

Audit Report

# Impact of Community Policing Efforts

May 2020



The Austin Police Department (APD) has taken several steps to improve its community policing efforts since 2016 and there has been a growth of community policing activities across the department. We found mixed results when we reviewed how APD's efforts have affected APD's relationship with the community though, and more time is needed to determine the effectiveness of APD's community policing efforts. APD may be able to improve community policing outcomes, including its relationship with the community, by better measuring the results of its efforts. We also found that while APD reported an increase in the amount of time officers have to engage with the community, it appears officers may not be able to use this time for community engagement activities.

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Cover: Photo provided by the Austin Police Department.

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## Objective

Have the Austin Police Department's community policing efforts since 2016 been effective?

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## Background

Community policing involves police departments building relationships with individuals and groups in the community. Building these relationships can help police departments identify and solve public safety issues and make communities safer. The Austin Police Department (APD) currently defines community policing as “building positive relationships, one contact at a time, by being present, engaged, and visible in [the] community to address crime and improve the general well-being of residents and visitors.”

The concept of community policing has existed in Austin since at least the early 1990's. In 1998, APD created positions for officers to serve as representatives of Austin neighborhoods. These positions, called district representatives, were created to help residents solve public safety issues and encourage communication between the public and the police. As shown in Exhibit 1 on the next page, each of APD's nine patrol sectors has district representatives.

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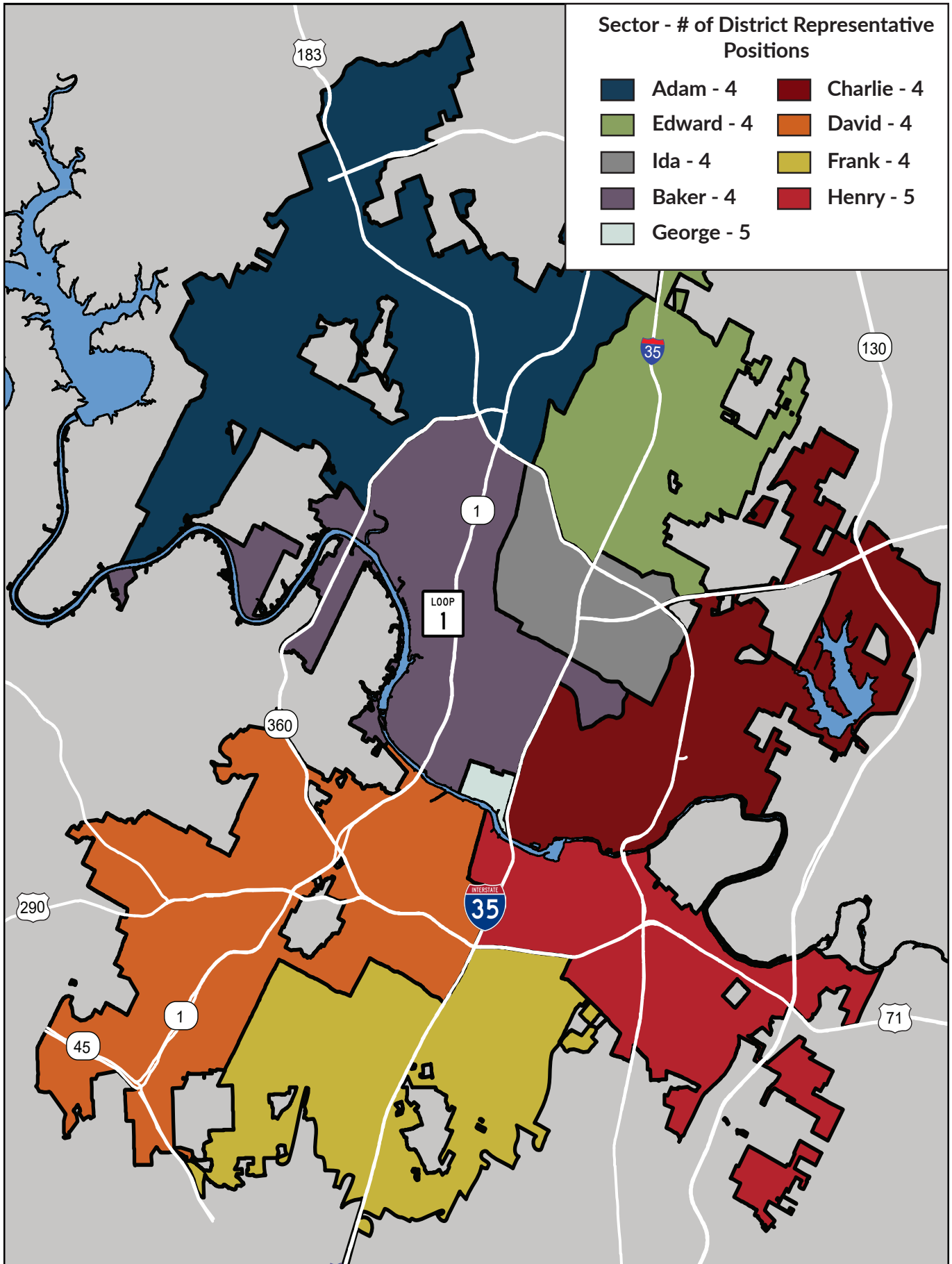
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APD also created the Office of the Community Liaison (OCL) to coordinate outreach and community engagement events. OCL is responsible for events such as Operation Blue Santa and National Night Out and manages outreach programs to various community groups. These programs aim to strengthen relationships between the police and the community.

While these are specific programs related to community policing, all APD employees are responsible for following the principles of community policing. For example, all APD officers are required to act professionally and respectfully in their daily interactions with the community.

In 2016, APD hired Matrix Consulting Group (Matrix) to assess its community policing efforts. As a result of this review, Matrix gave APD over 60 recommendations to improve community policing efforts. We reported on [APD's status of implementing Matrix's recommendations](#) in August 2019. At that time, we found APD had implemented 40 of 60 recommendations.

Exhibit 1: District Representatives are assigned to each of the nine patrol sectors



SOURCE: OCA analysis of APD patrol sector map and district representative positions as of December 2019.

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# What We Found

## Summary

The Austin Police Department (APD) has taken several steps to improve its community policing efforts since 2016 and there has been a growth of community policing activities across the department. We found mixed results when we reviewed how APD's efforts have affected APD's relationship with the community though, and more time is needed to determine the effectiveness of APD's community policing efforts. APD may be able to improve community policing outcomes, including its relationship with the community, by better measuring the results of its efforts. We also found that while APD reported an increase in the amount of time officers have to engage with the community, it appears officers may not be able to use this time for community engagement activities.

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## Finding 1

APD has taken steps to improve its community policing efforts since 2016 and has seen some positive effects, but more time is needed to determine if APD's efforts have been effective.

We reviewed APD's community policing efforts and found APD has taken several steps to improve its community policing efforts in response to recommendations Matrix made in 2016. For example, APD:

- revised its mission statement to be more aligned with community policing;
- developed a community policing policy that established community policing as a guiding philosophy and a way of doing business;
- added community policing principles to its training programs;
- revised patrol officer job descriptions to include community policing principles; and,
- appointed a lieutenant-level position to oversee community policing efforts at the department level.

We also found there has been a growth of community policing efforts in APD since 2016. For example, APD started several new programs that align with community policing principles. These programs include the Focused Area Support Team (FAST), the Region III Innovation, Safety, and Engagement Team, and Operation Blue Wave.<sup>1</sup> While the specific details of each program vary, the goal of each is to help officers identify and address community concerns. For example, APD staff said the FAST team worked with the community and other City departments to improve the safety of a walking path in 2019.

However, when we reviewed how APD's efforts since 2016 have affected their relationship with the community, we found mixed results. To understand how things have changed, we replicated two surveys Matrix did as part of their work in 2016. One survey was for community members and the other was for APD employees. We also reviewed APD's performance measures related to community policing, attended community meetings, and examined the current environment at APD.

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<sup>1</sup> Region III includes the Charlie and Henry patrol sectors, which are generally the central east and south east parts of the City.

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When we compared results of our employee survey to a similar survey Matrix conducted in 2016, we found a higher percentage of patrol officers reported they have a good understanding of the issues in the community but most still felt they did not have adequate time to solve those issues.

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The results of both surveys were mixed. The results for some questions got better, some got worse, and some stayed the same. For example, in response to our employee survey, a higher percentage of patrol officers reported they have a good understanding of the issues in the community but most patrol officers who responded still felt they did not have adequate time to solve those issues. In our community survey, a higher percentage of community members reported a positive experience with APD patrol officers but fewer community members felt APD could effectively anticipate and respond to community needs. Appendix A and Appendix B include more detailed survey results.

Another area we saw mixed results was related to community engagement. We attended several community meetings and observed varying levels of attendance. We also reviewed sign-in sheets for 20 community meetings. While the meetings had an average attendance of about 14 people, attendance varied significantly between sectors. A meeting in one sector had 40 attendees while two meetings in other sectors had none. APD staff said this may be because different sectors have different needs and said they are exploring ways to leverage technology to increase attendance at meetings.

We also saw mixed results when we reviewed APD's performance measures related to community policing. We found that while crime rates generally decreased between 2016 and 2018, resident satisfaction with police services also decreased. Resident satisfaction may be influenced by local or national events outside of APD's direct control, but this decrease may also indicate APD continues to face challenges building a positive relationship with the community.

One possible reason why the results of APD's community policing efforts have been mixed is that community policing efforts address issues of culture, trust, and confidence both within APD and between APD and the public. Recent issues suggest there are deeply rooted challenges APD must face to create a department-wide culture that is fair, impartial, and procedurally just, which APD states it is aiming for in its community policing policy. For example, a [report released in January 2020](#) by the Office of Police Oversight concluded that people of color in Austin are stopped in their motor vehicles at disproportionately higher rates than their percentage of the population in Austin. Additionally, [findings from an independent investigation](#) into anonymous allegations of racist and homophobic comments released in April 2020 did not find policy violations, but did note reports of racist and sexist behavior within the department and a fear of retaliation for speaking out. Both of these reports included recommendations for APD to address. While APD's community policing efforts since 2016 appear to have helped establish a foundation to support community policing goals, APD must address these issues and then continue to build on the foundation they have built to produce the change that they and the community want.

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## Finding 2

APD's ability to improve community policing outcomes may be limited because of issues with the way it measures performance.

APD developed a list of performance measures for community policing in response to the Matrix recommendations and a [2018 City Council Resolution](#). These measures align with APD's community policing goals and include things such as percent of residents who feel safe in the community and changes in crime rates over time. However, there are opportunities for APD to improve its performance measurement process. These improvements may help APD increase its likelihood of meeting desired community policing outcomes moving forward.

APD collects data on several of its community policing performance measures and reports the information on the City's [performance measurement website](#). However, APD does not have an established process for interpreting changes in performance measures and using results to improve performance. A more established process could help APD make better decisions about community policing, such as how to best allocate resources.

We also found that APD needs additional, more specific measures to determine whether the organizational changes they made to support their community policing activities have been effective. For example, APD made changes to how they recruit and train cadets but does not have measures to determine if these changes have resulted in a positive impact.

APD also needs a better process for documenting successful and unsuccessful community policing strategies. APD staff shared several examples of strategies used at the sector level, such as efforts to connect community members with needed health services. While these strategies may be shared informally across the department, there did not appear to be a formal system to record this information. Such a system would help APD leaders learn from previous experiences and prioritize impactful practices moving forward.

APD also needs a more robust process for involving and reporting to the community. We found it was unclear how much APD involved community stakeholders when it identified its performance measures because documentation of community meetings was not available. Additionally, there was not a single place to view data on APD's community policing measures. APD publishes data on many of its performance measures on the City's [performance measure website](#), but it is not organized around community policing efforts. A better reporting process could enable APD to demonstrate the success of its efforts to the community and may improve the public's trust and confidence in the police.

APD management described some new initiatives to generate data that may be useful for evaluating its community policing efforts moving forward. For example, APD recently contracted with an entity that helps law enforcement agencies measure and improve community engagement, trust, and relationships. APD also created a new position, the Police Data Initiatives and Analytics Strategy Officer, who will help coordinate data and analytics efforts across the department.

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A better reporting process could enable APD to demonstrate the success of its efforts to the community and may improve the public's trust and confidence in the police.

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## Finding 3

While APD has reported an increase in the amount of time officers have to engage with the community, it appears officers may not be able to use this time for community engagement activities.

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APD's uncommitted time measure does not accurately represent the time officers can spend on community engagement.

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Effective community policing requires law enforcement officers to proactively engage in community engagement activities, such as participating in community events, building relationships with local business owners, and increasing visibility in neighborhoods. According to the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, community engagement activities significantly contribute "to building and maintaining lasting relationships and community trust."

Matrix found in its 2016 study that APD patrol officers did not routinely engage the community because of call demands and other required services. Matrix recommended APD increase the time officers have available for community engagement. The specific goal Matrix set for APD was for officers to have 35%-45% of their time uncommitted. Uncommitted time is the time officers have available when they are not responding to calls.

The percent of uncommitted time available is one of APD's performance measures. APD reported an increase in uncommitted time city wide from 22% in 2016 to 27% in 2018. However, there are issues with the uncommitted time measure that prevent it from accurately representing the time officers can spend on community engagement.

One issue with the uncommitted time measure relates to the ability of officers to use uncommitted time for community engagement activities. Uncommitted time is not available as a single block of time during an officer's shift. Staff said that officers often go from one call to the next with little time in between. We selected a judgmental sample of three patrol officers who had 8-10 hours of consistent calls and found the time these officers had between calls was usually less than five minutes. The shortest time between calls was only 11 seconds. Additionally, officers may hesitate to start an engagement activity because they do not know how much time they have before their next call.

Another issue with this measure is that officers have many responsibilities to complete when they are not responding to calls. APD staff said officers must also write reports, read policy updates, check email, and complete other tasks during their shifts. The time needed for these tasks is included in APD's calculation of uncommitted time, but it is not time that officers can use for community engagement.

**Exhibit 2: Uncommitted time can be less than five minutes and is used for a variety of activities**



SOURCE: OCA review of uncommitted time, February 2020.

APD has made some efforts to better track community engagement time, but these efforts provide little insight into how much community engagement time officers actually have. In 2016, APD created five codes for tracking community policing activities, including codes for attending community events or visiting local businesses. Officers were asked to use these codes to self-assign themselves to community policing activities. However, APD staff told us that patrol officers have not consistently used these codes. We found APD staff used community policing codes on less than 1% of their calls between January 2019 and June 2019. As a result, these codes are currently not an effective way to track community engagement time.

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APD managers reported officers have very little time available for community engagement because of issues with understaffing and high vacancy rates.

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Because of these challenges, it is not clear if officers have more time available for community engagement in 2019 than they did in 2016. Many patrol officers who responded to our survey of APD employees indicated they do not have adequate time to engage with residents because of high call volume and issues with understaffing. APD managers said similar things during interviews.

APD has taken some steps to increase the time officers have for engaging with the community moving forward. For example, APD's approved staffing plan for fiscal years 2019 to 2022 included the addition of 54 patrol officers to increase community engagement activities citywide.<sup>2</sup> APD management also reported they have directed patrol officers to spend a few extra minutes on calls to engage with community members. These steps may be helpful, but they do not guarantee that officers will have more time for proactively engaging with the community outside of responding to calls.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 COVID-19 outbreak and the potential impact on the City's budget may affect APD's ability to add new officers moving forward.



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# Recommendations and Management Response

1

The Chief of Police should establish and implement a process for measuring and reporting on the effectiveness of the Austin Police Department's community policing efforts. This process should be developed with input from stakeholders that represent the Austin community and should, at a minimum, ensure that:

- performance data is used to understand and improve community policing;
- performance data is used to prioritize impactful practices and develop next steps for community policing; and,
- performance data and next steps for community policing are consistently and clearly shared with the community.

Management Response: Agree

**Proposed Implementation Plan:** The Austin Police Department (APD) is committed to meeting the key performance indicators under SD2023 and using data to understand and improve community policing citywide. The APD Research and Planning Division will continue to take the lead on data analysis and reporting. APD currently uses five community policing clearance codes to document engagement efforts. Over the next few months, the division will determine whether the codes, as currently framed, are appropriate and will capture the information needed, or if the codes should be reworked. The division will make final performance measure recommendations by August 30, 2020. All officers will be required to use the clearance codes beginning October 1, 2020. This requirement will allow the codes to be used as an effective way to track engagement time.

By the second quarter of FY2020 – 2021, the Research and Planning Division will begin providing APD Executive and Command Staff with regular compstat reports on community policing progress. APD Executive Staff and Command Staff will jointly review and use the data to understand the impacts of current activities and identify potential gaps in services and engagement efforts. The Executive Lieutenant for Community Engagement will take the lead on outreach and education. The lieutenant will solicit community input from and report on our efforts to the community via quarterly community engagement meetings and through the regular use of My90 community surveys (City vendor).

APD anticipates that the current public health crisis will limit many community policing activities for the foreseeable future. All APD patrol managers will continue to meet with stakeholder groups, neighborhood leaders and community members as much as possible. The department is hopeful that current strategies will result in increased trust and partnership.

**Proposed Implementation Date:** June 2021

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## Recommendations and Management Response

2

The Chief of Police should develop and implement a plan to ensure patrol officers have time to engage with the community in ways outside of responding to calls. This plan should address how to:

- train officers on effective and appropriate community engagement activities;
- periodically evaluate engagement activities to ensure they are effective and appropriate; and,
- periodically report the results to the community.

**Management Response:** Agree

**Proposed Implementation Plan:** APD agrees that all officers should continue to receive training on effective and appropriate community engagement activities. The department is researching the potential for modifying the Seattle Police Department's "Micro Community Policing" model to meet the needs of APD. Knowing that community policing will vary from neighborhood to neighborhood, micro plans are tailor made and consider cultural, social and economic factors. As additional community policing tools and strategies are identified, officers will receive training updates.

Current and future community policing training options will improve an officer's ability to meaningfully connect with the community, and, over time, to build mutually beneficial professional relationships. Beginning in October 2020, all APD patrol commanders will be tasked with developing (or building off of existing) community engagement strategies specific to their neighborhoods, while commanders with oversight of centralized services will work together to develop a citywide community engagement plan in coordination with the Executive Lieutenant for Community Engagement. Commanders will work in partnership with the APD Research and Planning Division to ensure that their plans include well defined performance measures and achievable outcomes.

The department expects that internal planning and implementation activities will be directed out of rapid response meetings, attended by sworn personnel and crime analyst counterparts. The weekly meetings are well structured, data driven and staffed by personnel with the capacity to evaluate performance, provide an assessment of current awareness, and make adjustments. Commanders will provide an overview of efforts at their monthly meetings with executive managers.

All engagement strategies and plans, including related research on innovative evidence-based community policing activities and trauma-informed approaches, will be uploaded to SharePoint and accessible to all APD personnel.

The Executive Lieutenant for Community Engagement (or proxy) will solicit community input (and share impacts) on neighborhood plans via My90. Executive and Command Staff will continue to report on efforts at city meetings and through social media platforms (NextDoor, Facebook, Twitter). They will request input at community forums and events, and during one-on-one interactions.

**Proposed Implementation Date:** June 2021

# Management Response



## City of Austin

### Austin Police Department

P.O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767  
(512) 974-5030

**Brian Manley, Chief of Police**

[Brian.Manley@austintexas.gov](mailto:Brian.Manley@austintexas.gov)

May 8, 2020

Corrie Stokes,  
City Auditor  
Office of the City Auditor,  
City of Austin  
[Corrie.Stokes@austintexas.gov](mailto:Corrie.Stokes@austintexas.gov)

*RE: Austin Police Department Management Response, Community Policing Audit Report*

Dear Ms. Stokes:

Thank you for providing a copy of the Community Policing Audit Report. I appreciate the time and effort of your audit team and the collaborative process for moving forward.

I have included our management response below. In summary, my office agrees with both recommendations and with the detail provided throughout the report. The report offers an overarching history of community policing at APD and our progress since 2016, with the ongoing implementation of the Matrix recommendations. The report touches on several challenges we currently face with community policing and measuring success, and calls for the creation of additional, more specific measures to determine whether our organizational changes are effective.

The first recommendation focuses on process improvements and designing a plan with input from Austin community members and stakeholder groups. The initial implementation plan and timeline we present takes into consideration the current known views of local stakeholders; however, our recent formal avenues for feedback have been severely limited due to the pandemic. The response provided is considered preliminary and will be revised in the coming months to accurately represent the ideas and preferences of the community.

The second recommendation centers on ensuring that patrol officers have time to engage with the community in ways outside of responding to calls. The report speaks to a slight increase in the uncommitted time of patrol – from 22% in 2016 to 27% in 2018 – and recognizes that this percent change does not translate to officer availability for engagement purposes. Uncommitted time at 27% allows officers the opportunity to take a restroom break, write reports, read required policy updates, check email, ensure the operation of their equipment and complete other required activities. Having only seconds to several minutes between calls may allow for a hand shake or short exchanges.

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# Management Response



## City of Austin

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### **Austin Police Department**

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(512) 974-5030

Connecting on a personal level in such a short amount of time is difficult, particularly when trust and bias are at issue in a community. Our response below discusses officer training as well as a process for evaluating efforts and reporting the results to the community. We will be asking community and stakeholder groups for their ideas on quick engagement activities and neighborhood-specific plans.

Thank you for reviewing our responses. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office at any time.

Sincerely,



Brian Manley  
*Chief of Police*



# Appendix A - APD Employee Survey

We surveyed APD employees using a survey like one Matrix conducted in 2016 to determine how employee perceptions have changed. All APD employees were invited to participate in our survey. The survey opened on September 27 and closed October 28. Of the 2,413 employees who received the survey, 406 responded, for an overall response rate of 17%. Some questions were asked of all APD employees, while some were asked only of APD patrol officers. Overall, the results were mixed. The results for some questions got better, some got worse, and some stayed the same. For example, about 7% more respondents agreed APD does a good job planning services to the community but nearly 11% fewer respondents agreed that APD has the support of the community. For patrol officers, nearly 15% more respondents agreed that there is an expectation for them to get to know the community and about 23% more agreed they have a good understanding of issues in the community. However, results for questions related to having adequate time for community policing activities did not improve.

Question	2016			2019*			Percent Change		
	Agree	Disagree	No Response	Agree	Disagree	No Response	Agree	Disagree	No Response
APD provides a high level of law enforcement service to the residents we serve.	92.51%	5.00%	2.50%	89.11%	7.67%	3.22%	-3.40%	2.68%	0.72%
APD improves the quality of life in the City.	91.35%	5.76%	2.88%	88.34%	7.20%	4.47%	-3.02%	1.43%	1.58%
APD has the support of the community.	71.31%	24.76%	3.93%	60.64%	33.42%	5.94%	-10.66%	8.66%	2.01%
APD's approach to providing community policing is right for Austin.	66.38%	22.74%	10.89%	60.89%	28.47%	10.64%	-5.49%	5.73%	-0.24%
APD staffing levels have kept up with needs of Austin.	7.57%	89.84%	2.59%	7.43%	90.59%	1.98%	-0.15%	0.76%	-0.61%
APD does a good job planning how we provide services to the community.	53.40%	36.53%	10.07%	59.95%	29.47%	10.58%	6.55%	-7.06%	0.51%
APD's organizational structure provides for coordination of service delivery to the community.	62.12%	27.40%	10.48%	59.19%	30.23%	10.58%	-2.92%	2.82%	0.10%
APD's mission, values and goals reinforce our orientation to the community.	82.26%	10.83%	6.90%	81.77%	10.13%	8.10%	-0.49%	-0.71%	1.20%
APD is effective at recruiting staff who fit into our community policing model.	51.73%	31.63%	16.63%	56.06%	25.76%	18.18%	4.33%	-5.88%	1.55%
APD does a good job of hiring people who think that community policing is important.	57.79%	20.77%	21.44%	56.93%	18.39%	24.69%	-0.86%	-2.38%	3.24%
The Academy does a good job preparing new officers for effective service to the community.	74.30%	12.80%	12.90%	66.75%	16.75%	16.49%	-7.55%	3.95%	3.60%
APD's field-training program does a good job preparing academy graduates to effectively serve the community.	73.29%	12.34%	14.37%	67.44%	14.87%	17.69%	-5.85%	2.53%	3.32%
The APD disciplinary process provides appropriate accountability for officers.	53.31%	35.73%	10.95%	60.67%	24.16%	15.17%	7.35%	-11.57%	4.22%

# Appendix A - APD Employee Survey

Question	2016			2019*			Percent Change		
	Agree	Disagree	No Response	Agree	Disagree	No Response	Agree	Disagree	No Response
The external oversight of APD by the Office of Police Oversight is effective.	24.83%	59.10%	16.07%	34.70%	41.39%	23.91%	9.87%	-17.71%	7.83%
The following questions were only asked of APD patrol officers.									
I have a good understanding of problems in the sector I am assigned to.	72.87%	2.13%	25.00%	95.94%	1.52%	2.54%	23.07%	-0.61%	-22.46%
Patrol has adequate proactive time to solve problems in the community.	10.11%	75.36%	14.53%	12.69%	84.26%	3.05%	2.58%	8.91%	-11.48%
Patrol has adequate proactive time to be engaged with residents.	10.73%	75.54%	13.73%	14.87%	82.56%	2.56%	4.14%	7.03%	-11.17%
APD's proactive time is directed toward known problems.	54.65%	26.18%	19.17%	50.76%	39.59%	9.64%	-3.89%	13.41%	-9.53%
When I have proactive time, I spend most of it in the district that I am assigned.	55.24%	9.76%	35.01%	78.57%	9.18%	12.24%	23.33%	-0.57%	-22.76%
There is an expectation for me to get to know the community in the area(s) that I am assigned to.	58.71%	19.14%	22.16%	73.98%	16.33%	9.69%	15.27%	-2.81%	-12.46%
My sector has effective connections between law enforcement and community groups.	45.74%	18.76%	35.50%	55.38%	30.26%	14.36%	9.64%	11.50%	-21.14%
We effectively deal with 'displaced' people in the community (e.g., homeless and the mentally ill).	25.97%	58.39%	15.64%	22.96%	63.78%	13.27%	-3.01%	5.38%	-2.37%
District Representatives provide a valuable service to the community.	57.82%	21.66%	20.52%	62.56%	25.64%	11.79%	4.74%	3.98%	-8.72%
The allocation of staff among sectors is appropriate.	24.89%	54.39%	20.72%	18.88%	72.45%	8.67%	-6.01%	18.06%	-12.05%
Managers do a good job communicating community policing priorities.	46.60%	29.67%	23.73%	56.12%	29.08%	14.80%	9.52%	-0.59%	-8.94%
My immediate supervisor is effective at setting community policing expectations for me.	57.39%	14.06%	28.55%	78.35%	9.28%	12.37%	20.96%	-4.78%	-16.18%
Patrol operations are effectively coordinated with other units and functions such as District Representatives.	35.22%	39.13%	25.65%	36.27%	54.40%	9.33%	1.05%	15.27%	-16.33%
Patrol operations are effectively coordinated with other units and functions such as Metro TAC.	36.71%	38.15%	25.14%	37.63%	53.61%	8.76%	0.92%	15.46%	-16.38%

## Appendix A - APD Employee Survey

Question	2016			2019*			Percent Change		
	Agree	Disagree	No Response	Agree	Disagree	No Response	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Patrol operations are effectively coordinated with other units and functions such as Traffic (HEC).	42.88%	30.96%	26.16%	29.90%	56.70%	13.40%	-12.98%	25.74%	-12.76%
Patrol operations are effectively coordinated with other units and functions such as Special Operations units.	37.18%	35.16%	27.67%	30.93%	53.61%	15.46%	-6.25%	18.45%	-12.20%
We have timely access to translators when needed.	34.92%	41.41%	23.67%	41.97%	45.08%	12.95%	7.05%	3.66%	-10.71%
Crime analysis data available allows us to be more efficient in the delivery of proactive services.	54.32%	20.89%	24.78%	63.54%	22.92%	13.54%	9.22%	2.02%	-11.24%
The crime analysis information provided to me is useful.	58.31%	17.48%	24.21%	69.43%	20.21%	10.36%	11.12%	2.73%	-13.85%
The crime analysis information provided to me is timely.	57.63%	15.98%	26.39%	72.02%	16.06%	11.92%	14.39%	0.09%	-14.47%

\*In both the Matrix survey and our survey, the results were representative of the sworn and civilian populations but APD managers and supervisors were slightly overrepresented.

## Appendix B - Community Survey

We surveyed the Austin community using a survey like one Matrix conducted in 2016 to determine how community perceptions have changed. The survey was sent out to the Austin community using various methods between September 27 and November 4. The survey was available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. We received 1,787 responses. Overall, the results were mixed. The results for some questions got better, some got worse, and some stayed the same. For example, respondents in 2019 rated individual experiences with APD staff higher than respondents in 2016, but about 20% fewer respondents agreed that officers are professional in their contacts with them.

Question	2016			2019*			Change		
	Agree	Disagree	No Response	Agree	Disagree	No Response	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Based on your most recent experience with an APD Patrol Officer, how would you rate your experience with this APD Patrol Officer?	52.27%	15.31%	32.43%	69.54%	12.98%	17.49%	17.27%	-2.33%	-14.94%
Based on your most recent experience with an APD District Representative, how would you rate your experience with the District Representative?	40.91%	8.21%	50.88%	74.83%	9.60%	15.56%	33.93%	1.39%	-35.32%
Based on your most recent experience with an APD Detective, how would you rate your experience with the APD Detective?	27.81%	11.75%	60.43%	60.91%	24.87%	14.21%	33.10%	13.12%	-46.22%
Based on your most recent experience with an APD staff member, how would you rate your experience with the staff member?	45.70%	11.85%	42.45%	64.69%	16.40%	18.91%	18.99%	4.55%	-23.55%
The Police Department provides a high level of law enforcement service to Austin.	67.66%	25.02%	7.32%	59.89%	28.24%	11.87%	-7.77%	3.23%	4.54%
APD Officers are professional in my contacts with them (please leave blank if you have not had any contacts).	75.64%	16.49%	7.87%	55.58%	8.72%	35.70%	-20.06%	-7.78%	27.84%
I see the same APD Officers who patrol in my area.	22.40%	46.75%	30.84%	17.27%	40.32%	42.41%	-5.13%	-6.43%	11.57%
APD staff are responsive to our law enforcement needs.	52.37%	31.17%	16.46%	43.22%	29.58%	27.21%	-9.16%	-1.60%	10.75%
APD does a good job anticipating service needs in my neighborhood.	32.94%	43.76%	23.29%	25.66%	39.15%	35.19%	-7.28%	-4.61%	11.89%
Officers are prompt in responding to problems raised by the community.	46.23%	33.84%	19.94%	36.50%	32.17%	31.33%	-9.73%	-1.67%	11.40%
It is important to me to regularly see an officer in my area.	84.93%	10.64%	4.44%	80.64%	11.84%	7.52%	-4.29%	1.20%	3.08%
I feel safe in Austin.	72.05%	25.76%	2.20%	58.05%	37.21%	4.74%	-14.00%	11.45%	2.54%

\*Nearly 74% of respondents self-identified as white, while other ethnicities were underrepresented compared to the Austin community. Matrix did not ask for respondent demographics in 2016, so we were unable to determine whether our samples were comparable.



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## Scope

APD activities related to community policing, especially changes made since the Matrix Consulting Group made recommendations in July 2016.

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## Methodology

To complete this audit, we performed the following steps:

- interviewed staff in the Austin Police Department;
- reviewed relevant reports on community policing;
- evaluated APD's completion of recommendations made by Matrix Consulting Group;
- reviewed APD policies and procedures related to community policing;
- analyzed APD crime and safety data from 2016 to 2019;
- analyzed community perception data from the Austin Community Survey between 2016 and 2018;
- conducted a survey of Austin residents, analyzed responses, and compared results to the community survey Matrix conducted as part of their work in 2016;
- conducted a survey of APD employees, analyzed responses, and compared results to the employee survey Matrix conducted as part of their work in 2016;
- attended APD community outreach events;
- studied APD's community policing initiatives;
- analyzed APD's uncommitted time methodology;
- attended APD meetings;
- evaluated internal controls related to APD's community policing efforts; and,
- evaluated the risks related to fraud, waste, and abuse regarding APD's community policing efforts.

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## Audit Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The Office of the City Auditor was created by the Austin City Charter as an independent office reporting to City Council to help establish accountability and improve City services. We conduct performance audits to review aspects of a City service or program and provide recommendations for improvement.

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