

Summary of Input Gathered from the American Leadership Forum's Community Dialogue

San José's New Police Chief: Community Input and Involvement

On September 27, 2010, The American Leadership Forum (ALF) - Silicon Valley convened a community dialogue to discuss the City's efforts and progress to date to recruit the next Police Chief for San José. The event was part of ALF's series of community dialogues titled, A Safer San José.

Chris Block, ALF CEO, opened the meeting and served as the facilitator. City Manager Debra Figone attended the community dialogue along with key staff from her office. Judge LaDoris Cordell, the San José Independent Police Auditor, and Jose Salcido, Senior Policy Advisor to Mayor Chuck Reed attended along with community members.

What has the City heard?

Ms. Figone presented the results of the input obtained thus far from the City's community and stakeholder group meetings, highlighting the key, high-level themes that are emerging:

- The new Police Chief needs to be able to work with diverse communities, demonstrating cultural competence
- Community outreach and engagement
- Promotes community policing
- Works with vulnerable members of the community
- Works collaboratively with different agencies, departments, organizations and groups.
- Record of crime prevention and suppression
- Strong/courageous leadership
- Effective communicator
- Honest and ethical
- Upholds standards/provides oversight
- Innovative, resourceful and creative
- Effective administration/management skills, including using staff effectively
- Experience with a department and city comparable to San José

Discussion focused on responses to the input (Question: Is there anything to add to what the City heard?) and two additional questions:

- 1) What responsibilities do both the City and the community have to help the new chief be successful?
- 2) What is my personal commitment to a safer San Jose?

Experience and Track Record

- Ability to set the tone and listen
- Understands the function of the Independent Police Auditor
- Gender issue with being a strong leader (large double standard). Able to acknowledge that a woman as a strong leader can be conceived differently than a man
- Prefer small/diverse communities than large/non-diverse communities
- Experience in mental health issues
- Involvement in activities out of uniform (volunteer, involved with PAL)
- Understand change management and have the ability to communicate change to Rank and File

Skills and Characteristics

- Need authenticity
- Want a leader than has been a part of the rank and file and has experience on the streets
- Ability to command respect
- Courageous Leadership (instead of strong leadership)

General Important Issues to Consider

- Use of Force (downtown issues)
- Concern over low Latino and Young population audience in meetings to date
- Concern that candidate pool is small (those who meet trends and themes)
- Issue of enforcing the law v. using logic over what is questionable

Community Policing/ Relationship with Community

- PD Chief should define community policing first, and then community input.
- Think about resource reality; apply new thinking on what community policing is
- Daily shift change is an issue—preceding officers do not communicate to the officers on the following shift (especially in the instances in which officers receive 3 days off). Effects on community—personal equity loss that diminished community policing. Community is not sure if they should start a relationship
- Officers should look at ethics of staying in communities—inquire about their thoughts on shift change
- PD Chief needs to utilize groups as a resource available to them—this does not just include working collaboratively
- Communication and education of resources available to the community that are confidential (e.g. Crime Stoppers Anonymous)
- We just want PD/FD to do their jobs. Community sometimes put them on a pedestal and then are afraid to approach them
- The PD Chief needs to be truly accessible to the community (this does not include only attending meetings)
 - o Difficult in scheduling 1:1 meeting with high level leaders. Command Staff should be accessible and available to build relationships with groups that are not reachable/those are afraid (through small churches)
 - o Meet with small churches, ethnic communities, different people, social workers, mental health workers, homeless shelters, east San José population that lives in converted garages and campers

Distrust

- Fear from immigrants with Police Department (relationship between Latinos and the Police Department)
- Utilize people from faith community to help open the dialogue—they are trusted
- Instances of vehicle stops (Guadalupe Church 2 weeks ago)
- Issues raised at PACT press conference (towing a car going 35mph in a 25mph/ 4 Officers stop for a broken blinker)

One Person's Experience

- Individual making complaints and in turn, being arrested
- Pat down during search is inappropriate
- “WWB: Walking While Black”
- Mental Health/ Racial Profiling (external profiling e.g. style of clothes)
- Issue of Officers needed to make quota—Officers should just do their job
- Accepting it as the way of life for people of color:
 - o Many incidents
 - o Not knowing resources
 - o Make complaints → you are blown off, or disregarded
 - o Then people distrust and do not engage in community policing

Department

- High level themes need to be drilled down to the rank and file (frontline)
- Issue of the way promotions are handled (favoritism)—promote fairness and equity
 - o Interviews used to include the public, now that that portion of the process has been eliminated
- Officers need to be disciplined and fined (e.g. Officer got his job reinstated by the Civil Service Commission (drunk officer/not giving breathalyzer)
- SJPOA—SJPD v POA v. other websites. PD Chief needs to bring these groups closer together
 - o United Way: Award to SJPD. There is a major perception problem.
 - o The Department needs to address distrust problems internally and prove to everyone that they have zero tolerance. The Community should not have to tell the Department to do this
- The community have come to a point where we cannot positively acknowledge the department. It's a huge problem. This is a process that needs to be carried through the Chief and through mediation.
- There is a major PR issue with the department
 - o There are perceived problems and do have problems—having bad eggs
 - o There is a disconnect (with PD and Community) between how many “bad eggs” `should be allowed—there should be no tolerance
- Community at large needs to be informed about problems and how we get there. Need to work with building bridges, not tolerating “bad eggs.” Need to give credit when applicable (e.g. United Way) about positives

- What is going to happen internally? How are you going to get buy-in from the Department when the community wants community policing? This should occur first—community needs to educate PD Chief
- Issue of PD Officers relay bad behavior to friends. There needs to be a culture shift
- PD Chief should not forget SJPD Chiefs are sought out when they leave (because of the legacy that they leave). SJ has the very finest PD in the world.

Personal Commitment

- Be the change you want to be
- Continue to create spaces in which people feel comfortable to share their stories
- Demonstrate real commitment