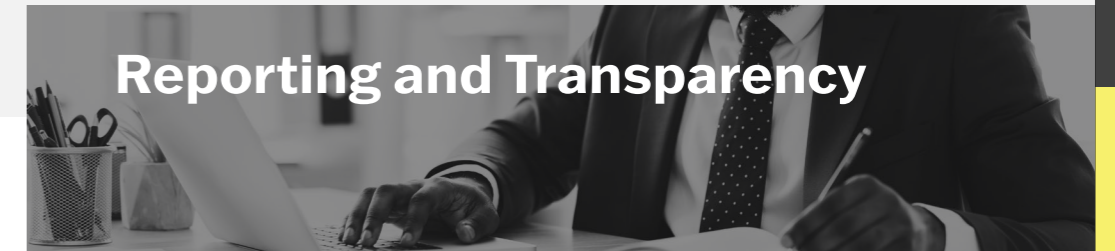
## Governance

- 10** Increase accountability for APD and Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB) to conduct investigations and provide responses in a timely manner
- 11** Mandate 3rd party independent review for recommended actions on ACRB/APD disagreements on complaints
- 12** Create a memorandum of understanding between Office of Professional Standards (OPS) and ACRB for disciplinary action reporting and investigatory data exchange
- 13** Increase period-in-office of OPS leadership to a minimum of two years
- 14** Mandate ACRB review of changes to APD Standard Operating Procedures which affect citizens, at least 30 days in advance; establish a 3rd party recourse for disagreements
- 15** Increase ACRB funding by \$0.4-1.3M to enable improvement in effectiveness of processes
- 16** Improve community awareness through direct information dissemination and awareness campaigns
- 17** Extend ACRB mediation program to OPS for lower level complaints



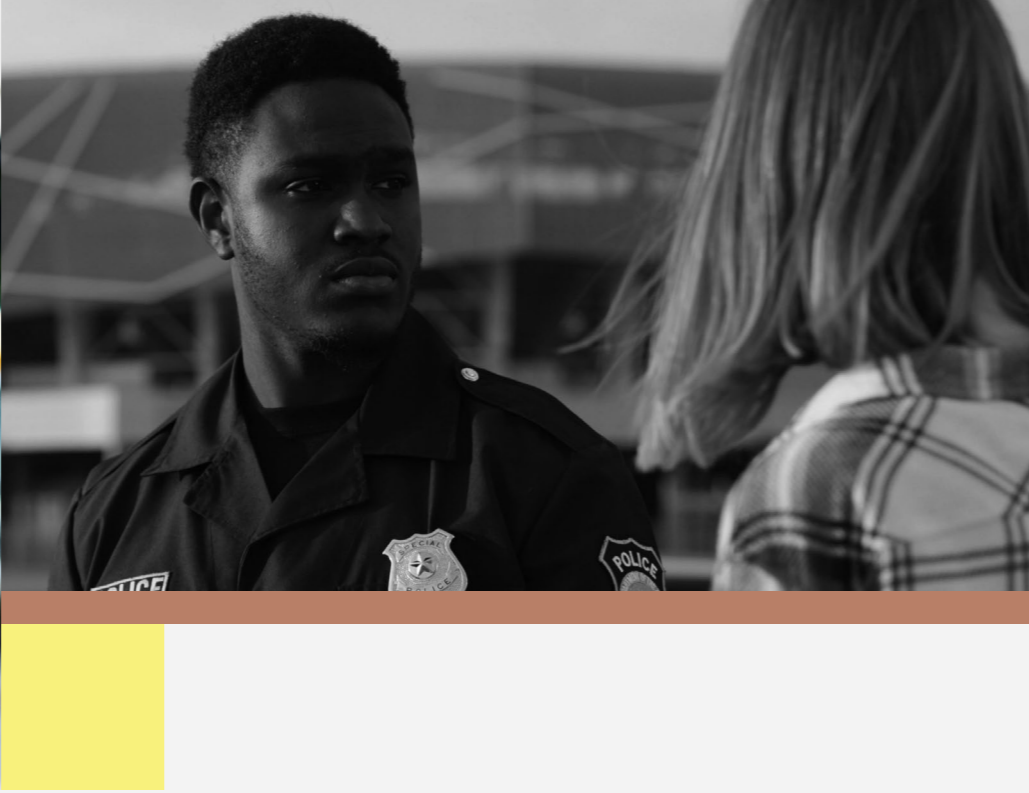
## Community Partnership

- 18** Evaluate and augment current 911 dispatcher process to identify situations eligible for alternate response
- 19** Develop a plan to enable alternative first responders for situations where other expertise is beneficial and/or police presence is not critical
- 20** Commit to eliminating performance evaluation systems and disciplinary actions that incentivize officers to make unnecessary arrests
- 21** Commit to incentivizing diversion and de-incentivizing certain categories of arrest
- 22** Mandate alternative response training e.g., pre-arrest diversion for all officers in all zones
- 23** Create a working group with key stakeholders to implement target alternative response continuum
- 24** Ensure continued support and expansion of prevention, diversion, and intervention programs e.g., Pre-Arrest Diversion, @Promise youth center and similar community-focused programs
- 25** Create a fund and central database for organizations supporting non-LEO response to formally connect with APD and apply for funding from the City
- 26** Commit to planning out the creation of a central crisis response center in partnership with other local jurisdictions



## Reporting and Transparency

- 27** Digitize and structure current and recent records so that they can be analyzed and reported
- 28** Revise data collection process to ensure completeness of data and encourage compliance with data collection policies
- 29** Implement structural and process changes to integrate data across departments while preserving privacy and integrity of APD operations
- 30** Invest in deeper analytics to implement data driven decision making
- 31** Ensure public accessibility to current and future data disclosures
- 32** Build and implement an interactive use of force data dashboard after the Mark43 implementation is operational
- 33** Ensure data are true and complete through 3rd party data audits



# We've outlined a set of bold actions to become a beacon of hope for the future of policing

Re-imagining the purpose and role of the APD within the community

Prioritizing and implementing a wide range of interdependent recommendations on policies and procedures

Coordinating with several internal and external stakeholders to drive behaviors and sustain change

Launching reconciliation and healing efforts to rebuild trust and repair community relations

Monitoring impact and ensuring these changes last

Renewed sense of purpose aligned with the community's expectations and needs

Transformative change with both substantive and symbolic impact

Innovative partnership models and protocols to serve community's evolving needs

Renewed sense of trust and engagement with a revived community

Dramatic improvement in the sentiment of public safety and general welfare

# Recommendation Detail



Photo: Luca Fandi



# Vision, Mission, and Values

**VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

GOVERNANCE

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY





“ ”

**To truly revolutionize our society we must first revolutionize ourselves. We must be the change we seek if we are to effectively demand transformation from others.**

*Representative John Lewis*

# Vision, Mission, and Values

The vision, mission, and core values serves as a critical rallying cry to the organization of the Atlanta Police Department. Real transformation requires a long term commitment to changing organizational mindset and culture from leadership down to every officer and employee. It is critically important for these polices to reflect a broader set of guiding principles that reinforce APD policies and practices across the organization. In this sense, the recommendations that can be implemented in the short term must be coupled with a longer term commitment to culture change that reflects these ideals.

Together, the vision, mission, and values set the culture and tone of the APD through a clear

articulation of three crucial questions:—(i) where are we as an organization headed?, (ii) what do as an organization do?, and (iii) how does our organization behave to get where we are headed? The overall goals of the focus group were to identify a process under which a full scale re-imagining of the vision, mission, and values of the APD could take place and to develop guiding ideals that would holistically capture what should be prioritized when developing a new vision, mission, and values.

To develop recommendations, the focus group reviewed APD’s current Mission and Organization of the Department SOP to identify themes already included within the APD’s vision, mission, and values. The group then compared vision, mission,

and values statements from other comparable city police department including Camden, NJ; Los Angeles, CA; Washington DC; and San Francisco, CA. Additionally, the group compiled recommendations and input across focus groups to inform both the guiding ideals and language leveraged through recommendations on the vision, mission, and values.

Developing a new set of vision, mission, and value statements serves as a critical first step in developing a culture within the APD that is in accordance with the expectations of the community. However, it is also of critical importance to undergo annual culture audits to evaluate progress that APD is making towards living out the vision, mission, and values.

# Recommendation overview

- 1** Convene a working group that will be responsible for the reimagining the vision, mission, and core values of the APD
- 2** Require the working group to prioritize seven guiding ideals during the development of the newly reimagined vision, mission, and values
- 3** Create a forum to hold community reconciliation meetings between APD and the Atlanta community
- 4** Perform an annual culture audit that will highlight where APD stands regarding progress in achieving newly reimagined vision, mission, and values



# Approach for our recommendations

We recognize that re-imagining the culture of an organization cannot be accomplished immediately nor can culture to be properly embedded within an organization without intimately involving leadership with the organization in the process. As such, we have identified the vision, mission, and values of APD as a focal point where cultural and mindset shift can be effectively actioned. Our recommendations highlight key considerations to be included during the development of the vision, mission, and values.



## Setting ambition

Ensuring the right principles are included in the vision, mission, and values

## Monitoring and adapting

Continuously engaging the APD and community on the ambition and understanding how to impact those teams

## What do vision, mission, and values provide an organization?

### Vision

WHERE we are going—our ambitions for the future

### Mission

WHAT we do—a statement of our core competency and function

### Values

HOW we behave—often stated as character traits (e.g., promoting a guardian mindset, building community trust)



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Convene a vision, mission, and values task force

**Setting  
ambition**

Monitoring  
and adapting

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Convene a task force charged with re-imagining of the vision, mission, and core values of the APD**

Create a task force that will engage in a 2–3 month effort to develop the complete set of vision, mission, and values that will guide the APD

Ensure that the task force includes key stakeholders from the APD leadership team, City of Atlanta leadership, community leaders and activists, and a third party facilitator of the process

Leverage a structured approach (see full approach on following page) to draw out purpose principles and luminary insights from APD leadership that will solidify ownership of the newly developed vision, mission, and values

**Context**

The vision, mission, and values that are outlined in APD’s SOP on Mission Organization of the Department lack sufficient detail. The vision, mission, and values of an organization are critical cornerstones that establish the prevalent culture of an organization. We believe that more specific and reflective vision, mission, and values within the APD will serve as the basis for the cultural and mindset shift required within the organization. We recognize that real transformation requires a long term commitment to changing organizational mindset and culture from leadership down to every officer and employee. As a result, we have identified several themes as best practices—based on their inclusion in vision, mission, and values of comparable cities’ police departments—that are notably missing from APD’s vision, mission, and values.

**Expected outcome**

The objective of this recommendation is to define a process that will yield a newly defined vision, mission, and values that are owned by APD and are informed by input from the community who the APD serves.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Convene a vision, mission, and values task force

**Setting ambition**

Monitoring and adapting

## PROPOSED APPROACH

ACTIVITIES

### Discover

Define authentic strengths of the organization, why it matters, and the human need it fulfills

### Articulate

Translate lessons from Discovery into Purpose and renewed Vision, Mission, and Values

### Activate

Craft and execute communications plan to educate and inspire APD rank and file to embrace Purpose and renewed Vision, Mission, and Values

### Embed

Ongoing effort to transform org's culture, policy, and community engagement efforts through the lens of Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Values

OUTCOMES

10-15 Targeted Leader Interviews

3-5 Luminary interviews

Survey

Articulation of Purpose, Vision, Mission, Values statements

Creation of narratives that express how the APD fuels the health and growth of the City

Activation Content (e.g., digital content, internal campaign materials, toolkits for workshops and "difficult conversations")

Film(s)

Align and elevate Culture, Policy, and Community Engagement

Establish regular audit of performance against Purpose, Vision, Mission metrics



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Use guiding ideals as guardrails throughout vision, mission, and values task force

**Setting  
ambition**

Monitoring  
and adapting

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Require that vision, mission, and values task force prioritize seven guiding ideals during the development process (see language/ definition deep dive on following page)**

- Creating transparency
- Fostering accountability
- Using force as last resort
- Prioritizing least harm methods
- Striving for community connection
- Emphasizing compassion, fairness, diversity, human rights, and justice
- Adopting mindset and language that mirrors values

**Context**

“Best practices” when developing vision, mission, and values for an organization are to conduct a deep dive to understand the purpose and the principles of an organization first. This deep dive into purpose serves to orient the process, but often lacks input from community stakeholders.

**Expected outcome**

The objective of this recommendation is provide a set of overarching key components to serve as the guide posts that the vision, mission, and values task force will reference during the process of reimagining the vision, mission, and values of the APD.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Use guiding ideals as guardrails throughout vision, mission, and values task force

**Setting ambition**

Monitoring and adapting

## DEEP DIVE ON SPECIFIC LANGUAGE THAT DEFINES THE GUIDING IDEALS

### Creating transparency

Be transparent in operations by regularly publishing reports and soliciting community feedback on critical events and community concerns

Example text from Washington DC PD: “Ensure that all allegations of misconduct and uses of force are investigated thoroughly and impartially.”

### Fostering accountability

Incentivize behavior consistent with values and ensure procedures; do not incentivize outcomes that do not support values

Take full responsibility for actions or inactions for ourselves and our fellow officers

Onboard recruits who specifically embrace values, and enforce meaningful consequences for officers who undermine values

Ensure that officers remain healthy—both mentally and physically—and committed to APD’s values through recruitment, training, support, and services deployed within the department

### Using force as last resort

Recognize that arrest is a use of force, and always resolve short of arrest where it does not compromise community safety

Example text from San Francisco PD: “Our Highest Priority is the Protection of Human Life.”





**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Use guiding ideals as guardrails throughout vision, mission, and values task force

**Setting ambition**

Monitoring and adapting

## DEEP DIVE ON SPECIFIC LANGUAGE THAT DEFINES THE GUIDING IDEALS

### Prioritizing least harm methods

Address each unique circumstance faced across the wide breadth of the Atlanta community and partner with organizations with the expertise to support them

Example text from Washington DC PD: “Strive to resolve all conflicts peacefully, valuing all human life, and ensuring that any use of force is proportional to the threat faced.”

### Striving for community connection

Prioritize the placement of officers into communities where they are aware of the circumstances and issues faced in that particular community

Police should see themselves as “Trusted Partners” who actively engage with and share the same goals of the community

We care about the quality of life in the city’s neighborhoods, believe that our services must answer their needs, and are committed to building problem-solving partnerships with the communities we serve

### Emphasizing compassion, fairness, diversity, human rights, and justice

Protect the city’s residents and visitors with the highest regard for the dignity and sanctity of human life

### Adopting mindset and language that mirrors values

Use language that reinforces the image of APD as guardian/ servant leader/peace officer/ trusted partner instead of Warrior

Use words like person, fellow citizen, human, and neighbor vs. criminal, suspect, perpetrator, offender, and defendant when describing members of the community

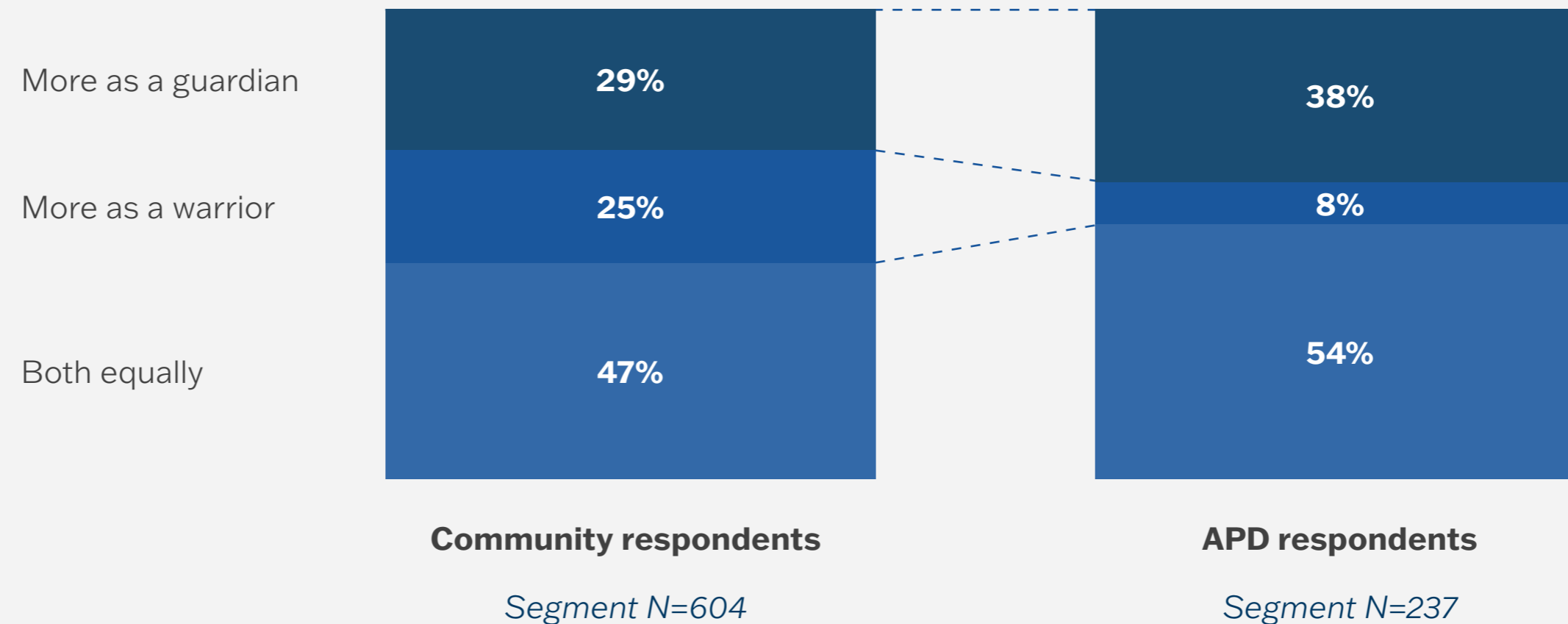


# APD members are 3x less likely to view themselves as warriors in comparison to community members

Setting ambition

Monitoring and adapting

Even if you believe both are important parts of police work, do you see **the police in your community/yourself?**



L1b. Even if you believe both are important parts of police work, do you see the police in your community MORE as...

L1c. Even if you believe both are important parts of your work, do you see yourself MORE as...

Source: Third-Party APD and Community Sentiment Survey July 2020 (n = 604 community members; N = 239 APD members)



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Hold community reconciliation meetings between APD and the Atlanta community

Setting  
ambition

**Monitoring  
and adapting**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Create a forum to hold community reconciliation meetings between APD and the broader community**

As a part of the process of developing the vision, mission, and values for the APD, hold a series of community reconciliation meetings as a method of facilitating community healing and capturing additional input during the “Activate” step of the Purpose Approach

**Context**

In recent months, our Atlanta community and U.S. at large have been grappling with the impacts of excessive police violence, which in many cases have led to the death of civilians from interactions with the police. The aftermath of these events has created an opportunity for much needed healing and reconciliation—between the APD and the Atlanta community—to occur via the implementation of reconciliatory-type meetings. In the past, similar meetings have been utilized more formally in places such as South Africa when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was instituted in the aftermath of the end of apartheid.

**Expected outcome**

The objective of this recommendation is to provide the community and the APD a venue to engage with one another in an effort to foster understanding and healing between the two groups.

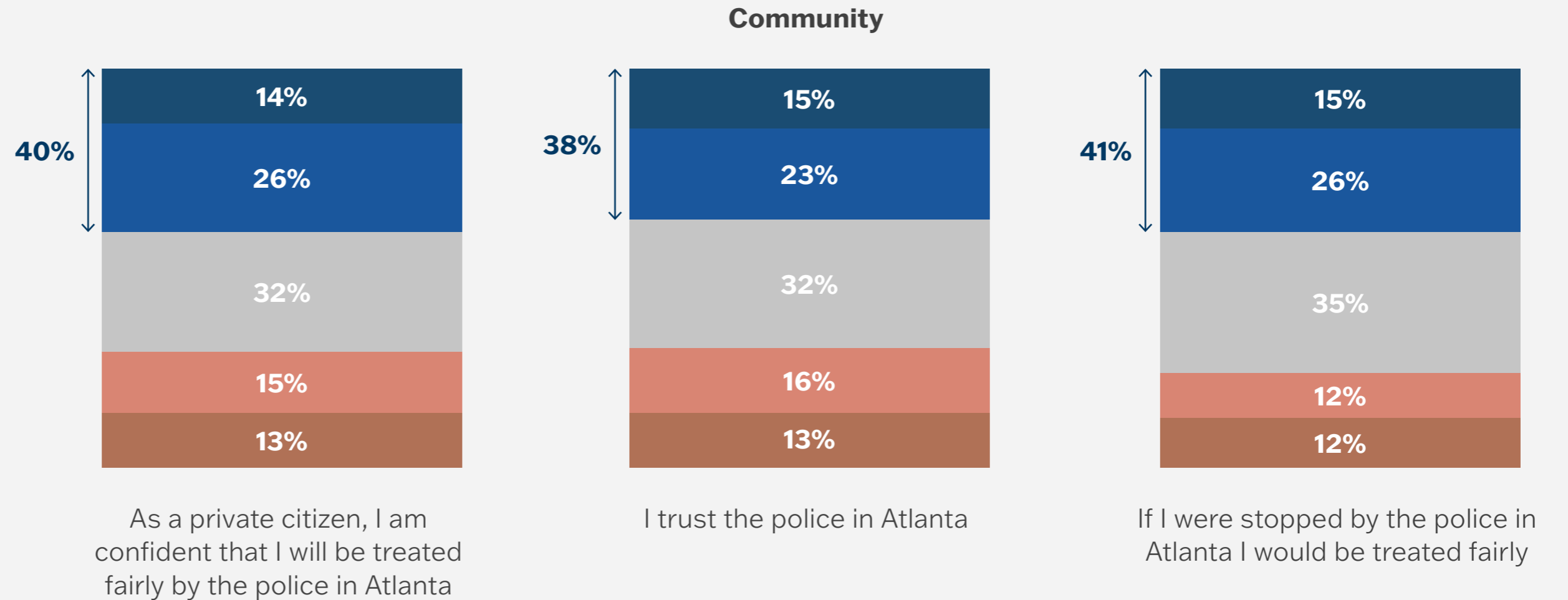


# Less than half of community respondents say they trust the police and believe they are treated fairly

% of community respondents that say they \_\_\_\_\_ with each of the following statements

Setting ambition

**Monitoring and adapting**



↔ Total agreement    Strongly disagree    Disagree    Neither    Agree    Strongly agree

L9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements  
 Source: Third-Party APD and Community Sentiment Survey July 2020 (n = 604 community members; N = 239 APD members)



# APD's and the community's perceptions differ greatly regarding treatment of people based on race

Setting ambition

**Monitoring and adapting**

**% of APD and community respondents that say they \_\_\_ with each of the following statements**



↔ Total agreement    Strongly disagree    Disagree    Neither    Agree    Strongly agree

L9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements  
 Source: Third-Party APD and Community Sentiment Survey July 2020 (n = 604 community members; N = 239 APD members)



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Perform an annual culture audit to highlight where APD stands

Setting ambition

**Monitoring and adapting**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Create process to audit the culture of APD annually**

Perform an annual review of the progress APD has made towards realizing the vision, mission, and values (e.g., annual APD sentiment survey, annual community sentiment survey)

Leverage an annual APD and Community survey and the resulting insights as a baseline metric to monitor the progress that is made towards aligning the APD culture with the wants and needs of the community

**Context**

According to best practices gathered from culture and organizational behavior experts, the development of a new vision, mission, and values for an organization is not independently sufficient to drive lasting cultural and mindset shift. There must also be a consistent review of where the culture of the organization stands relative to the goals set in the vision and mission.

**Expected outcome**

The objective of this recommendation is create a ongoing process whereby the APD not only reviews the progress being made towards realizing the vision, mission, and values, but also affirms its efforts and plans to continue to push the organization towards achieving its goals.

# Standard Operating Procedures

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

GOVERNANCE

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY





“ ”

**Police need to humanize community members, but it goes the other way, too. It's very common to only see police as a uniform.**

*Dr. Gregory Ellison,  
Emory University and Fearless Dialogues*

# Standard Operating Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) detail how officers are expected to conduct themselves in their activities; updating APD's Use of Force SOP is a direct way to impact how officers use force against subjects in the field. The overall goals of the focus group were to identify targeted policies and incorporate language into APD's current SOP that adds practical restrictions and reduces ambiguity on when it is appropriate for force to be used.

To develop recommendations, the focus group reviewed APD's current Use of Force SOP to identify potential areas for revision. The group then compared how progressive reforms were built into the SOPs from other police departments, including Camden, NJ, Chicago, IL, and San Francisco, CA. The policies of these model SOPs were then used to develop prescriptive recommendations that can be readily incorporated into APD's SOP.

Codifying new guidelines within Standard Operating Procedures is a valuable tool to change officer conduct. However, real transformation requires a long term commitment to changing organizational mindset and culture. It is critically important for these policies to reflect a broader set of guiding principles that reinforce APD policies and practices across the organization. In this sense, the recommendations that can be implemented in the short term must be coupled with a longer term commitment to culture change that promotes restraint when using force, reinforces policies through complementary training, and ensures swift accountability and discipline when officers violate policy by using excessive force.



## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

# Recommendation overview

- 5** Lead Use of Force SOP with principles/values to set tone for Use of Force policies, incorporating additional principles consistent with APD's emerging vision, mission, and values
- 6** Create de-escalation requirements, outlining specific examples/tactics and creating a requirement to consider vulnerable populations when deciding to use force
- 7** Strengthen Use of Force continuum with clearer definitions for levels of subject resistance and force to ensure proportionality
- 8** Further restrict use of deadly force/ firearms, including designation of deadly force as a "last resort" and outlining requirements before use, including de-escalation
- 9** Add peer duty to intervene and complementary non-retaliation and reporting requirements



# Approach for our recommendations

There is no standardized format or approach used for Use of Force SOPs across America’s police departments—to ensure our recommendations can be actioned quickly, we looked at the primary structure and provisions of APD’s existing Use of Force policy to identify where and how our specific changes can be incorporated



## Purpose

**Statement that this policy governs use of force for APD**

## Policy

**Values/principles guiding SOP policies**

## Responsibilities

**Chain of command and department responsibilities for ensuring compliance, maintaining records, providing training, and conducting investigations**

## Action

**Specific conduct guidelines organized by topic**

- Use of Force Generally <sup>1</sup>
- Deadly force
- Medical attention
- Lethal and less lethal weapons
- Reporting requirements
- Chain of command review
- Maintenance of Use of Force reports
- Analysis of Use of Force reports

## Definitions

**Definitions for key terms used in the SOP**

1. Includes weapons authorization, bans on warning shots and chokeholds



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Lead with principles and values

- Purpose
- Policy**
- Responsibilities
- Action
- Definitions

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Incorporate additional principles consistent with APD’s emerging vision, mission, and values**

Incorporate seven emerging guiding ideals (prioritized by vision, mission, and values task force):

- Creating transparency
- Fostering accountability
- Using force as last resort
- Prioritizing least harm methods
- Striving for community connection
- Emphasizing compassion, fairness, diversity, human rights, and justice
- Adopting mindset and language that mirrors values

Assert that the constitutional “objectively necessary” principle established by *Graham v. Conner* serves as the “floor” for guiding officer conduct—APD’s SOP aspires to go above and beyond

**Context**

The policy section currently opens with: “The Atlanta Police Department recognizes and respects the value of human life and the right of people to be secure in their persons and property.” Other SOPs reviewed by the focus group have used the “Policy” section to detail a longer list of principles, values, and aspirations that serve as guide posts for the conduct policies that follow.

**Expected outcome**

The objective of this recommendation is to set the tone for the Use of Force SOP by outlining principles that emphasize APD’s guiding ideals.



## RECOMMENDATION: Require de-escalation

- Purpose
- Policy
- Responsibilities**
- Action
- Definitions

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Add de-escalation requirements

Require that officers attempt to de-escalate situations to reduce the need to use force

Provide examples of specific de-escalation techniques and tactics officers can employ, including providing instructions and verbal warnings, creating a buffer zone (reactionary gap) between officer and subject<sup>1</sup>

Direct for officers to consider vulnerable populations when deciding to use force

- Example from San Francisco PD: “Officers shall when feasible, attempt to understand and consider the possible reasons why a subject may be noncompliant or resisting arrest. A subject may not be capable of understanding the situation because of a medical condition; mental, physical, or hearing impairment; language barrier; drug interaction; or emotional crisis, and have no criminal intent”<sup>2</sup>

Sequence “whenever feasible” verbiage later within the body of the de-escalation requirement vs. as the lead to reinforce the importance of de-escalating

### Context

“De-escalation Options for Gaining Compliance” is state-mandated in both recruit training and annual in-service training, but APD’s SOP did not have an explicit requirement for officers to engage in de-escalation techniques. Effective July 9, the Use of Force SOP was updated in response to a June 16 Administrative Order issued by Mayor Bottoms to specify that, “in all interactions, officers will strive to employ de-escalation techniques taught by the training academy to utilize the least amount of force necessary.”

### Expected outcome

The objective of this recommendation is to ensure best-practice policy and language is incorporated in a de-escalation requirement, so that officers are obligated to minimize or eliminate the use of force.

1. San Francisco Police Department “DGO 5.01, III.C” (2016);  
2. San Francisco Police Department “DGO 5.01, I.C” (2016)



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Strengthen use of force continuum

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Strengthen proportionality requirement via an updated Use of Force continuum

Detail a Use of Force continuum with specificity that can be visually represented as a matrix (see example on following page)

Create defined levels of resistance by a subject that warrant differences in response, from least to most resistance

Detail specific types of force, arranged from least to most force, that can be used in response to specific levels of resistance, making clear that force can only be used to carry out specific law enforcement objectives

Provide specific examples and definitions for resistance/types of force where appropriate

### Add corresponding definitions to supplement revisions

E.g., “deadly force”, “imminent threat”; subject levels of resistance

Purpose

Policy

Responsibilities

**Action**

**Definitions**

### Context

APD has dedicated SOPs that outline procedures for using specific weapons and tools and outlines that force must be “reasonable and necessary”, but does not have a comprehensive policy that outlines how to use force proportionally in response to specific situations or levels of resistance.

### Expected outcome

The objective of this recommendation is to define unambiguous policies that ensure any force used is proportional to the circumstances.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Develop use of force continuum

**EXAMPLE**

The Use of Force policy for Camden PD defines a Use of Force continuum with enough specificity on which types of force can be used in response to escalating levels of subject resistance that it can be captured visually as a matrix. A similar visual can be incorporated in APD’s SOP and used as a tool to reinforce training.

	LEAST FORCE										MOST FORCE
	Police presence	Verbal control techniques	Physical contact	Holding techniques	Compliance techniques	Control instruments	Physical force	Impact weapons	Canine apprehension	Conducted energy devices	Deadly force (incl. firearm)
<b>Cooperative person</b>	●	●									
<b>Passive resistor</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●					
<b>Active resistor</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		
<b>Threatening assailant</b> Subject “use force, threatens to use force, or otherwise acts in an aggressive manner” that risks injury	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
<b>Active assailant</b> Subject poses “imminent danger”	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

As last resort

Source: Camden County Police Department “CCV3C2 Use of Force Policy; 13-14.” (2013)



# RECOMMENDATION: Restrict deadly force

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Update existing deadly force restrictions

Specify that deadly force should only be used as a “last resort” and only when “necessary”<sup>1</sup>

Elevate the guardrail for when officers can use deadly force by replacing the current “serious bodily harm” threshold with “imminent threat to life” or “imminent danger of death”<sup>2</sup>

Mandate “strict requirements” for officers to meet before using deadly force, including attempting de-escalation, issuing verbal warnings, exhausting feasible alternatives<sup>2</sup>

Outline explicit prohibitions for using deadly force, including fleeing persons/vehicles that do not pose “imminent threat to life” of the public or officers and persons who are threats only to themselves or property<sup>3</sup>

### Update corresponding definitions to supplement revisions

E.g., “deadly force”, “imminent threat”;

1. Chicago Police Department “G03-02 Use of Force, III.C” (2020);  
2. Camden County Police Department “CCV3C2 Use of Force Policy; 22” (2013);  
3. Chicago Police Department “G03-02 Use of Force, III.C.5” (2020)

Purpose

Policy

Responsibilities

**Action**

**Definitions**

## Context

APD’s current deadly force policy restricts use to apprehend “suspected felons” when officers believe the suspect poses an “immediate threat of serious bodily injury”, or when a suspect’s escape “would create a continuing danger of serious physical harm to any person”. In comparison to other model SOPs, APD’s policy does not detail additional restrictions or considerations to reduce the likelihood that an officer uses deadly force.

## Expected outcome

The objective of this recommendation is to provide additional safeguards and restrictions on the most severe type of force that an officer can use.



# RECOMMENDATION: Establish duty to intervene

- Purpose
- Policy
- Responsibilities
- Action**
- Definitions

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Add a peer duty to intervene

Require that any officer (not just supervisor) intervene and stop excessive or unnecessary use of force when it occurs

### Add a non-retaliation requirement in cases of intervention

Prohibit retaliation, interference, intimidation, or coercion against employees who intervene or report inappropriate uses of force

### Update reporting requirements and chain of command review policies to incorporate peer interventions

Define a process for reporting inappropriate uses of force to a supervisor (verbal and written) and a corresponding escalation and investigation processes up chain of command<sup>3</sup>

Source: Chicago Police Department "G03-02 Use of Force, III.C" (2020); Camden County Police Department "CCV3C2 Use of Force Policy; 22" (2013); Chicago Police Department "G03-02 Use of Force, III.C.5" (2020)

## Context

APD's SOPs have a broad supervisor obligation to intervene "when the conduct of any employee is contrary to the public interest or the good reputation or proper operation of the Department", but there was no explicit peer duty to intervene to prevent unnecessary force at the start of our effort. Effective July 9, the Use of Force SOP was updated in response to a June 16 Administrative Order issued by Mayor Bottoms to specify that, "any police officer present and observing another police officer using force that is beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, safely intercede to prevent the use of such force. Officers shall immediately report these observations to an on-duty supervisor.

## Expected outcome

The objective of this recommendation is to foster accountability and an officer culture that rejects excessive force.



# Governance

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

**GOVERNANCE**

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY





Photo: Luca Endi

# Governance

Effective governance involves the employment of several different internal and external mechanisms. These include cohesive policies and guidance, consistent management, well-defined processes and decision-rights, and proper oversight and accountability. Due to the time-constrained nature of this work—and to maximize the impact of the recommendations made—this group chose to focus on oversight and accountability of the APD through changes to the mandate of Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB).

The ACRB, founded in 2007, provides citizens with independent investigations and decisions on APD and Atlanta Corrections Department officer misconduct complaints and makes reactive recommendations on departmental policies, training, and practices. Several inefficiencies in ACRB’s processes and relationships with APD and the community e.g., long case resolution time and high misalignment in sustained cases were identified by this focus group. The second goal of this effort involved determining means of mitigating these issues.

A wide ranging fact base was used in this work. This group examined current ACRB processes, reviewed best practice examples from oversight boards in other cities e.g.,

“ ”

**People want to jump to the changes, but it takes time. It’s going to take every aspect of the community being involved to make this change.**

*Rev. Angie Johnson,  
Central UMC and Fearless Dialogues*

Washington DC and Detroit, and identified ways of closing the gaps. Recommendations were further refined through interviews with ACRB and APD’s Office of Professional Standards (OPS) leadership to identify pain points and their suggested mitigation approaches. All of these inputs were considered by the group in developing this final set of recommendations.

With these recommendations in place, it is imperative to take immediate steps to set up the ACRB in a position to hold the APD accountable to the expectations of the community in instances of inappropriate actions by officers. Tactically, this will involve rolling out a set of changes to ACRB ordinance and APD SOPs and creating a working team of key stakeholders e.g., OPS, legal department to commence implementation.

## GOVERNANCE

# Recommendation overview

- 10** Increase accountability for APD and ACRB to conduct investigations and provide responses in a timely manner
- 11** Mandate 3rd party independent review for recommended actions on ACRB/ APD disagreements on complaints
- 12** Create a memorandum of understanding between OPS and ACRB to define disciplinary action reporting to ACRB and investigatory data exchange between both agencies
- 13** Increase period-in-office of OPS leadership to a minimum of two years
- 14** Mandate ACRB review of changes to APD SOPs which affect citizens, at least 30 days in advance; establish a 3rd party recourse for disagreements
- 15** Increase ACRB funding by \$0.4-1.3M to enable improvement in effectiveness of processes
- 16** Improve community awareness through direct information dissemination and awareness campaigns e.g., APD officer cards, cruiser decals, and board member community engagement
- 17** Extend ACRB mediation program to OPS for lower level complaints e.g., courtesy, failure to communicate



# Approach for our recommendations

Recommendations were tailored to address the interactions the ACRB has with both the APD and members of the Atlanta community. In each group, sub-focus areas were addressed by answering key questions outlined below.



## Case resolution

- What is the current APD response time to ACRB determinations?
- Why is the response time longer than ACRB ordinance mandates?
- How can the response time and APD/ACRB disagreements be reduced?

## OPS relationship

- How do OPS and ACRB interact over the course of a complaint timeline?
- How can we improve the efficiency of this interaction?

## SOP review

- How much oversight does ACRB have of APD SOP changes?
- How can we ensure ACRB and community input prior to key APD SOP changes?

## Outreach

- What is the community's awareness and trust of ACRB's mandate and processes?
- How can we effectively increase community awareness and trust?

## Mediation

- What mediation options are there for lower level complaints?
- How can these options be expanded to increase community/officer participation and understanding?

**1**  
**Oversight and Accountability**

**ACRB**

**2**  
**Outreach and mediation**

**Community**

RECOMMENDATION GROUP:

# Improving case resolution process

10

11



### Context

APD and ACRB’s opinions on use of force complaints differ (60% for sustained cases in 2019) and APD’s decision—based on OPS investigations—is final for all cases. ACRB notifies APD of its recommendations post-adjudication; existing ACRB ordinance mandates a response from the APD within 30 days, status update within 45 days, and final response within 90 days; but this has not been enforced in practice. In 2019, APD gave final responses within about 136 days.

### Expected outcome

Reduction in APD response time to ACRB recommendations and increase in ACRB/APD complaint alignment to provide verdicts to the public sooner.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Increase accountability for APD and ACRB to conduct investigations and provide responses in a timely manner<sup>1</sup>

For APD non-compliance with the 30-day response to sustained charge letters, develop a fine system that transfers funds from APD to ACRB

ACRB to begin communicating preliminary findings to OPS on cases prior to the board determination letter to better align investigation times

Require all Priority 1 investigations be completed by ACRB and APD within 180 days of when the first file is opened, failure to complete in that timeline resulting in concession of findings to the other organization

#### Mandate 3rd party review for ACRB/APD disagreements on complaints<sup>1</sup>

Mandate 3rd party independent review to settle disagreements in final ACRB/APD complaint investigation decisions and provide impartial recommendation to APD Chief (see subsequent pages)

APD

1  
Oversight and Accountability

ACRB

2  
Outreach and mediation

Community

1. Changes to APD SOPs and/or ACRB ordinance required

# 5 options to resolve APD/ACRB complaint misalignment

## RECOMMENDATION

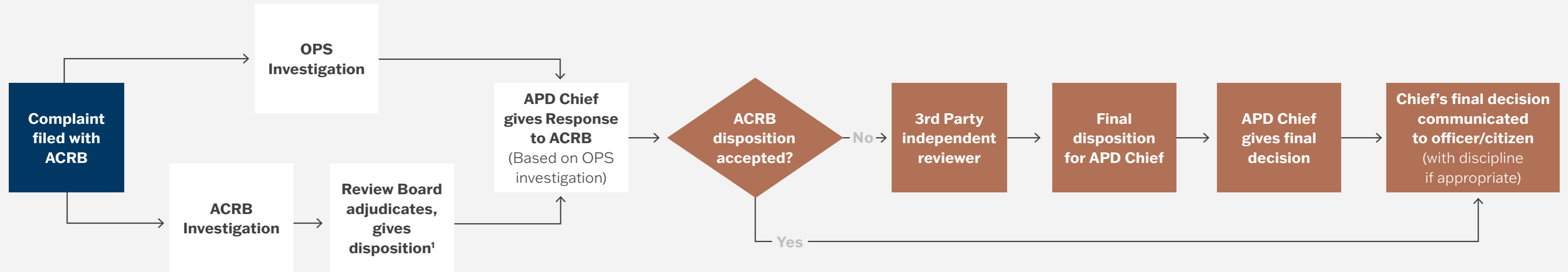
Mandate 3rd party review for ACRB/APD disagreements on complaints

		ACRB level of authority			ABSOLUTE
		LIMITED			
<b>CURRENT STATE: OPS-led process</b>		<b>ACRB and OPS misalignment presented to City Council</b>	<b>ACRB and OPS misalignment reviewed by 3rd Party</b>	<b>ACRB makes final recommendations vs OPS</b>	<b>ACRB/3rd Party makes binding recommendations</b>
Description	OPS and ACRB develop recommendations in parallel, but OPS recommendations are key driver to APD Chief decisions	OPS and ACRB develop recommendations in parallel, when recommendations are not aligned, presentation to City Council required for final decision	OPS and ACRB develop recommendations in parallel, when recommendations are not aligned, 3rd Party reviews to provide impartial recommendation to APD Chief	ACRB recommendations go to APD Chief as official recommendation rather than OPS'	ACRB or 3rd Party have final say on recommendations and findings are binding
Trade-offs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited ability by ACRB to influence decisions</li> <li>OPS decisions drive outcomes in cases</li> <li>Misaligned decisions get <b>limited transparency</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited ability by ACRB to influence decisions</li> <li>OPS decisions drive outcomes in cases</li> <li>More transparency and accountability in misaligned decisions</li> </ul> <p><b>Recently approved by City Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balances level of influence between OPS and ACRB</li> <li>Improves transparency and bias</li> <li>Findings are still only recommendations</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommended</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowers ACRB on cases with citizen complaints</li> <li>May create challenges with <b>Consent Decree</b></li> <li>Will require coordination on timing of investigation and standards for discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shifts decision from APD to ACRB/3rd Party creating external accountability</li> <li>Requires substantial changes to City Code</li> <li>Likely requires change of APD status under civil service code</li> </ul>

# Proposed ACRB process for 3rd party arbitration

## RECOMMENDATION

### Mandate 3rd party review for ACRB/APD disagreements on complaints



1. Dispositions could be sustained, not sustained, exonerated, unfounded

● New additions to case resolution process



# Key ACRB ordinance changes proposed to address 3rd party review

## RECOMMENDATION

# Mandate 3rd party review for ACRB/APD disagreements on complaints

### Selection

A 3rd party Reviewer will be selected upon agreement by the ACRB and the APD; in instances where the ACRB and APD are unable to agree on a 3rd Party selection, the City Council will appoint one

### Compensation

3rd party reviewer will be paid equally out of ACRB and APD budgets

### Transparency

Upon completion of review, the 3rd party reviewer's recommendation and ensuing decision by the Chief of Police is to be made available to the public

Source: ACRB "Resolution review proposal" (2020)



Photo: Luca Eandi



Photo: Luca Eandi



**RECOMMENDATION GROUP:**

# Ensuring improved OPS collaboration

12

13



**Context**

When APD/ACRB opinions are aligned, officers are disciplined. However, details of disciplinary action are not always communicated to the ACRB. In addition, there is no formal exchange of investigatory data between OPS and ACRB. APD’s decision is fully based on OPS findings, meaning OPS investigations sometimes do not include additional complaints filed by ACRB on behalf of complainants. Lastly, high OPS leadership rotation—12–18 months—impacts the continuity of ACRB/APD relations.

**Expected outcome**

Increased collaboration and exchange of information between OPS and ACRB leading to greater efficiency and thoroughness of both investigative efforts.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Ensure consistent reporting of disciplinary action and investigatory data exchange between ACRB/OPS**

Create a memorandum of understanding between OPS and ACRB to ensure consistent reporting of resultant APD disciplinary action and exchange of investigatory data with ACRB

**Increase continuity of OPS/ACRB relations<sup>1</sup>**

Increase period-in-office of OPS leadership to a minimum of two years for continuity

**APD**

**1**  
**Oversight and Accountability**

**ACRB**

**2**  
Outreach and mediation

Community

1. Changes to APD SOPs and/or ACRB ordinance required

**RECOMMENDATION GROUP:**

# Improving SOP oversight and process effectiveness

14

15



**Context**

ACRB has authority to make recommendations on APD policies, training, and practices. However, this authority is reactive; no mandate exists ensuring the board is notified prior to any policy changes. The ACRB has identified financial gaps that need to be filled to fully achieve its mandate. These include human resource needs e.g., independent legal counsel, additional investigator, salary parity, technology needs e.g., audio equipment, printing/copying equipment, and other needs e.g., office space renovation, creation of APD officer clearinghouse.

**Expected outcome**

- Increased involvement of the ACRB and community in key APD SOP changes prior to rollout
- Shorter investigative timeline and generally improved effectiveness of ACRB processes

1. Changes to APD SOPs and/or ACRB ordinance required

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Strengthen ACRB oversight of APD SOP changes<sup>1</sup>**

Mandate ACRB review of changes to APD SOPs which affect citizens, at least 30 days in advance; establish a 3rd party recourse for disagreements with APD (see details on subsequent page)

**Increase ACRB funding to appropriate levels to meet operational and capital needs**

Increase ACRB funding by \$0.4-1.3M to enable improvement in effectiveness of ACRB processes (see details on subsequent page)

**APD**

**1**  
**Oversight and Accountability**

**ACRB**

**2**  
Outreach and mediation

**Community**

# Proposed approach to ACRB review of APD SOPs

## RECOMMENDATION

### Strengthen ACRB oversight of APD SOP changes

#### SOPs in scope

APD.SOP.2010	Work Rules	APD.SOP.3042	Electronic Control Devices
APD.SOP.2011	General Conduct	APD.SOP.3050	Pursuit Policy
APD.SOP.2020	Disciplinary Process	APD.SOP.3060	Reports and Report Writing
APD.SOP.2022	Early Warning System	APD.SOP.3061	Methods of Clearing a Crime
APD.SOP.2060	Extra Jobs	APD.SOP.3062	In-Vehicle Computers
APD.SOP.2070	Recruitment and Hiring Process	APD.SOP.3063	Accounting for Field Reports
APD.SOP.2080	Training	APD.SOP.3065	Field Interviews
APD.SOP.2300	Department Employees Cooperation with the Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB)	APD.SOP.3066	Bias Crime Data Reporting
APD.SOP.3010	Use of Force	APD.SOP.3067	Gang Data Reporting
APD.SOP.3020	Search and Seizure	APD.SOP.3080	General Procedures
APD.SOP.3030	Arrest Procedures	APD.SOP.3082	Mentally Ill
APD.SOP.3031	Repeat Offender	APD.SOP.3083	Family Violence
APD.SOP.3032	Felons in Possession of Firearms	APD.SOP.3084	Disabled Persons
APD.SOP.3033	Repeat Offenders Tracking Unit	APD.SOP.3089	Supervisor Notification
APD.SOP.3040	Weapons	APD.SOP.3131	Mobile Video and Audio Recording
APD.SOP.3041	Investigation Police Discharges Towards Animals	APD.SOP.3133	BWC (Body Worn Cameras)
		APD.SOP.3190	Juvenile Procedures
		APD.SOP.4010	Traffic
		APD.SOP.4043	Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT)

## Proposed process

APD leadership notifies ACRB when a policy change has been drafted, but prior to implementation, allowing the ACRB to provide comment and recommendations

Allotted response period should be at least 30 days under normal circumstances

- Under extenuating circumstances, notice should be provided to the ACRB with a 5-day review and comment period
- In an emergency situation, notice should be provided to the ACRB that a policy change has occurred

**RECOMMENDATION**

Increase ACRB funding to appropriate levels to meet operational and capital needs

Category	Items	
<b>Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Legal Counsel—first needed FTE</li> <li>• Additional investigator—second needed FTE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary parity for ACRB staff</li> <li>• Executive Assistant—third needed FTE</li> <li>• Receptionist</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audio equipment for board meetings</li> <li>• Printing—brochures, cards, activity books, reports, complaint form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webmaster and server</li> <li>• Copier and services</li> <li>• Transcription</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of officer clearinghouse data for APD Roster</li> <li>• Community sentiment surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediator Funding</li> <li>• Mass-media consulting</li> <li>• Renovation of offices</li> </ul>

**ACRB proposed a budget of ~\$1.3M to achieve full potential**

**\$0.6M**

Incremental operational investment<sup>1</sup>

**\$0.7M**

Incremental capital investment<sup>1,2</sup>

1. Not including FY 21 approved funding. 2. Ninth floor renovation costs. Source: ACRB "Dream budget" (2020)

## RECOMMENDATION GROUP:

# Enhancing outreach and mediation

16

17



### Context

Surveys indicate only a fraction of the population is aware of ACRB's existence. Among the population that is aware, lack of trust and adequate penalty are common concerns. The ACRB launched a mediation program which resolves lower level complaints for interested citizens and officers. However, this program is limited to complaints received directly by ACRB. Extending program to all OPS cases would increase long-term community/APD goodwill.

### Expected outcome

- Increased awareness of the ACRB's offerings by citizens more likely to need its services
- Greater community-APD goodwill and understanding due to mediation

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Improve community awareness through targeted outreach

Conduct direct information dissemination and awareness campaigns, specifically:

- Create and encourage the use of officer cards with ACRB contact details on the back side
- Evaluate adding vehicle decals advertising ACRB with contact details to police cruisers
- Require Board members to conduct independent community engagement outside ACRB-organized events

#### Extend ACRB mediation program to OPS for lower level complaints<sup>1</sup>

Encourage the use of ACRB's mediation program by OPS, allowing interested officers and citizens on OPS's complaints to be referred to ACRB for mediation

APD

1  
Oversight and  
Accountability

ACRB

2  
Outreach  
and mediation

Community

1. Changes to APD SOPs and/or ACRB ordinance required

**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Improve community awareness through targeted outreach

16



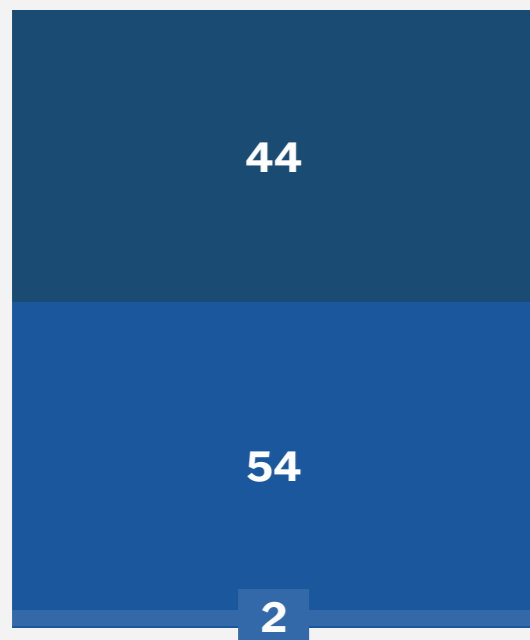
## Current community sentiment on the ACRB suggests need for more outreach

Have you heard of the Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB)?

If you ever had a complaint against a police or corrections officer, would you file a complaint with the agency?

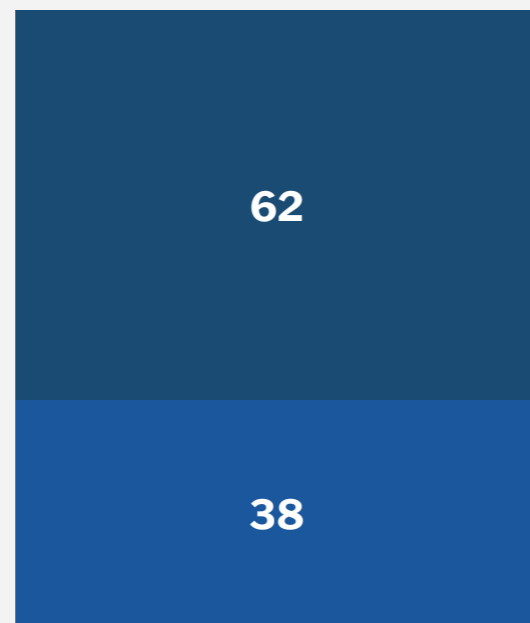
If you would not file a complaint with the ACRB against an officer who behaved inappropriately, why?

**% Respondents**



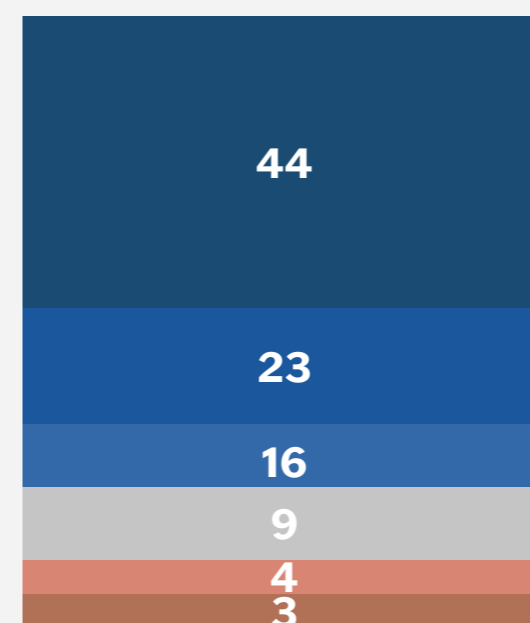
■ Yes ■ No ■ No response

**% Respondents**



■ Yes ■ No

**% Respondents**



■ Lack of trust ■ Believes nothing will happen ■ Concern about retaliation  
■ Process too long ■ Lawyer advised not to ■ Criminal charges

“ ”

The results are an indication that the agency will need to increase its current outreach efforts, develop additional community engagement opportunities, and continue to build strategic partnerships within the community.

*Atlanta Citizen Review Board*

Source: ACRB "Community survey report" (2019)

# Community Partnerships

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

GOVERNANCE

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY





“ ”

**With truth telling, there also have to be guidelines and foundations for confronting the harsh realities they see. They have to agree... there needs to be honesty and wanting to move beyond what is.**

*Dr. Rosetta Ross,  
Spelman College*

# Community Partnerships

In its ideal state, community policing aims to place the right responders at the right place and at the right time, ensuring the deployment of LEOs only in situations that warrant such response, thus reducing the risk of use of force and unnecessary escalation. Equally importantly, it bridges the gap between the police and the community by creating partnerships in response to certain situations and ensuring mutual understanding and collaboration.

In line with this thinking, the goals of this focus group were to identify crisis and non-crisis situations where law enforcement, currently first/main response, can be substituted by alternative responders and determine avenues to increase the footprint of incumbent alternative response organizations.

Recommendations were developed by defining response resource allocation aspirational goals along the dimensions of situation types (e.g., homelessness) and response types (e.g., LEO-led vs alternative-led and mapping as appropriate). These recommendations were aimed at defining a response continuum. In addition, deeper dives into already-launched organizations within the continuum informed further recommendations to ensure continued growth and expansion of least harm response in the city.

The recommendations put forth should guide a long-term strategy for building and expanding the alternative response continuum in Atlanta. Tactical next steps should involve the creation of a working group comprising the APD, broader City of Atlanta, alternative response organizations, and other key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive implementation plan. This plan should include the implementation of the target alternative response continuum, transformation of APD performance evaluation systems to ensure that unnecessary arrests are de-incentivized and eligible offenders are diverted to appropriate programs, and launching of a fund and database to support the non-profit organizations in the alternative response continuum.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

# Recommendation overview

- 18** Evaluate and augment current 911 dispatcher process to identify situations eligible for alternate response
- 19** Develop a plan to enable alternative first responders for situations where other expertise is beneficial and/or police presence is not critical
- 20** Commit to eliminating performance evaluation systems and disciplinary actions that incentivize officers to make unnecessary arrests
- 21** Commit to incentivizing diversion and de-incentivizing certain categories of arrest
- 22** Mandate alternative response training e.g., pre-arrest diversion for all officers in all zones

- 23** Create a working group with key stakeholders to implement target alternative response continuum
- 24** Ensure continued support and expansion of prevention, diversion, and intervention programs e.g., Pre-Arrest Diversion, @Promise youth center, and similar community-focused programs
- 25** Create a fund and central database for organizations supporting non-LEO response to formally connect with APD and apply for funding from the City
- 26** Commit to planning out the creation of a central behavioral health crisis response center in partnership with other local jurisdictions





# Approach for our recommendations

Recommendations were centered around two broad goals: defining and empowering a continuum of least harm response and expanding current and new programs within that continuum. Deep dives on programs like the Pre-Arrest Diversion initiative and @Promise Youth Center provided further context to guide the second set of recommendations.

## 911 situation

- Signal code a
- Signal code b
- Signal code c
- Signal code x
- ...

Example:  
57 – Noise Complaint

## 1 Define Continuum

LEO ○ ————— Response continuum ————— ○ Community-led response

**Law enforcement officers act as the primary responders,** independently of issue at hand or underlying root causes

**Mix of law enforcement officers and 3rd party organizations act as the primary responders** for eligible situations

LEO can act as first responders and then call in specialized resources; one or both parties dispatched simultaneously

**Community organizations act as the primary responders** in situations deemed eligible

LEO dispatched to support based on call type, situation specifics

LEO involvement/arrest occurs when all alternatives have been exhausted

## 2 Expand programs in Continuum

Pre-Arrest Diversion (PAD)

@Promise

Other & New



RECOMMENDATION GROUP:

# Evaluate and augment dispatch process and plan out enablement

## Define Continuum



Signal code a

Signal code b

Signal code c

Signal code x

...

## Expand programs in Continuum

PAD

@P

Other & New

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Evaluate and augment current 911 dispatcher process to identify situations eligible for alternate response

Review call signals to identify situation types most relevant for non-LEO response alternatives (see examples on deep dive)

Thoroughly assess current triaging procedures and develop decision processes for the collection of context-specific information to inform appropriate dispatch (see example on LAPD deep dive)

#### Develop a plan to enable alternative first responders for situations where other expertise is beneficial and/or police presence is not critical, specifically:

For 911 calls, establishing direct lines of communication between 911 responders and community organizations to facilitate dispatch

For situations with officers on site, facilitating connection to/dispatch of community resources in support of officers on site

Creating and ensuring continued community awareness and change management communications of these broader changes in call responses

### Context

APD is dispatched as first responder for many 911 situations where alternative responders may be more appropriate. Some 911 signal codes are broadly defined, indicating the need for further refinement of the triaging process to aid operators and ensure appropriate dispatching.

### Expected outcome

- Increased use of co-responders and alternative responders for eligible situations
- Improved effectiveness of triaging and dispatching processes



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Evaluate and augment current 911 dispatcher process

## Deep dive: APD responds to 6 categories of 911 situations

Priority level

HIGH

LOW

Category

**Priority 0  
Immediate  
emergency response**

**Priority 2  
Expedited response**

**Priority 3  
Routine response**

**Priority 4  
Non-emergency  
response**

**Priority 5  
Tele serve calls**

**Priority 6  
Referrals and  
court calls**

Description

Immediate presence of police is **essential** to save a life, prevent serious injury, or arrest a violent felon

Immediate presence of the police may save a life, prevent serious injury, prevent major property loss, or lead to the arrest of a felon

Require the presence of the police but do not meet the criteria for Priority 2

Require the presence of police but time is not critical

Can be handled by telephone

Do not require police presence

Examples

- Kidnapping/Hostage

- Silent alarm
- Burglary
- Shots fired
- Shot spotter call

- Fire alarm
- Welfare/elderly check
- Disorderly children
- Demented person
- Fireworks
- Intoxicated driver

- Abandoned auto
- Recovered auto
- Carbon monoxide
- Criminal trespass
- Illegal parking
- Illegal alcohol/drugs

- Situations where suspect is not on scene and time lapses are >1hr
- Lost/stolen checks and credit cards
- Harassing phone calls

- Operator's discretion

NO SIGNALS PRE-CATEGORIZED AS PRIORITY 5 OR 6  
Source: APD.SOP.6010 Communications (2018)



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Evaluate and augment current 911 dispatcher process

## Deep dive: Most 911 calls not pre-categorized and up to operator's discretion; potential for alternative/co-responder response if triaging revamped

### Priority 0

21 Kidnapping/Hostage

### Priority 2

2S Silent alarm

6R/B Burglary (residence/business)

25 Shots fired

25S Shot spotter call

25T Training shots fired

29 Fight in progress

30 Explosion

32 Open door/window

36 Robbery in progress

44 Robbery

### Priority 3

2A Audible alarm

3 Fire alarm

15 Welfare check/elderly check

23 Disorderly children

24 Demented person

26 Fireworks

27 Intoxicated driver

28 Intoxicated person

31 Wires down

33 Structure fire

34 Vehicle fire

35 Wood/Grass fire

40 Animal call

41 Auto accident

43 Hit and run accident

45 Larceny

### Priority 4

1A Abandoned Auto

1R Recovered Auto

4 Carbon Monoxide

7 Criminal Trespass

14 Shelter Run

16 Emergency Message

37 Illegal Parking

38A Illegal Alcohol

38D Illegal Drugs

39 Info for Officer

42 Burglary

### Priority 5

N/A

### Priority 6

N/A

### Uncategorized

2P Police Alarm

8G Out at Municipal Court

9G Out on Admin. Call

10 Wash Down

11G Out at City Shop

12G Out at Grady Detention

13G Out at Traffic Court

16G Out at Precinct

17 Lockout

18 Tree Down

18G Out at Radio Shop

19 Water Problem

19G Out at Jail

20 Contagious Disease

22 Against Depart. Policy

45V Vehicle Theft

46 Pedestrian Struck by Vehicle

47 Person Injured/Down

48 Person Dead

49 Rape

50 Person Shot

51 Person Stabbed

52 Found Property

53 Suicide

54 Suspicious Person

54P Suspicious Package

55 911 Hangup

56 Missing Person

57 Noise Complaint

58 Domestic Disturbance

59 Meet Officer, Now

60 Molesting

60A Child Abuse

61 Help Call-Non Police

62 Switch Radio/Zone

63 Officer Needs Help

64 Soliciting Sex

65 Gambling

66 Peeping Tom

67 Hold Radio Transmission

68 Person Screaming

69 Person Armed

70 Prowler

71 Public Indecency

72 Traffic Stop

73 Bomb Threat

74 Terrorist Incident

75 Air Rifle

76 Abandoned Child(ren)

77 Snatch Thief

78 Standby for Lookout

79 Stolen Vehicle in Progress

80 Gas Leak

81 Street/Sidewalk Hazard

82 Wagon Call

83 Wanted Person/Escaped

84 Work Traffic

84D Aircraft Down

84S Aircraft Incident

85 Wrecker Request

86 Vandalism

87 Person Trapped

88 Extra Job

89 Directed Patrol

90 Obscene Phone Calls

91 Community Policing

92 Rescue Person(s)

93 Odor of Smoke

95 Check and Advise

● Identified as potentially eligible for alternate response; will require case-specific triaging



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Evaluate and augment current 911 dispatcher process

## Deep dive: Example response approach for co-responder model—public awareness ensures 911 callers have adequate contextual information prior to engagement

**LOS ANGELES**

LAPD Mental Evaluation Unit's fliers provide an information checklist and **response expectations to prepare caller for engagement**

- Caller's name
- Address for response
- Nature of the crisis (Why response needed)
- Prior or current violent behavior
- Weapons or access to weapons
- Name of family member in crisis
- Age of family member
- Height and weight of family member
- Clothing description of family member
- Current location of family member
- Diagnosis (Mental Health and/or Medical)
- Current medications (On or Off?)
- Drug use (current or past)
- Triggers (what upsets them?)
- State what has helped in previous police contacts
- Identify other persons in the residence or at the location

“ ”

- The 911 operator will dispatch uniformed patrol officers to your location
- Officers will detain your family member, which will include handcuffing and is for the safety of everyone, including your family member
- Officers will conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether a crime occurred
- Officers will conduct a preliminary mental health investigation to determine whether your family member is a danger to self, danger to other(s), or gravely disabled due to a mental illness
- Your statements and historical information are an important part of the mental health investigation
- Officers will inquire about any firearms or other deadly weapons, and in most cases will seize them for safe-keeping
- Officers will notify the Mental Evaluation Unit and a SMART unit (officer and clinician) will be dispatched if available

Source: LAPD MEU "911 Checklist" (2019)



RECOMMENDATION GROUP:

# Revise performance evaluation and alternative response training

## Define Continuum



Signal code a

Signal code b

Signal code c

Signal code x

...

Expand programs in Continuum

PAD

@P

Other & New

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Commit to addressing officer evaluation systems

Eliminate performance evaluation systems and disciplinary actions that incentivize officers to make unnecessary arrests

Ensure that APD performance evaluations incentivize eligible diversions and de-incentivize certain categories of arrests (see signal code deep dive)

#### Mandate pre-arrest diversion training for all officers in all zones

Ensure all sworn officers undergo pre-arrest diversion training at hiring and regularly afterwards

### Context

The APD's officer evaluation system does not incorporate pre-arrest diversion or other diversions but incentivizes arrests. The Pre-arrest Diversion Initiative provides a 2-hour training for officers; however, this training is not mandatory for all and occurs only once.

### Expected outcome

- Increased pre-arrest diversions and reduced arrests for quality of life, mental health, and minor juvenile offenses
- Freed-up APD resources to tackle more pressing public safety concerns



## RECOMMENDATION GROUP:

# Implement continuum and expand programs

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Implement the defined least harm continuum

Create a working group with APD, broader City of Atlanta, alternative response organizations, and other key stakeholders to implement the target alternative response continuum

#### Ensure continued support and expansion of prevention, diversion, and intervention programs

Provide consistent funding to ensure steady growth of PAD and @Promise

Evaluate eligibility for @Promise programming and revise/expand to make accessible for more youth (i.e. not only youth in the margins)

### Define Continuum



Signal code a

Signal code b

Signal code c

Signal code x

...

### Expand programs in Continuum

PAD

@P

Other & New

### Context

A comprehensive plan will be necessary to fully implement the defined least harm continuum. Programs like PAD—the Pre-arrest Diversion program which diverts and assists quality of life offenders—and the @Promise youth center—which diverts, intervenes, and seeks to prevent further criminal activity by at-risk youth—begin to address the challenges of implementing the least harm continuum. PAD recently received funding to expand from zones 5 and 6 to zones 1, 2, 3, and 4. The @Promise youth center is expanding from zone 1 to zones 3 and 4. However, further expansion and growth of these programs is necessary.

### Expected outcome

- Definition of a detailed roadmap to launch the least harm response continuum
- Expansion of PAD and @Promise programs without encumbrance of financial limitations
- Increase in pre-arrest diversions, reduction in juvenile recidivism





## RECOMMENDATION GROUP:

# Implement continuum and expand programs

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Create a fund and central database for organizations in continuum

Enable organizations supporting the least harm response continuum to formally connect with APD and apply for funding from the City

#### Commit to planning out the creation of a central behavioral health crisis response center

Plan out and launch a central crisis center to serve as base of operations for alternative responders, diversion programs, and APD non-LEO efforts

### Define Continuum



Signal code a

Signal code b

Signal code c

Signal code x

...

### Expand programs in Continuum

PAD

@P

Other & New

### Context

For a truly centralized and cohesive city-wide effort to expand and stabilize the least harm continuum of response, a couple needs are apparent:

- A means of connecting non-profits and other community based agencies in the continuum to APD and linking them to a central funding source from which to apply
- A central crisis center for offender assessment and crisis support and to facilitate walk-ins in addition to reported situations.

### Expected outcome

- Increased APD—Non-profit community-based collaboration and understanding
- Increased access to funding for all non-profits/ community organizations within the continuum
- Greater efficiency and effectiveness of diversion programs due to centralized operations

# Reporting and Transparency

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

GOVERNANCE

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

**REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY**





“ ”

**As a scientist, we have to have the data. We need to identify what success looks like, define our measurement, and then figure out where we are.**

*Dr. Bryant Marks,  
Morehouse College*

# Reporting and Transparency

Transparency has long been lauded as critical practice to developing positive relations between the police and the community. The objective of this group was to develop a high level strategy for utilizing data and improving transparency through reporting. There are two primary benefits for the City of Atlanta. First, increasing transparency will build trust between APD and the broader Atlanta community, catalyzing the journey towards reconciliation. Second, effectively leveraging data will enable APD to shape policies and interventions that more effectively lead to higher performance.

We developed our recommendations by first reviewing the current state of APD and then comparing the department to best in class benchmarks to identify areas for improvement. Our review of the APD included current and planned processes and infrastructure for data collection, analytics and reporting. For benchmarks, we evaluated publicly accessible information from other US police departments as well as federal policing guidelines, grassroots policy recommendations and academic work.

The recommendations include a combination of immediately implementable tactical actions and longer term transformational changes. Beyond the recommendations included in the section, APD must work to promote a culture around valuing data and public accountability. These recommendations will take time and effort to implement, and may require the adoption of a transformation office or a third party to help with the implementation. However, these efforts will be worth it as they will enable lasting improvements to APD’s relationship with the community.

## REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY

# Recommendation overview

- 27** Revise data collection process to ensure completeness of data and encourage compliance with data collection policies
- 28** Digitize and structure current and recent records so that they can be analyzed and reported
- 29** Implement structural and process changes to integrate data across departments while preserving privacy and integrity of APD operations
- 30** Invest in deeper analytics to implement data-driven decision making
- 31** Ensure public accessibility to current and future data disclosures
- 32** Build and implement an interactive use of force data dashboard
- 33** Ensure data are true and complete through 3rd party data audits



# Approach for our recommendations

In order to increase transparency through reporting, it is important to evaluate each step of the process from data collection through reporting. In addition to these sequential process steps, a set of maintenance and audit practices should be in place to ensure data integrity. In order to frame the recommendations, we have provided some descriptions and key questions to be answered about each of the process elements.

## Description

Capturing a record within each respective data system of all relevant information associated with an incident

## Key questions

- Does the data collected capture the information needed to adequately inform the public?

Combining data from different data systems into a unified dataset

- Is data aggregated in a way to facilitate further analysis and visualization?
- Is data stored such that necessary stakeholders have access?

Transforming and modeling raw data to glean useful insights

- Which policy reforms, training curriculum designs, preventative interventions, etc. should be guided by data analysis?

Communicating models and insights to relevant stakeholders

- Do data visualizations and reports adequately inform the public?
- Is the data detailed and reliable enough to hold APD accountable?

Storing data and ensuring data integrity

- Is the data complete and trustworthy?
- Is there a single, centrally managed, source of truth?



**Collection**

**Integration**

**Analysis**

**Reporting**

**Maintenance  
and Audit**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Revise use of force data collection process

27

**Context**

Complete and accurate data collection is the lifeblood of an effective data strategy. Therefore, the first step in improving transparency through reporting is to improve the quality of the raw data input. The current process in place involves numerous manual steps, and limits the ability to structure data for incident level integration across departments. Although APD is in the process of implementing Mark43, a public safety software platform that should reduce the number of manual process steps pertaining to data collection and integration, there are still some additional gaps to address.

**Expected outcome**

The objective of this recommendation is to ensure raw data will be complete and adequately structured for integration, enabling subsequent analysis and reporting.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Revise data collection process to ensure completeness of data and encourage compliance with data collection policies**

Revise input forms in order to ensure all relevant data is collected to build advanced analytics and reporting capabilities

Coordinate among departments to ensure consistency in language and identifiers used to describe incidents

- E.g., the “incident id” should be the same across crime analysis division and police academy

Revise the data collection process such that it encourages high compliance rates

- E.g., current policy specifies that officers should complete incident reports by the end of the shift; however, an officer may forget details of an incident at the beginning of their shift if he or she does not log the incident until the end of the shift



Collection

Integration

Analysis

Reporting

Maintenance and Audit

**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Digitize and structure manual records

28

**Context**

Under current processes, APD systematically collects, digitizes and organizes arrest data and many associated details. However, data pertaining to use of force, investigations and disciplinary actions is recorded manually and is difficult to analyze and report. Once new analysis and reporting tools are developed and implemented, APD will need data to analyze and report. Failing to retroactively digitize and structure recent use of force data will limit the usefulness of any new tools until sufficient data is collected.

**Expected outcome**

This recommendation will lead to two primary benefits. First, it will unlock a historical view of recent use of force performance data, providing context around APD's improvement as future data is captured. Second, it will lead to immediate usefulness of new reporting and analytics tools by having input data ready for use.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Digitize and structure current and recent records so that they can be analyzed and reported**

Include relevant records to enable dashboard analysis, including 911 calls, arrests, use of force incidents, investigations, injuries and demographic information

Develop a consistent structure for digitizing records so that they can be integrated across departments

Prioritize the digitization of most recent records



Collection

Integration

Analysis

Reporting

Maintenance and Audit

**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Integrate data across APD departments

29

**Context**

Police work is complex, interconnected, and at times requires boundaries to be erected in order to preserve the integrity of operations. These factors lead to intentional siloing of data, resulting in relevant use of force data being spread across multiple departments within APD, with each set of stakeholders being limited in what they can access. This presents a challenge to implementing an effective data analytics and reporting strategy as effective strategy requires integration of data from across departments.

**Expected outcome**

The goal of this recommendation is to ensure two things. First, that datasets will be complete. And second, that a data and analytics team will have the capability to analyze data and is free of any conflicts of interest resulting from seeing data across departments. The combination of these two factors enables interdepartmental analysis and reporting.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Implement structural and process changes to integrate data across departments while preserving privacy and integrity of APD operations**

In the short term, implement processes (such as interdepartmental forums) to consolidate use of force data across divisions (e.g., arrests, use of force incidents, investigations), enabling analysis and more comprehensive reporting

- E.g., Given current level of integration, we could not answer a question such as “what percentage of 911 calls for a suspicious person resulted in an officer using force?”

Commit to building a centralized data analytics team to enable coordination across departments once program is mature

Commit to reviewing Mark43 implementation to ensure the architecture is sufficient to support the additional analytics and reporting

- E.g., are consistent language and identifiers used across departments to describe the same subject?



Collection

**Integration**

Analysis

Reporting

Maintenance and Audit



**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Commit to analytics-driven decision making

30

**Context**

Across industries, leveraging data and analytics has led to improved decision making. Data collection and integration enable APD to invest in deeper analytics to improve decision making. There are numerous areas in which APD could leverage data analytics, including but not limited to: policy and SOP development, targeted interventions such as additional preventative training for select officers, compliance initiatives, strategic investment in communities, and officer placement.

**Expected outcome**

Building out more robust analytics capabilities will lead to more thoughtful insights being gleaned from data and included in reporting and decision making. It will also enable APD to both proactively address expected concerns, and more effectively respond to real time challenges.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Invest in deeper analytics to implement data-driven decision making**

Conduct a comprehensive review to identify areas where advanced analytics can improve decision making and reporting

- E.g., identifying trends in specific use of force reports for specific call types, leading to reviews of policy and training protocol

Ensure data and analytics team has the right data and capabilities to execute on analyses

- E.g., ensure the data on officer pair demographics, officer patrol jurisdiction and excessive force location are readily available for analysis



Collection

Integration

**Analysis**

Reporting

Maintenance and Audit

**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Ensure public accessibility to data

31

**Context**

Providing data to the public is only half of the formula for informing the public. In fact, APD already discloses a variety of data to the public. However, some are hard to find, and many people do not know they are available. In order to effectively build transparency, the public must also be aware of what data is available and how to access it.

**Expected outcome**

The objective of this recommendation is twofold: first, to ensure public awareness of which data is available and how to find it. And second, to provide a streamlined user experience for accessing APD performance data.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Ensure public accessibility to current and future data disclosures**

Consolidate publicly available data (e.g., training documents, use of force reports, SOPs, crime data) into a single portal on APD website

Make current use of force annual reports available online to the public

Implement an awareness campaign (e.g., place data portal front and center on the APD website or invest in marketing campaign)

Mandate a semi-annual reporting cadence, starting with reporting the use of force data from the first half of 2020



Collection

Integration

Analysis

**Reporting**

Maintenance and Audit

## RECOMMENDATION:

# Implement an interactive use of force data dashboard

32

### Context

As an institution designed to serve the public, the public should be intimately aware of APD performance – with use of force being an especially important performance dimension. Other major US cities have implemented interactive use of force data dashboards as a way to effectively communicate with the public. Some examples include the Chicago Police Department, the Portland Police Bureau and the Seattle Police Department.

### Expected outcome

The immediate outcome of the dashboard will be a better informed public. This will unlock second layer implications including: increased trust between the public and APD, a shared sense of prioritization (e.g., what APD is doing well vs. needs to improve), and the enablement of fact based discussions around police performance in Atlanta. However, it is important to recognize that use of force is only one component of overall police performance. In order to holistically evaluate police performance, it is critically important to consider a set of metrics and measures that comprehensively describe the roles and responsibilities of the police.

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Build and implement an interactive use of force data dashboard

The use of force dashboard should include the following elements

- Summary
- Interactive detail pages:
  - UoF historical trends (i.e. total calls, arrests, UoF incidents, injuries, and investigations)
  - UoF incidents segmented by type of force, subject demographics, and incident location
  - Incident investigations and outcomes
  - Officer behavior (performance, disciplinary actions, lawsuits)
- Officer training
- Community engagement and officer recognition

Long term, the dashboard should incorporate non-LEO related public safety data such pre-arrest diversions and other social services, as well as data from the ACRB



Collection

Integration

Analysis

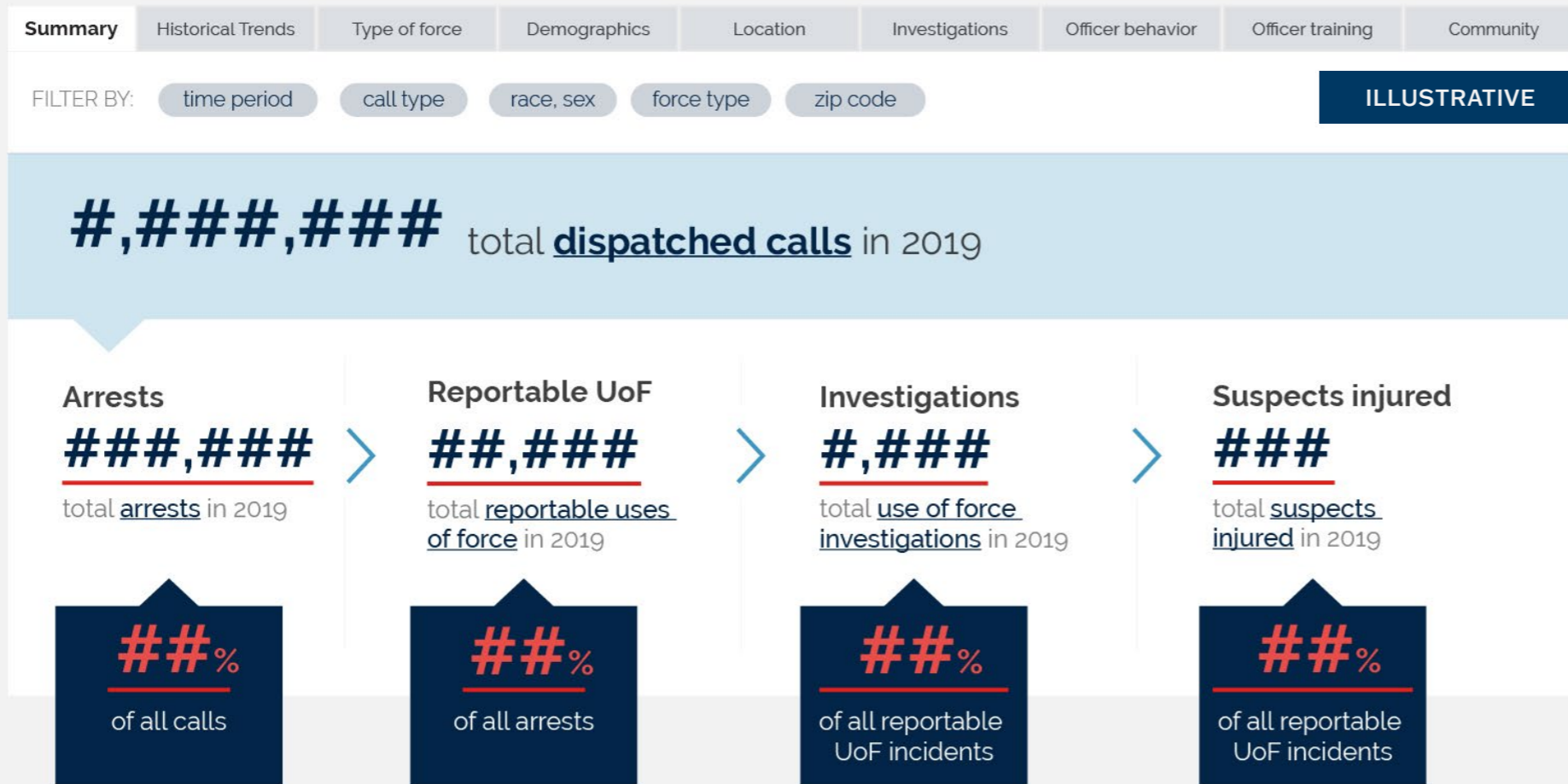
**Reporting**

Maintenance and Audit

RECOMMENDATION:

# Implement an interactive use of force data dashboard

32



“ ”

Transparency to us means being open to public review and scrutiny. We are committed to being accountable for our actions.

— From APD Annual Report

Important links

- [Download raw data set](#)
- [Download meta data](#)
- [Crime data](#)
- [Use of force policy](#)
- [APD training materials](#)
- [Use of force investigation policy](#)
- [Submit officer commendation or complaint](#)
- [Submit video evidence](#)
- [ACRB website](#)



City of Atlanta  
July 24, 2020



Collection

Integration

Analysis

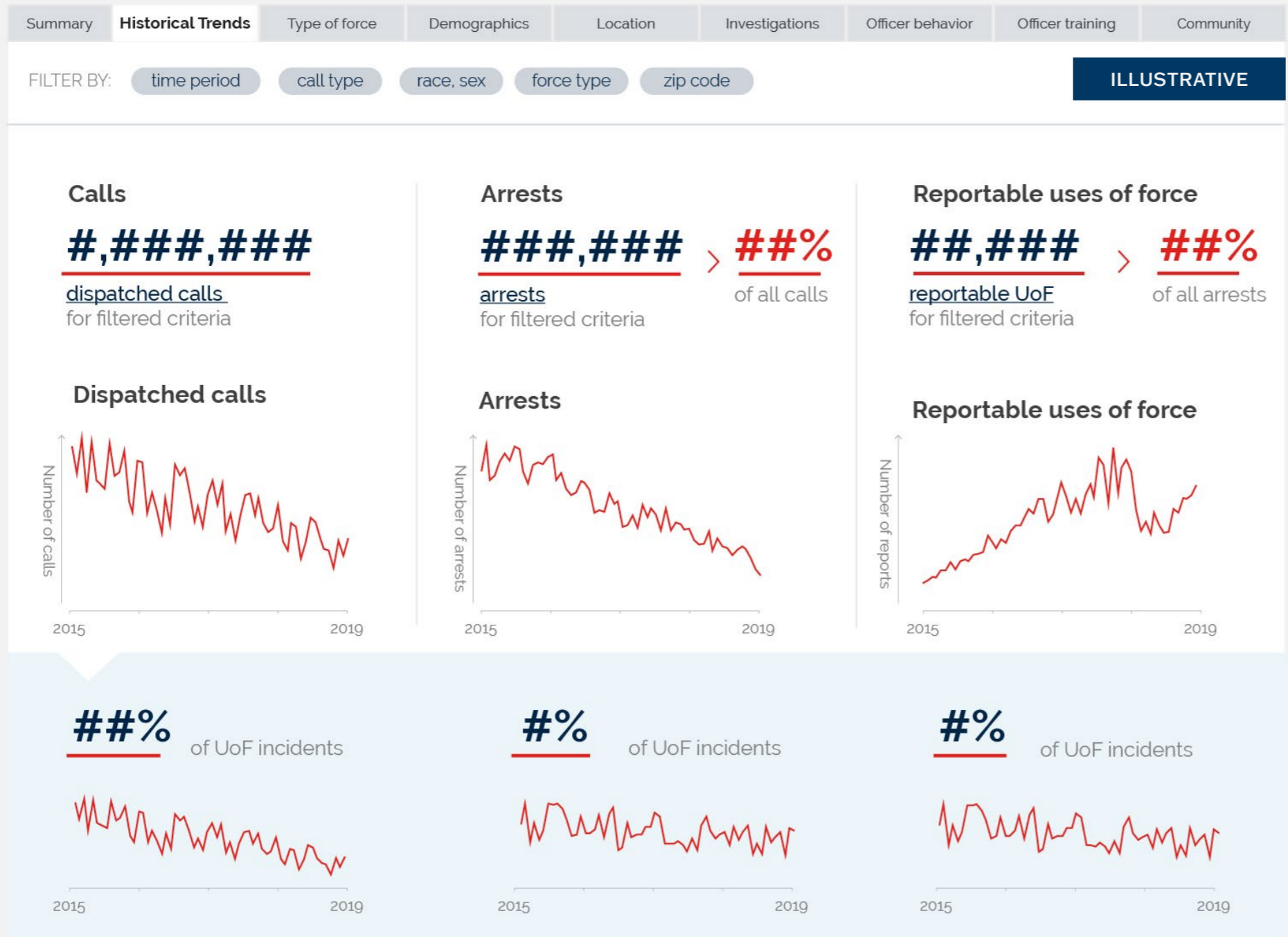
Reporting

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RECOMMENDATION:

# Implement an interactive use of force data dashboard

32



Collection

Integration

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Maintenance and Audit

**RECOMMENDATION:**

# Implement 3rd party data audits

33

**Context**

Reliable data is an important component to building a leading data and transparency strategy. Mechanisms should be in place to ensure data integrity and completeness.

**Expected outcome**

Implementing independent 3rd party audits of the use of force data will lead to increased trust between the public and the APD. Additionally, it will improve the reliability of recommendations derived from analytics.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Ensure data are true and complete through 3rd party data audits**

Implement a semi-annual review of use of force incidents and officer behavioral data with ACRB

- Share officer performance metrics, complaint data, disciplinary actions, lawsuits

Implement a 3rd party auditing system for use of force data

- Some important considerations include:
  - Are all incidents getting documented?
  - Are incidents being documented completely?

Data may be audited by

- Reviewing body cam footage
- Comparing APD records to 3rd party records such as ACRB

Implement policy so that non-compliance and failed audits lead to appropriate corrective action



Collection

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**Maintenance and Audit**



# Way forward



Photo: Luca Fandi

**The recommendations made by this advisory council are only a starting point.**

There is a lot of upside to be realized—and the opportunity to make Atlanta a leading bastion of change nationally—but a difficult journey lies ahead...

While many of these recommendations can be implemented immediately, truly transformational change will require continued investment by—and collaboration between—the city of Atlanta and its police department.

At this time it is crucial to remain grounded. Change is hard: behaviors, systems, and infrastructure all need to be addressed.

Success hinges on setting up this effort properly, and actively managing the change process on an ongoing basis.





**To reconcile, we must engage one another as trusting neighbors, envision more inclusive communities, and evolve the status quo of policing.**



## engage

neighborhoods and the APD through truth and transparency

“ ”

Trust and fairness create a more peaceful society. There's less violence. There's less aggression... you feel like you're part of something bigger, and that you belong.

---

*Dr. Corey Keyes, Sociology Professor  
Emory University*

## envision

new ways for our officers to take part in our communities

“ ”

Police should be in and among the community. We must get to know one another and not have this abrupt engagement around problems. So, when problems do occur, it becomes solution-focused and leaves everyone better off.

---

*Dr. Rosetta Ross, Religion Professor  
Spelman College*

## evolve

current policing practices in the city of Atlanta

“ ”

Behavior change is a process. Bias and awareness training, for example, is necessary but not enough. We need to look at training and community engagement programming over the long-term.

---

*Dr. Bryant Marks, Psychology Professor  
Morehouse College*

# Reconciliation Framework

Reconciliation is a complex process. In order to effectively and efficiently move from stagnation to revival, we commit to the journey of reconciliation together. This three-stage framework captures the steps in the journey, bold actions that the community and APD can take, and our ideal state—what to expect along the way.

“ ”

Reconciliation can't come without first acknowledging people's stories and having empathy for their hardships and pains.

*Reverend Angie Johnson,  
Central UMC and Fearless Dialogues*



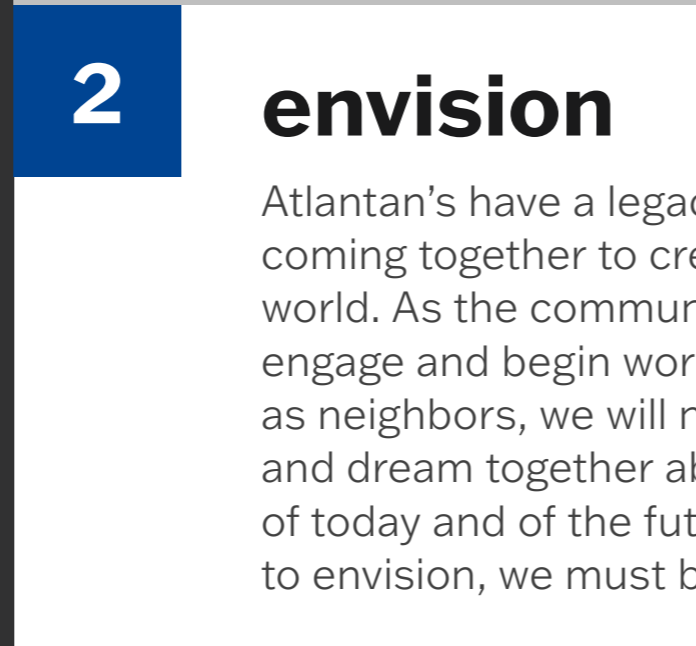
1

## engage

The relationship between APD and the community has been fractured. Relationships are built on trust, and trust is built on transparency. In order to effectively engage each other, we must first be honest.

### Ideal State

When we successfully engage with one another, we can let our guard down and work together, as neighbors.



2

## envision

Atlanta's have a legacy of activism—coming together to create a better world. As the community and APD engage and begin working together as neighbors, we will need to think big and dream together about the Atlanta of today and of the future. In order to envision, we must be bold.

### Ideal State

Envisioning a new future together will create a shared sense of empathy. This deep understanding will energize us and mobilize us to act.



3

## evolve

We will go from envisioning a better world to creating one. With a new vision of what we can be, Atlanta can then evolve. The city will define what good policing is at home and continue our tradition of being a model for the nation. In order to evolve, our strategy must be holistic.

### Ideal State

If APD and Citizens can evolve police practices and implement “good policing” at home, Atlanta can inspire similar change for the world. Atlanta can become the inspiration for what is possible.

# Answering the Call



[Click to listen to our Way Forward Narrative](#)

“ ”

I would be interested to hear APD’s response to the question—**who do you want to be for us?** The us includes them. It’s not how you want to serve us but who do you want to be as part of our community?

*Dr. Rosetta Ross,  
Spelman College*

Though the fires of protest have begun to settle, the embers of change still burn bright in our streets. They burn for reconciliation, they burn for reform, and they light the way toward revival. This 45-day report is a strategically sound and emotionally invested synthesis of data-driven, community-led recommendations, intended to rebuild the trust between the Atlanta Police Department (APD) and the communities they protect.

Following the release of recommendations for immediate action, the Advisory Committee embarked on a community-led exploration to identify the most fundamental areas for use of force to be re-evaluated:

## **Vision, Mission, Values, and Purpose of the APD**

Reimagining the police department’s current vision, mission, and values to excavate and inform new culture. As an extension, a statement of Purpose would help to bring clarity and inspiration.

## **Standard Operating Procedures**

Evaluating existing procedures and policies to better support the vision of the department; ensuring that guidance on how and when to apply force is prescriptive, clear, and reduces unnecessary use of force.

## **Governance and Accountability Measures**

Establishing new means of oversight and accountability of the APD, through changes to the mandate of the Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB).

## **Community Partnerships that Reinforce Public Safety and Reduce Overdependence on Law Enforcement**

Placing the right responders at the right place and time, ensuring the deployment of law enforcement officers only in situations that warrant such response, thus reducing the risk of use of force and unnecessary escalation.

## **Transparency Through Data and Analytics**

Leveraging existing data and capabilities, collecting new inputs, and building intelligence and tools to support more thoughtful planning and informative reporting.

The survival and resurgence of Atlanta depend on us to re-engage the communities and hearts torn through injustice, re-imagine what a partnership between police and residents can be, and re-define the parameters of reconciliation by finding common ground on which to flourish.

We all venture into the world each day with the hopes that we return safely. By creating secure spaces and open dialogue between our police and the communities they serve, we can assuage fears across both groups and restore peace to the city we call home.



Photo: Luca Eandi

**Continued input from community members will be an integral part of our work as we proceed past these initial recommendations.**

**Additional information on the work of the Advisory Council, including materials presented during meetings to date:**

<https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/mayor-s-office/projects-and-initiatives/Use-of-Force-Advisory-Council>

**For questions and comments, please reach the Council via:**

[useofforce@AtlantaGa.Gov](mailto:useofforce@AtlantaGa.Gov)