Community Dinner Dialogue Pilot Program Report

City of Los Angeles Human Relations Commission

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I. Executive Summary

A. Goal
After a public survey revealed a lack of trust for the Los Angeles Police Department by the African American community, Police Commissioner Cynthia McClain-Hill requested that the Human Relations Commission facilitate a series of dialogues with the black community in South Los Angeles to assess perceptions of law enforcement and gather concrete, actionable recommendations for building trust.

B. Methodology
The core model consisted of small, HRC-facilitated dinner dialogues with African American residents of South Los Angeles in neutral and safe community spaces in the absence of the LAPD. The HRC held four youth dialogues and five adult dialogues. Police Commissioners and HRC Commissioners attended dinners, but numbers were kept to a minimum to ensure that the vast majority of the people in the room were community members, and after a brief introduction and icebreakers, Commissioners did not participate in the discussions.

C. Outcomes
The result of this unique community-centered methodology was relaxed, calm, open, productive conversations in which most community members appeared comfortable and all demonstrated respect for each other and the city staff and officials present. Every participant contributed to the conversation, speaking more than once. Many conveyed deeply personal and sometimes painful stories. Participants often expressed empathy for the LAPD and expressed a sincere desire for a changed relationship with the police. They engaged deeply with each other and offered concrete suggestions for how that can be accomplished.

D. Findings
Participants perceived that interactions with police in general and with LAPD specifically occurred or were unnecessarily negative due to their race. They also perceived that they receive lesser protection and lesser service due to their race or location in a neighborhood of color. This racism, whether perceived, real, or some combination of the two, creates a lack of trust in the LAPD.

In dinner after dinner, regardless of age, participants offered similar stories, perceptions, and suggestions to address the problem and build trust. The same themes arose time and again. They were (1) Community Engagement, (2) Transparency, (3) Accountability, and (4) Training. Please note that this report does not indicate where public perception is correct or incorrect, nor does it detail existing efforts by the LAPD, as the HRC is not fully briefed on the LAPD’s policies and procedures with respect to many of the issues raised by participants.

As a result of this pilot, the HRC recommends the LAPD and Police Commission utilize the HRC’s methodology of small dinner dialogues using a neutral facilitator to gain community perspectives and recommendations to inform policy. Once dialogues are held, the HRC recommends communicating with participants to thank them for their participation and let them know law enforcement listened and have taken or will take action as a result. Where possible, the HRC recommends adopting feasible community recommendations that would enhance public safety and police-community trust.
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II. Introduction

A. Background

The Police Commission partnered with the Human Relations Commission to explore methods of engaging residents of the African American community, gain a deeper understanding of community perspectives around policing and trust, and gain community-sourced input and recommendations that can be translated into LAPD policy. The resulting pilot program consisted of nine “Community Dinner Dialogues” with African American residents of South Los Angeles.

This partnership resulted from a briefing by then Police Commissioner Cynthia McClain-Hill to the HRC in March 2018, during which she shared that a public survey revealed deep and abiding mistrust of law enforcement among African Americans in South LA.

The HRC held dinner dialogues from June 2018 to May 2019 with African American community members in South LA (four with youth and five with adults). Commissioner McClain-Hill, who resigned from her post on the Police Commission in June 2018, privately donated the cost of the dinners. USC Professor Howard Greenwald donated the costs of his academic partnership.

The HRC, residing within the Housing + Community Investment Department, is a neutral advisory board for the City that promotes intergroup peacebuilding, equity, and human rights by transforming community engagement and dialogue into sustainable programs and policy. The HRC’s mission and role as civic mediators and dialogue facilitators make it well-positioned and equipped to solicit meaningful community input to improve police-community relations and liaise between Los Angeles communities and the Police Commission.

B. Program Details

- Nine dialogues were held in 8 different community locations throughout South Los Angeles.
- Locations included community centers, churches, a mosque, and a barbershop.
- The program included 92 participants.
  - 38 youth
  - 54 adults
  - Approx. 60-70% male participants.
- Participant ages ranged from 13 to 79 years old.
  - Average youth age approx. 17
  - Average adult age approx. 51
- Four out of 5 Police Commissioners attended at least one of the dialogues as observers. Nine out of 11 Human Relations Commissioners attended a dialogue as observers.
- See Appendix A for a full program timeline.

III. Methodology

A. Outcomes

Dialogues and focus groups are powerful tools to elicit meaningful community input that can be translated into improved City processes and outcomes. In designing the pilot program, the HRC
sought to reimagine traditional City-led community engagement to be especially inclusive, community-centered, empowering, productive, and informative. These dialogues were designed in the style of embraceLA, a program incubated by the HRC and implemented through 100 successful dinner dialogues in April 2018 by Council President Herb Wesson and Community Coalition. A full description of the HRC’s guiding principles for generating meaningful dialogue is included in Appendix B.

The result of this unique community-centered methodology was relaxed, calm, open, productive conversations in which most community members appeared comfortable and all demonstrated respect for each other and the City staff and officials present. Every participant contributed to the conversation, speaking more than once. Many conveyed deeply personal and often painful stories. Even those participants who were initially skeptical or suspicious of the process remained receptive to participating throughout the dinner. No one left due to discomfort or anger and all dialogues were completed.

The benefit of holding dinners without LAPD present was immediately apparent. In one instance, a young man walked into the room wearing a shirt and tie, explaining that he thought the police were going to be there and indicated that he was ready to give them a piece of his mind. When we explained that the police were not present, he immediately relaxed, leaned back, laughed, got a plate of food, talked calmly with fellow participants and, along with many other participants, he expressed empathy for the police.

Another participant said: “You do have to take into consideration that yes, the neighborhoods that we live in are dangerous and that’s why they act the way that they act. They don’t have the right to, but if we’re just thinking about understanding, I understand why an officer can be so mean-mugging, or ‘I don’t talk to you’ because you are in a dangerous area.”

Statements such as “they have a hard job,” “they are just trying to get home to their families,” “they are human,” “they have trauma,” “they have PTSD” were common throughout the dinners. For example: “I mean I understand they’re held to a higher standard and I hold them to it, but they’re human, too, and they have bad days at work, or days they’re feeling like crap and they’re trying not to take it out on anybody. But it’s hard, it’s a human thing. When we keep holding them on this outrageously high pedestal that’s our problem too. We can’t expect them to be perfect.”

In another instance, a participant said: “We’re all human. That officer’s no different from us when it comes down to biology. Flesh and bone, blood and skin we’re all the same, unique in our own ways but all the same. That should definitely be respected and realized in every community. Every officer should realize it before doing anything.”

Participants also widely expressed sincere desire for a changed relationship with the police and offered concrete suggestions for how that can be accomplished. This is outlined in the Findings section below.

B. Outreach and Participation

This pilot program was specifically designed to reach African American residents of South Los Angeles. The HRC intentionally recruited participants that had varying levels and types of
community involvement, affiliations, and personal experience with law enforcement, and those whose voices are not usually heard at City meetings or other spaces that regularly engage in this topic.

Initially (the first three dinners), the HRC asked community leaders to suggest 3-4 participants to attend a given dinner. However, this individualized outreach method was very labor-intensive, requiring multiple forms of follow-up for each individual participant. Leaders were also often very busy recruiting for other community programs, and potential participants were initially distrustful of the dinner dialogue series and its relationship to the LAPD.

To address these challenges, the HRC adjusted its outreach strategy for the final six dinners. The HRC identified a handful of institutions that are deeply embedded in different elements of community life to be “anchor partners.” It ensured that these anchor partners (which included religious institutions, community centers, etc.) represented various geographies and types of organizations in South LA. Each partner hosted a dialogue and was responsible for identifying 10-12 diverse participants from their respective networks to attend.

This revision ensured that anchor partners felt a sense of ownership over the dinner dialogue and therefore prioritized recruitment, and ensured that participants trusted the anchor partner and therefore were more willing to engage in the dialogue.

HRC facilitators spoke with as many participants as possible before the dinner, to ensure that they understood its purpose and what to expect. They provided FAQ sheets and liability waivers to all who attended.

C. Format

The format of these dialogues was intentionally designed to create a safe space for open and honest discussion and to glean the most accurate and community-led data possible. This design included:

1. **Location:** Each dialogue took place in a community space that was familiar to or frequented by participants. In almost all cases the “anchor partner” provided the space and was present during the dialogue either as a participant (in the adult dialogues) or as a chaperone or source of support (in the youth dialogues).

2. **Meal:** A family-style dinner was provided to create an intimate and casual environment, and ensure that participants could comfortably attend during evening hours. In one case, lunch was provided on a Sunday to accommodate youth schedules.

3. **Recording:** Dialogues were recorded using a small handheld recording device. HRC staff notified all participants of the recording and its use, and all participants gave their expressed permission to be recorded by signing a waiver form. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to remove their name tags at the outset of the dialogue to indicate that they did not want their names used during the recording.

4. **Facilitator:** A trained HRC staff member facilitated each dialogue. The facilitator opened each conversation by describing their role as neutral, framing the purpose of the conversation, and encouraging participants to bring up topics they felt were most meaningful to them.
5. **Commissioners:** A Human Relations Commissioner was also present at each dialogue to introduce the program. A Police Commissioner and in one case two Police Commissioners were present at most of the dialogues as well to observe the conversation. The facilitator explained during opening remarks that both Police and HRC Commissioners’ roles were purely to observe, rather than to participate in, the dialogue. Commissioners introduced themselves but did not speak during the conversation. This ensured that the conversation was guided solely by participants, and that any resulting themes accurately reflected community perceptions as they stand (without external influence, and regardless of whether programs and policies exist to address these perceptions).

6. **Group Agreements:** The dinner opened with an icebreaker activity and a few Group Agreements. These agreements set the tone for the dialogue and promoted a safe and honest exchange of ideas. They included “Speak your truth,” “Use ‘I’ statements,” “Curiosity first; disagree with respect,” “Give space, take space,” and “Stretch yourself.”

7. **Facilitator Questions:** Facilitator questions were designed to ask participants about their perceptions of the police, potential reasons behind their perceptions, and their ideas and hopes for the future. However, the facilitator did not force any particular answers and allowed participants to speak about topics that were most pertinent to them. With the exception of some structured pieces in the beginning and the end, the conversations were loosely structured and guided by the interests of participants. Sample questions included:
   a. What is one word you think of when you think of the police?
   b. What is your deepest concern (or hope) regarding law enforcement and the Black community?
   c. Define trust/respect. Can you think of a time trust has either been built or broken between law enforcement and community? What would it look like for trust to be built?
   d. If you were Chief of Police, what would be the first thing you would do to transform community-police relations?

**IV. Data Analysis**

The findings were compiled by the HRC in partnership with Dr. Howard Greenwald and his research team. The findings provide an analysis of the primary themes that arose during the nine dinner dialogues recorded by the HRC, and the results of the post-dinner questionnaires filled out by participants.

Dr. Greenwald and his research team reviewed audio from two of the dinner dialogues to identify primary themes, using the principles of qualitative data analysis. The HRC team then reviewed the audio from the remaining seven dialogues to both corroborate that these themes were consistent across the dinners, and to add additional pertinent contributions within the themes that arose.

Overall, participants perceived that interactions with police in general and with LAPD specifically occurred or were unnecessarily negative due to their race. They also perceived that they receive inferior protection and service due to their race or location in a neighborhood of color. This racism, whether perceived, real, or some combination of the two, creates a lack of trust in the LAPD. In many cases, participants did not differentiate between police departments, but rather spoke about experiences with and perceptions of police in general. In some cases, participants referred to LAPD
specifically, and in others, they shared stories about law enforcement entities in other cities, counties, and states. However, the themes listed below remained consistent, suggesting that many of these experiences and perceptions transcend specific departments.

In dialogue after dialogue, both youth and adults offered similar personal accounts, perceptions, and suggestions for how to address the problem and build trust. The same themes arose during each of the dinners. They were (1) **Community Engagement**, (2) **Transparency**, (3) **Accountability**, and (4) **Training**.

Please note that this report does not indicate where public perception is correct or incorrect, nor does it detail the LAPD’s existing efforts, as the HRC is not fully briefed on the LAPD’s policies and procedures with respect to many of the issues raised by participants. It should also be noted that these themes are not meant to be read as “representative” of an entire community or neighborhood. Rather, they represent the individual participants and a small sample of black people in South Los Angeles.

Finally, it should be noted that participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to discuss the issues as individuals and in a group, and to be heard by City officials. They said this frequently during the ongoing conversations as well as in the wrap-up comments at the end.

The dinner conversations were incredibly rich and encompassed a wide swath of issues, experiences, and ideas. The below findings are the most commonly occurring themes and provide the Police Commission with a range of valuable starting points for meaningful policies and programs. A list of quotations for each theme is available in Appendices C, D, E, F, and G.

V. Findings

A. Community Engagement and Recruitment

   “I want to know them like I know my postman.”

   1. Community Engagement

They expressed frustration that officers know very little about them as individuals or about the rich culture and history of their communities.

   “[There] is a cultural disconnect where police officers are unable to identify with the people they are policing.”

   “There was a time when law enforcement knew people in the community and how long people have lived there, whereas nowadays there’s lack of learning on both ends. If we don’t trust, that person is in a state of fear where we protect ourselves.”

There is a perception that police officers paint them and their communities with a negative brush and provide inferior service as a result.

   “Police assume that each (black) person they stop or pullover is on parole or probation, or a gang member.”


“They approach us with disrespect.”

There is a perception that other people in other communities get better service.

“I should be treated the same way as the person up the street, the person up the hill, the person over the mountain.”

“And like you said, unless they coming to get us, we calling, for instance, something happened to us, we’re waiting an hour, forty minutes, fifty minutes... Where I’m hanging in Beverly Hills and I’m seeing 30 seconds, one minute response times no matter what it is... And I’m saying so how can that be when you’re riding around the community and you see cops all the time.”

Participants expressed a desire for a stronger relationship and for positive interactions with law enforcement.

“I want to know them like I know my postman.”

“What I would like to see from the police is that really cheesy utopia you’ll see in like Bob the Builder or some cartoon or… coloring books where you’ll see walking down the street some police officers and a black guy and a white person and everything’s fine. That really silly cheesy utopia, seeing that would be amazing.”

They expressed a desire for persistent community engagement through both community programming and daily interactions as a means of building trust.

“What if police officers and youth got together and did a yoga class? And they all had to look stupid and learn how to stretch together? ...I would love to see a big tall police officer do a downward dog. It would be funny, but more importantly, meditation and yoga are things that have been proven to help relieve stress and deal with anger management...that way we get together on equal ground.”

“The Newton station. They’re doing a fair. They block off the whole street. They want to show a little care for their community, but some people still don’t feel like that’s enough.

“Maybe just coming around…. get out the car, ask if anything is going on, does anyone need help with anything.”

They offered that LAPD officers should be encouraged to spend time out of their cars engaging with civilians in friendly ways. School and transit officers have a unique opportunity to build trust because of their frequent proximity to community members.

“I see cops at my school and they’re there to watch out for us but they never come up to us and ask how was your day, and come talk to us and see how was our day.”

“...Go out there for five minutes and walk around get out of your vehicle...I still to this day, every time I see an officer, like it or not, I say ‘hi,’ they don’t say back but I don’t care, what you going to do, kill me? I don’t care. That's it, just you know, talk, little baby steps.”
They described some potential hurdles to this kind of community engagement.

“A lot of them call the police, but then in the same breath, they don’t want to talk to the police because they’re afraid if they call them things could escalate to a whole other level...You know we have this big thing – stop snitching.”

“We do have solutions but we don’t know that it’ll work because there’s always that one person who wants to be introverted that doesn’t want nothing to do with nobody else, who’s always angry at everybody, and there’s always that one person in each community. So that one person might mess it up for everybody else.”

2. Recruitment

Participants expressed a desire for community engagement through the active recruitment of officers from the community.

“So who are the police actually hiring? They actually hiring people from the actual community, they’re placing them there because you know in hostile situations sometimes it’s best to see a face from the community, you know what I’m saying. Somebody you know you can always trust.”

“We want more police, better police, and more black police. But more police to improve safety in our community also increases danger to us from them.”

They advised that current policies be amended to allow for broader recruitment.

“Selecting only ‘squeaky clean’ recruits means you get people who don’t have any experience with conflict and dealing with problems. For example, if a recruit had a previous minor brush with the law or has a relative who is a gang member, that shouldn’t automatically rule out hiring him.”

“Most guys like me we’re disqualified by the age of 11 or 13 because they put a record on us, a little misdemeanor, so we can’t be a cop, or we have problems with our credit so they eliminate us.”

B. Transparency

“Do they have rules?”

Participants expressed a lack of knowledge and a desire to know about current community policing trainings, policy, procedure and accountability methods. They also expressed a sense that the police do not generally operate with transparency.

“Do they have rules? Do they get cited by people? Who is citing them?”

“And then, after a while, it feels like you don’t even have someone you’re looking for anymore – you’re looking for anybody. And that’s why I go back to the word powerless – I don’t know what your technique is. I don’t know how…I guess I’m not supposed to because that’s supposed to make me feel safer, but it doesn’t because then everybody’s a target out here. You know, where’s the transparency?”
Participants expressed a desire for consistency and predictability in standard police procedure, particularly around routine stops.

“It would be so ideal if citizens knew what to expect when they got pulled over as well as cops, almost like there’s a playbook. If A happens then B happens if B happens then C happens and you either get your ticket or go about your way. There’s always kind of like every pull-over is different.”

“So I go ‘excuse me they have rights and you’re violating them, you don’t have the right to ask them that question. You give us our ticket, slide it through the window, and let’s all go.’ And they just get mad at me, saying ‘you need to know your place you need to know what you’re doing you’re infringing us from doing our job.’”

C. Accountability

“Who do you call when a police (officer) is coming at you?”

Participants expressed that officers who do not comport with community police trainings, policy, or procedure, and officers who violate police procedure by demonstrating bias, racism, unnecessary violence, or aggression, should receive additional training and/or be held accountable for their actions and the community should be made aware of accountability practices (see transparency).

“These police were found to be out of policy. But there was no punishment, no consequences…. Even though the Police Commission found him out of policy they are incapable making a judgment call about punishment. What we’ve got here are the police policing the police.”

“No policeman is going to jail for killing a black man.”

“When we call 911 in our neighborhoods, they do not come until the next day, or they won’t show at all...You should get fired. If I’m a pizza delivery [guy] and I’m supposed to deliver you my pizza, I think I’m about to get some money taken off of my check because I didn’t deliver the pizza on time... It should be the same way how every other job is. There should be no discrimination.”

“And me personally I feel like you should lose your job if you disobey your orders or break the laws. Y’all should have laws. I don’t know if they have rules or things like that. You guys probably heard the phrase…police in general are the biggest gang. They’re unstoppable. I’m not sure who regulates them.”

Participants expressed a sense of powerlessness in the face of an all-powerful police force.

“Do you value my life? Do you care for my life? Does my life matter? Or am I ticket until you get a pay raise? Or am I another arrest so you get a high arrest record? What am I to you? That’s why I feel so powerless, because I don’t even feel human anymore sometimes.”
“There are females that get harassed by police. You never hear anybody talking about it… they’re supposed to protect you, so who do you call when a police (officer) is coming at you?”

D. Training & Procedure

“Training should include a ‘practicum in the community.’”

Participants indicated that they were sometimes unaware of what trainings officers received, but said that every officer (from the top down) should be trained in community policing. This might include cultural competency training and neighborhood competency training. Training might also include a history lesson on the relationship between law enforcement and the black community in Los Angeles.

“Part of their training needs to be a history and cultural context of Los Angeles so that way when they go into a situation with a Latino or Black person they have a little bit more cultural understanding with what they’re dealing with...”

“Training should include a ‘practicum’ in the community. Rookies should hang out in parks and walk kids home from school.”

“We don’t know how they’re trained. Whatever they’re trained on has to be dated. Technology moves faster than police training I’m pretty sure.”

Participants expressed that law enforcement was created to enforce racist policies and systems and this has not been fully extracted from today’s police force or its training.

“The police force was created to control the poor and minorities, and the laws were created to reflect this. So actually the police are just doing their job. This is a societal problem, not just an LA problem.”

“Officer training encourages them to reach for their guns, especially if the person is running. There are many more shootings now than there were in the 1970s.”

“The police officers historically were created to be slave catchers…when you have a root like that, it’s farther than just ‘we need to teach cops how to be good people,’ it’s ‘we need to change the root, we need to change the system.’”

Participants recommended specific training to combat systemic and historic racism, such as training in the history of LAPD-community relations and understanding how to deal with community trauma.

“We all have to go to school. They need to go to school on history. They need to learn about the immigration patterns from El Salvador in the 80s and how it impacted the Black community…Why don’t they know what happened to Rodney King, but also Latasha Harlins? Like, are they learning the history of Los Angeles and how all that history has built-in and made us? ...Our history constantly gets buried.”
“Do they realize that the community as a whole suffers from PTSD from the trauma of the history of their interactions with police officers?”

Participants expressed that officers should be regularly trained in de-escalation, racial bias testing, and treating people with dignity and respect (even when they do not perceive the community as treating officers with dignity and respect).

“It shouldn’t be a person’s responsibility to deescalate. That should be the police.”

“They should take a test to see if they are racist or not. Questions to see if they’re racist – if they stereotype us, or look at us, see where their headspace is. I wouldn’t want them to think they just have this overwhelming power over us.”

“An officer should follow their protocol, I shouldn’t have to follow a certain protocol to adjust to an officer…They’re trained to handle situations…I wasn’t trained to handle a situation. I had to look from experiences of what happens when you don’t act a certain way…you either ended up arrested or worse.”

Participants said that officers should be trained and engage in respectful customer service.

“Don’t jump to conclusions so quickly. I understand their job is risky …they don’t know if you’ve got guns in your house …so they’re quick to cover themselves. But I think maybe they need to go through some programs to teach them people skills so they know to collaborate better with people they come in contact with.”

“There should be a way to rate your officer after an interaction – ‘please rate your overall experience, is there anything you would like to tell us,’ like an uber driver. That officer goes to a review board particularly when someone is getting several bad ratings.”

Participants discussed that working as a police officer can be difficult, stressful, and perhaps traumatic, and that officers should be provided with regular support, opportunities for stress relief, and counseling.

“They are also exposed to a lot of trauma with their jobs too, so kind of could measure how they are doing too.”

“Police are exposed to danger. Police upper management needs to recognize that and provide support and reduction/release from the stress and tension this causes. But police who can’t handle the job even with that kind of support should be removed.”

E. Additional Findings & Recommendations

Participants often discussed the special considerations involved in trying to “stay safe” during police-community interactions, particularly for youth.

“My dad tries to tell me how to deal with the cops, like be friendly and super cool, not aggressive…I guess how to survive basically.”

“I suffer from mild hearing loss in my left ear, so (my mom) is fearful that I might not hear (directions from an officer) and that might be the reason why I’m gone.”
“We all do it. When I’m driving on the freeway, we’re doing nothing wrong. Then you hear sirens, you go perfect [participant straightened up and ‘drove’ with a smile].”

Participants shared interactions that they described as unnecessary, unfair, or based in a misconception of their behavior.

“I remember one night I was running home not too far from here and I had a cop shine a light on me. I was just running because I was trying to get home in time before I get in trouble, and he was shining this giant light on me, and I was like oh crap – in my mind I’m like it’s a gang – someone’s trying to shoot me.”

“I don’t understand how if I’m walking and I’m a naturally person like this [makes angry face] why does that mean you have to come and harass me? Because I can’t walk happy. I can’t walk around here smiling like how I walk in my neighborhood. I will get stabbed. I will get robbed. Something will happen to me.”

Participants expressed appreciation for being heard in an open and secure forum and expressed a desire for action as a result. There was both hope and skepticism that action would follow.

“The dialogues themselves get us information but don’t change things in the community. Next steps should be to have some more, broader participation.”

“You can take all this data but unless you address that system, this data is just going to be another – I’m not saying this to belittle this process, I’m glad that you’re doing this – but this is a system that we have to understand.”

Appendix H includes a full listing of Community-Sourced Recommendations that arose during the dialogues.

F. Summary of Questionnaires

At the end of each dinner, the HRC provided all participants with a questionnaire to get a glimpse of participants’ feelings about their experience. The research team reviewed the questionnaires and identified themes in the responses.

The overwhelming majority of responses reflected an appreciation of the dialogues as the beginning of an open-ended conversation about police-community relations. Participants appreciated the chance to dialogue and interact with others generally, and also expressed a hope that action and policy change might result from the dialogues. Various participants expressed an appreciation for being heard and having a voice. Questions and response themes are listed in detail in Appendix I.

G. HRC Recommendations

As a result of these findings, the HRC recommends the LAPD and Police Commission utilize the HRC’s methodology of small dinner dialogues to gain community perspectives and recommendations to inform policy. Once these dialogues are held, the HRC recommends communicating with participants to thank them for their participation and let them know law enforcement listened and have taken or will take action as a result. Where possible, the HRC
recommends adopting feasible community recommendations that would enhance public safety and police-community trust (See Appendix H).

VI. Conclusion

The HRC held a series of nine dinner dialogues with African American community members in South Los Angeles to elicit honest community input, perceptions, and recommendations around policing.

The methodology of these dinner dialogues, which was designed to create a safe space for honest conversation, can be a powerful tool for the Police Commission to better understand community perceptions and gain community input. This act of good faith listening can be an important starting point for building trust with communities.

The perceptions and recommendations expressed by community members and detailed in the above themes provide invaluable insight that the Police Commission and LAPD may use to inform policies, practices, and outreach.

The HRC recommends the LAPD and Police Commission periodically utilize the HRC’s methodology of small dinner dialogues with a neutral facilitator to gain community perspectives and recommendations to inform policy with the African American and other communities. Once dialogues are held, the HRC recommends communicating with participants to thank them for their participation and let them know law enforcement listened and have taken or will take action as a result. Where possible, the HRC recommends adopting feasible community recommendations that would enhance public safety and police-community trust.

VII. Appendices

A. Appendix A: Program Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Commissioners in attendance</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HRC developed a suggested methodology for gaining honest community input in response to outreach by Police Commissioner Cynthia McClain-Hill.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 20, 2018</td>
<td>A Place Called Home (29th St/S. Central Ave, 90011)</td>
<td>HRC Commissioner Nirinjan Khalsa</td>
<td>Adult Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 21, 2018</td>
<td>A Place Called Home (29th St/S.</td>
<td>HRC Commissioner Courtney Morgan-Greene</td>
<td>Youth Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 13, 2019</td>
<td>Coalition for Responsible Community Development (28th St/S. Central Ave, 90011)</td>
<td>HRC Commissioner Amna Qazi</td>
<td>Adult Dinner</td>
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<td>*The HRC postponed the remaining dinners to 2019 to use a revised outreach strategy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 12, 2019</td>
<td>Tolliver’s Barbershop (Florence/Western Ave, 90047)</td>
<td>Police Commissioner Steve Soboroff; Police Commissioner Dale Bonner; HRC Commissioner Anthony Mack</td>
<td>Adult Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 26, 2019</td>
<td>Holman United Methodist Church (Arlington/W. Adams Blvd, 90018)</td>
<td>HRC Commissioner Harout Semerdjian; No Police Commissioner was available to attend.</td>
<td>Adult Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 28, 2019</td>
<td>Masjid Bilal (S. Central Ave/Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, 90011)</td>
<td>Police Commissioner Eileen Decker; HRC Commissioner Angelica Solis-Montero</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 3, 2019</td>
<td>First African Methodist Episcopal Church (25th St/S. Harvard Blvd, 90018)</td>
<td>HRC Commissioner Rosa Russell; No Police Commissioner was available to attend</td>
<td>Youth Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5, 2019</td>
<td>YO! Watts YouthSource Center (Century Blvd/Holmes Ave, 90002)</td>
<td>Police Commissioner Eileen Decker; HRC Commissioner Melany Dela Cruz-Viesca</td>
<td>Youth Dinner</td>
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The methodology used in this and the prior initial dinners provided a basis for the HRC’s pilot program.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
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<tr>
<td>Safe and Trusted Spaces</td>
<td>Community-centered, inclusive, and familiar environments lead to more open and honest dialogue and willingness for a broad cross-section of the community to share their authentic voices and personal experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue over Debate</td>
<td>Conversations take place with mutually agreed-upon principles to ensure respectful, productive discussions and a shared goal of developing solution-oriented outcomes.</td>
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<td>Community-Oriented Approach</td>
<td>Public servants, by nature, are responsible for meeting community needs and therefore must proactively listen to community needs and implement community-based solutions.</td>
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<td>Value of Listening</td>
<td>Listening to and understanding the source of individual and community perceptions and opinions is an inherently valuable component of any community engagement effort and key to building trust.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moving Toward Shared Understanding</td>
<td>By sharing differing perspectives, it becomes possible to move diverse or opposing positions to places of mutual understanding and compassion. Further, mutual understanding can prevent conflict, reduce tensions, and help identify policy and program gaps and opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Civic engagement efforts should aim to meet community members where they are, making resources and opportunities for input easily available and user-friendly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow-through</td>
<td>While civic engagement efforts and dialogues are valuable in and of themselves, their ultimate success lies in the government entity’s ability and willingness to respond to the expressed needs of community members with tangible policies and programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restorative Practice and Policy</td>
<td>Policies and programs that put the health and wellbeing of a community first, and that directly respond to expressed community needs in a personalized way, have the power to transform government and community for the better.</td>
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| Participants expressed frustration that officers know very little about them as individuals or about the rich culture and history of their communities. | “[There] is a cultural disconnect where police officers are unable to identify with the people they are policing.”  
“There was a time when law enforcement knew people in the community and how long people have lived there, whereas nowadays there’s lack of learning on both ends. If we don’t trust, that person is in a state of fear where we protect ourselves.” |
| There is a perception that police officers paint them and their communities with a negative brush and provide inferior service as a result. | “Police assume that each (black) person they stop or pullover is on parole or probation, or a gang member.”  
“They approach us with disrespect.”  
“Where I grew up, my mom made sure I didn’t carry my family’s last name. If you had that last name, they automatically attached you to what…the men in my family did.”  
“I got pulled over just on a random stop and pulled out my car and I’m not on parole, probation, ain’t never been to jail in my life, and then being frisked early in the morning, and it was [voice cracking] … yea, that’s my truth.”  
“Look at us. We’re black and it’s like our skin is contagious.”  
“The way they handle it is not in the way they should handle it. They stopped (me and my cousin) and put lights on us, they put us against the gate, thinking we’re somebody that we’re not. That happens a lot.”  
“The police rounded up all the black kids in my predominantly white high school. They said that it was because an unrelated gang member had entered the school and made threats.”  
“As a black man in general I feel like you put fear into police’s hearts. Black men in general already have some perception…darker taller males are more likely to get approached than their white counterparts.”  
“I’ve had many (encounters) over the years of being a black man, a teenager…generally the first position is one of impatience and disrespect. That’s usually what comes first. Some change their position because of how I sound and how I present myself to them.” |
<table>
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<th>There’s an attitude toward me until I speak to them. The first contact they’re assuming I’m this criminal.”</th>
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<tr>
<td>“No more stereotyping…I don’t want to be judged just by something I wear. Just anybody in general just because they wear something or carry themselves in a certain way I’m not going to judge them based on how they act.”</td>
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<td>There is a perception that other people in other communities get better service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I should be treated the same way as the person up the street, the person up the hill, the person over the mountain.”</td>
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<td>“And like you said, unless they coming to get us, we calling for instance something happened to us, we’re waiting an hour, forty minutes, fifty minutes...Where I’m hanging in Beverly Hills and I’m seeing 30 seconds, one minute response times no matter what it is...And I’m saying so how can that be when you’re riding around the community and you see cops all the time.”</td>
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<td>Participants expressed a desire for a stronger relationship and for positive interactions with law enforcement.</td>
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<td>“I want to know them like I know my postman.”</td>
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<td>“What I would like to see from the police is that really cheesy utopia you’ll see in like Bob the Builder or some cartoon or… coloring books where you’ll see walking down the street some police officers and a black guy and a white person and everything’s fine. That really silly cheesy utopia, seeing that would be amazing.”</td>
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<td>“I can rely on you. That is what trust means to me. I can call you and you’ll be there.”</td>
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<td>“To protect and serve, that means a lot. When I think of protect and serve I think of my brother, I want to protect him, I have a son, I want to protect and serve him…putting their needs in front of my own.”</td>
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<td>“My brother was murdered back in 2013. We still don’t know who killed my brother. A lot of those things go unsolved in our neighborhood because the police they’re overwhelmed with so many cases that they can’t really focus on this case. It hurts, because we want these people…to get caught…but the police have so many things on their shoulders. We as a community could help with that as far as community policing but we can’t do that when we’re like this (punches fists together).”</td>
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| They expressed a desire for persistent community engagement through both community programming and daily interactions as a means of building trust. | “What if police officers and youth got together and did a yoga class? And they all had to look stupid and learn how to stretch together? ...I would love to see a big tall police officer do a downward dog. It would be funny but more importantly meditation and yoga are things that have been proven to help relieve stress and deal with anger management...that way we get together on equal ground.”

“The Newton station. They’re doing a fair. They block off the whole street. They want to show a little care for their community, but some people still don’t feel like that’s enough.

“Maybe just coming around.... get out the car ask if anything is going on, does anyone need help with anything.”

“I want to follow up with cops involving themselves in everyday events in the community...we get to see them as human beings just as we are.”

“Trust is something that can’t be gained in a day.”

“I want to have leagues with basketball teams with the Police Department, with the Fire Department...like I said ‘I don’t want nothing to do with them’ instead say ‘I know a good police officer I play ball with, I work out with.’”

“Everybody is looking for overtime, and they’re paying it anyway, so might as well give it back in the community...where they’re doing stuff outside, not behind their badge, except badge with a t-shirt, where they’re working out with these kids, talking to them, hearing from the community, so they understand the community when they’re policing them behind the badge, when there’s going to be those tough situations trying to figure out.”

“The LAPD is attempting to move to community-based policing. They’ve come a long way.”

| They offered that LAPD officers should be encouraged to spend time out of their cars engaging with civilians in friendly ways. School and transit officers have a unique opportunity to build trust because of their frequent | “I see cops at my school and they’re there to watch out for us but they never come up to us and ask how was your day, and come talk to us and see how was our day.”

“...Go out there for five minutes and walk around get out of your vehicle...I still to this day, every time I see an officer, like it or not, I say ‘hi,’ they don’t say back but I don’t care, what you going to do, kill me? I don’t care. That’s it, just you know, talk, little baby steps.”

“I never had a bad experience ever with the police...Officer Lee has always been there.... He found out who my brother was and him
proximity to community members.

and my brother became cool and we still see him to this day and we still shake his hand. So I never had a bad experience with an officer.”

“Officer Whiteman takes my brother sometimes to football practice. He got him onto the football team and comes over and asks if we need anything and that’s how you build trust.”

“If police would walk rather than patrol in cars, and stop to interact—talk and listen—they would have a better reputation and be perceived more positively.”

They described some potential hurdles to this kind of community engagement.

“A lot of them call the police, but then in the same breath they don’t want to talk to the police because they’re afraid if they call them things could escalate to a whole other level...You know we have this big thing – stop snitching.”

“We do have solutions but we don’t know that it’ll work because there’s always that one person who wants to be introverted that doesn’t want nothing to do with nobody else, who’s always angry at everybody, and there’s always that one person in each community. So that one person might mess it up for everybody else.”

“They come the wrong way and bring guns. So most people don’t really call the police. And that’s what they’re supposed to be here for, to serve and protect. Some people are really getting harassed.”

“Have we ever thought about how we can work with the police to protect our communities together? Or are we always so angry and scared that we don’t even see how we could reach out and they could reach out, too. I know that’s a scary thing to think about, but it takes a village to raise a child, so it takes a community to fix a community. We all need to be in it together.”

“It’s like it’s creating trauma amongst each other – getting retaliation against other gang members around the community because nobody wants to talk to the police and down anyone out.”

“It’s safer not to deal with them than the uncertainty associated with dealing with them”

“We’re scared to come face to face with them. Some people really are terrified of the police and I mean so terrified. It’s hard to say oh, well we have police officers coming to a high school, we’re going to talk to them. Nine times out of ten probably two people will show up.”
Recruitment -
Participants expressed a desire for community engagement through the active recruitment of officers from the community.

“So who are the police actually hiring? They actually hiring people from the actual community, they’re placing them there because you know in hostile situations sometimes it’s best to see a face from the community, you know what I’m saying. Somebody you know you can always trust.”

“We want more police, better police, and more black police. But more police to improve safety in our community also increases danger to us from them.”

“LA could be a leader in having a police force that is proportional to the non-white population—but it’s far from that.”

“I think people should police their own people. I don’t think you should be able to live out in Culver City and come police in South LA, because like you said if you don’t wear the culture of what’s going on, if you don’t know that world, then how are you going to be able to relate to it? You need to live in the community where you police…people would be more caring of where they live.”

They advised that current policies be amended to allow for broader recruitment.

“Selecting only ‘squeaky clean’ recruits means you get people who don’t have any experience with conflict and dealing with problems. For example, if a recruit had a previous minor brush with the law or has a relative who is a gang member, that shouldn’t automatically rule out hiring him.”

“Most guys like me we’re disqualified by the age of 11 or 13 because they put a record on us, a little misdemeanor, so we can’t be a cop, or we have problems with our credit so they eliminate us”

“We need to start teaching and mentoring young black males about the benefits of being a good police officers…positively to be able to infiltrate and make a difference in their community.”

“They already systematically remove us from the process. I took the LAPD test and the first 20 questions were so stupid, that they eliminated me right away. You have to know how to take that test because a lot of questions just don’t make any sense.”

D. Appendix D: Transparency

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<td>Participants expressed a lack of knowledge and desire to know about current community</td>
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| Quotations |
| “Do they have rules? Do they get cited by people? Who is citing them?” |
Participants expressed a desire for consistency and predictability in standard police procedure, particularly around routine stops.

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<td>Participants expressed that officers who do not comport with community police trainings, policy or procedure and accountability methods. They also expressed a sense that the police do not generally operate with transparency.</td>
<td>“And then after a while it feels like you don’t even have someone you’re looking for anymore – you’re looking for anybody. And that’s why I go back to the word powerless – I don’t know what your technique is. I don’t know how…I guess I’m not supposed to because that’s supposed to make me feel safer, but it doesn’t because then everybody’s a target out here. You know, where’s the transparency?”</td>
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<td>“Who are they answerable to? All of the blatant incidents that are happening that really aren’t that questionable, but many of those cases they’ve gotten off because of a technicality. What are they able to do? What is the law?”</td>
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<td>“…my dad passed when I was five. So, me, I’m upset…with the police officers that they’re not taking the time to open the case and let us know that everything they have in progress is working or that they’re looking for this person, because I don’t know who killed my dad. And I’m still sitting here…I don’t know if they’re still working on the case. I don’t know nothing about it. So, that would be great so I could….ask questions about my dad.”</td>
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<td>“Are they incentivized to make arrests? Are they trained or told to make more arrests on Fridays? If you are arrested on Friday there’s no way you are getting processed until Tuesday if you can’t make bail.”</td>
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<td>“It would be so ideal if citizens knew what to expect when they got pulled over as well as cops, almost like there’s a playbook. If A happens then B happens if B happens then C happens and you either get your ticket or go about your way. There’s always kind of like every pull over is different.”</td>
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<td>“So I go ‘excuse me they have rights and you’re violating them, you don’t have the right to ask them that question. You give us our ticket, slide it through the window, and let’s all go.’ And they just get mad at me, saying ‘you need to know your place you need to know what you’re doing you’re infringing us from doing our job.’”</td>
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| procedure and violate police procedure by demonstrating bias, racism, unnecessary violence, or aggression should receive additional training and/or be held accountable for their actions and the community should be made aware of accountability practices (see transparency). | judgment call about punishment. What we’ve got here are the police policing the police.”

“No policeman is going to jail for killing a black man.”

“When we call 911 in our neighborhoods, they do not come until the next day, or they won’t show at all...You should get fired. If I’m a pizza delivery [guy] and I’m supposed to deliver you my pizza, I think I’m about to get some money taken off of my check because I didn’t deliver the pizza on time... It should be the same way how every other job is. There should be no discrimination.”

“And me personally I feel like you should lose your job if you disobey your orders or break the laws. Y’all should have laws. I don’t know if they have rules or things like that. You guys probably heard the phrase...police in general are the biggest gang. They’re unstoppable. I’m not sure who regulates them.”

“Can you trust them? You can trust some of them...cause there’s a lot of good cops out there, but we all know there’s a lot of bad ones too. And I feel the good cop need to start calling out, whether it’s a lieutenant or not, give them strength, to call out these higher ups because even if he’s signing his overtime, hey call him out for being wrong. Wrong is wrong at the end of the day.”

“There’s no whistle-blowing in the force. Police are a fraternity; they protect each other even if somebody does something wrong.”

“He saw that his partner had a Nazi tattoo on his back...he’s scared to do something because...He might lose his job and he has a family to feed. That’s what’s on the (good cops’) minds.”

“If more people knew the laws and spoke up when those laws were violated I think a lot more would be done

“(We) need regular monitoring of records of each active officer’s arrests, complaints against him or her, and use of weapons and force. Then intervene early.”

Participants expressed a sense of powerlessness in the face of an all-powerful police force. | “Do you value my life? Do you care for my life? Does my life matter? Or am I ticket until you get a pay raise? Or am I another arrest so you get a high arrest record? What am I to you? That’s why I feel so powerless, because I don’t even feel human anymore sometimes.”

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“There are females that get harassed by police. You never hear anybody talking about it… they’re supposed to protect you, so who do you call when a police (officer) is coming at you?”

“At the end of the day, you have a power I don’t have. And that power is the power to take or ruin my life. And more importantly, I don’t know where you stand as a human being?”

“He was touching all over me, making me feel very – he was emasculating myself as a man and I told him, ‘excuse me officer, I would appreciate it if you could stop now, you already searched me and grabbed every part of my body…can you stop now?’ and he was like ‘shut up I’m doing my job.’”

“You can’t respond, just let them do what they do.”

“I’ve actually been at a traffic stop when a police officer hopped out the car and was (gang) banging on us. You’re a commissioner. You don’t know nothing about what’s really going on in the hood.”

F. Appendix F: Training & Procedure

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<td>Participants indicated that they were sometimes unaware of what trainings officers received, but said that every officer (from the top down) should be trained in community policing. This might include cultural competency training and neighborhood competency training.</td>
<td>“Part of their training needs to be a history and cultural context of Los Angeles so that way when they go into a situation with a Latino or Black person they have a little bit more cultural understanding with what they’re dealing with…” “Training should include a ‘practicum’ in the community. Rookies should hang out in parks and walk kids home from school.” “We don’t know how they’re trained. Whatever they’re trained on has to be dated. Technology moves faster than police training I’m pretty sure.”</td>
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<td>Participants expressed that law enforcement was created to enforce racist policies and systems and this has not been fully extracted from today’s</td>
<td>“The police force was created to control the poor and minorities, and the laws were created to reflect this. So actually the police are just doing their job. This is a societal problem, not just an LA problem.” “Officer training encourages them to reach for their guns, especially if the person is running. There are many more shootings now than there were in the 1970s.”</td>
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| police force or its training. | “The police officers historically were created to be slave catchers...when you have a root like that it’s farther than just ‘we need to teach cops how to be good people,’ it’s ‘we need to change the root, we need to change the system.’”

“All these police agencies are getting all this war equipment. They’ve got armored vehicles, tanks. They’re ready for war. California in the next 50 years will be a total police state.”

“A lot of police are ex-military...it’s two totally different jobs and skillsets...when you’re in the military you’re trained to kill first. We don’t know who’s friends we don’t know who’s enemies.”

“When I was 20, it was going on. My nephews are now 20, it’s still going on.” |
| Participants recommended specific training to combat systemic and historic racism, such as training in the history of LAPD-community relations, understanding how to deal with community trauma, and exploring innovative restorative justice practices. | “We all have to go to school. They need to go to school on history. They need to learn about the immigration patterns from El Salvador in the 80s and how it impacted the Black community...Why don’t they know what happened to Rodney King, but also Latasha Harlins? Like, are they learning the history of Los Angeles and how all that history has built-in and made us? ...Our history constantly gets buried.”

“Do they realize that the community as a whole suffers from PTSD from the trauma of the history of their interactions with police officers?”

“Just after I had graduated from high school, I was driving my shiny new car and kept getting pulled over. I was wearing a hat that the police assumed showed I was in a gang. I took off the hat and didn’t get pulled over anymore.”

“There should be other avenues where they put kids in so that they can occupy their time. I think that’s preventative, so it will be less of a headache for them...Diversion programs give cops an option besides arresting or letting someone go.”

“Law enforcement should work with the legal system to exonerate people who have been wrongly incarcerated.”

“(They need to) use critical thinking and better or more creative techniques to locate suspects as opposed to stopping people based on race and clothing descriptions.”

“Invest in the community with education...the ultimate goal in my opinion is less prisons and more educational programs.” |
Participants expressed that officers should be regularly trained in de-escalation, racial bias testing, and treating people with dignity and respect (even when they do not perceive the community as treating officers with dignity and respect).

| | “It shouldn’t be a person’s responsibility to deescalate. That should be the police.” |
| | “They should take a test to see if they are racist or not. Questions to see if they’re racist – if they stereotype us, or look at us, see where their headspace is. I wouldn’t want them to think they just have this overwhelming power over us.” |
| | “An officer should follow their protocol, I shouldn’t have to follow a certain protocol to adjust to an officer…I’m trained to handle situations…I wasn’t trained to handle a situation. I had to look from experiences of what happens when you don’t act a certain way…you either ended up arrested or worse.” |
| | “If a police tells me something, I don’t care. Shoot me if you want to. I don’t care because I know I’m right and I’m going to die trying before I let you disrespect me.” |
| | “They should know that a badge doesn’t equal a bully. Doesn’t mean they can do whatever they want. They should change from serve and protect to protect and respect.” |
| | “They approach us with disrespect.” |
| | “I’ve had many (encounters) over the years of being a black man, a teenager…generally the first position is one of impatience and disrespect. That’s usually what comes first. Some change their position because of how I sound and how I present myself to them. There’s an attitude toward me until I speak to them. The first contact they’re assuming I’m this criminal.” |
| | “They were talking to me like I was the scum of the earth. And I was an honors student.” |

Participants said that interactions should be trained and engage in respectful customer service.

| | “Don’t jump to conclusions so quickly. I understand their job is risky…they don’t know if you’ve got guns in your house…so they’re quick to cover themselves. But I think maybe they need to go through some programs to teach them people skills so they know to collaborate better with people they come in contact with.” |
| | “There should be a way to rate your officer after an interaction – ‘please rate your overall experience, is there anything you would like to tell us,’ like an uber driver. That officer goes to a review board particularly when someone is getting several bad ratings.” |
| | “I feel like the wording and communication just needs to be better, like saying ‘I am here for you if you need anything’ like the wording that reassurance even if you’re walking to someone that’s tense, or” |
Participants discussed that working as a police officer can be difficult, stressful, and perhaps traumatic, and that officers should be provided with regular support, opportunities for stress relief, and counseling.

They are also exposed to a lot of trauma with their jobs too, so kind of could measure how they are doing too.”

Police are exposed to danger. Police upper management needs to recognize that and provide support and reduction/release from the stress and tension this causes. But police who can’t handle the job even with that kind of support should be removed.”

(They should) do something to have a good time or relieve stress before going out on duty.”

There’s a lot that can go on within a day. At the end of the week, the beginning of the week…they can evaluate their emotional, mental strength to see whether they can handle the situation or if they need a break.”

Take a damn therapy class. Mentally, physically, emotionally we don’t know what they’re going through, what’s in their head, or what they can do to us…continuously. Monthly. Just to see what’s on their mind, how’s everything in the field.”

I would focus more on mental health. Our officers are human as well. They’re going through these experiences, those little interactions can be traumatizing to them, focusing on coping mechanisms, being mindful, self-care, hopefully deescalate some of this tension.”

They all want to go home at the end of the day, so you need to think about that, that you have a family to go home to, and so does everybody else who you come across.”

G. Appendix G: Additional Themes and Recommendations

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| Participants often discussed the special considerations involved in trying to “stay safe” during police-community interactions, particularly for youth. | “My dad tries to tell me how to deal with the cops, like be friendly and super cool, not aggressive…I guess how to survive basically.”

“I suffer from mild hearing loss in my left ear, so (my mom) is fearful that I might not hear (directions from an officer) and that might be the reason why I’m gone.” |
“We all do it. When I’m driving on the freeway, we’re doing nothing wrong. Then you hear sirens, you go perfect [participant straightened up and ‘drove’ with a smile].”

“My parents are always telling me…when you talk to a police officer you want to be respectful. If I’m getting pulled over and I have a bad police officer and I’m giving him attitude, of course that situation’s going to go right down. I think people don’t take responsibility.”

“When you’re in a hostile situation already, if you did everything right but the police officer is having a bad day, you don’t know how to determine what to say or how to handle.”

“I’ve actually never had an encounter with a police officer on the streets, by the grace of God. And the reason I say by the grace of God, is because I know my peers have had multiple encounters with police. And I often look at myself and ask ‘what’s the difference? Is it because I’m in a suit all day?’ I don’t understand it and if it is because of the suit, then that’s a problem…It’s been suggested already that sometimes police think they know what the bad guys look like. I know more bad guys in suits.”

“People believe they need to be wary of police and show respect whether or not the police are respectful to them. They believe that they must be taught what to do and how to act if stopped. This is not something most white kids have to learn.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants shared interactions that they described as unnecessary, unfair, or based in a misconception of their behavior.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I remember one night I was running home not too far from here and I had a cop shine a light on me. I was just running because I was trying to get home in time before I get in trouble, and he was shining this giant light on me, and I was like oh crap – in my mind I’m like it’s a gang – someone’s trying to shoot me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t understand how if I’m walking and I’m a naturally person like this [makes angry face] why does that mean you have to come and harass me? Because I can’t walk happy. I can’t walk around here smiling like how I walk in my neighborhood. I will get stabbed. I will get robbed. Something will happen to me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was jogging to junior high school at 7:30 one morning. An LAPD car came up, they told me to put my hands on the hood of the car. They searched my schoolbooks and everything I had, without ever explaining why.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was just hanging out with friends. The police put us in a patrol car and let us out in the neighborhood of an opposing gang.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I told them I don’t want to be patted down because I’m not comfortable with that. The black officer said ‘listen to what he had to say’ and I said I don’t feel comfortable with being patted down. So they just backed off from there. So I’m like okay why was that necessary.”

“I’m 8, 9 years old and they’re really patting me down….they didn’t even apologize. It’s a toss-up.”

“If I’m pulled over because I don’t have my lights on, they’re coming at me with guns at my window. Guns.”

Participants expressed appreciation for being heard in an open and secure forum, and expressed a desire for action as a result. There was both hope and skepticism that action would follow.

“The dialogues themselves get us information but don’t change things in the community. Next steps should be to have some more, broader participation.”

“You can take all this data but unless you address that system, this data is just going to be another – I’m not saying this to belittle this process, I’m glad that you’re doing this – but this is a system that we have to understand.”

“People are taking a stand…things have to happen and they have to go beyond this table.”

“Next steps should be to hold groups of other ethnicities.”

“Nipsey dying showed what the community really felt about itself…the gang walk…shows the will to change. If the community can do that, the police can too.”

“This meeting is part of the system’s conversation. We don’t have a conversation for that.”

“For change to happen I think something world shattering would have to happen…we can march, we can make policy, we can protest all we want, we can talk all we want, but it’s all in one ear and out the other…I can sit here face to face and say ‘I feel this way,’ but there’s no guarantee you’re going to listen.”

H. Appendix H: Full Listing of Community-Sourced Recommendations

Recruitment and screening

- Recruit from the neighborhoods where officers will serve. This might require changing some of the stringent measures that disqualify candidates.
- Screen for why a person wants to be a police officer.
- Screen for implicit and explicit racism, PSTD, inclination towards violence, emotional problems (e.g., hair-trigger temper).
Training and Duty Assignment

- Address recruitment and screening topics throughout initial and continual training.
- Assign officers to the neighborhood they live in (which depends on recruiting from that neighborhood). These officers should know and understand the history, culture, and dynamics of a community, get to know individual community members, and take part in community activities.
- Get officers out of cars: walk the neighborhood; go into barbershops, talk to community members outside of stops, etc.; visit schools in positive way (hang out with youth and get to know them). Officers who serve in schools or areas of transit have a particular opportunity to get to know and “look out for” those community members they see regularly, and to keep trying to build relationships even when they are initially met with suspicion.
- Better training about use of guns and other force, especially when not to deploy them.
- Anger and frustration about profiling and targeting (people stopped just for “driving while black” or “walking while black”). Is there training that can overcome this?
- Police often function out of fear for their own safety. Is there a way to dispel that fear through orientation, training, and statistics?
- Train officers that the posture of a victim can often mimic the posture of a perpetrator.
- Train officers not to intimidate community by unnecessarily using lights, elevated voices or profanity, not to put community on hot hoods of the police cars unnecessarily, not to detain or line up individuals on the curbs and against walls unnecessarily.
- Train officers to speak to the children in the home when they respond to an incident. This can be as simple as a brief hello and a smile or more extended to inquire about the welfare of the child and assure them that they are there to make sure everyone is safe.
- Listen to physical complaints during arrest so as not to unnecessarily injure medically compromised individuals.
- Train officers that some people are taught that police officers are a threat and will run and hide even if they have done nothing wrong.
- Provide an LAPD 101 training providing the history of the LAPD and the history with the community. Teach officers that none of us created this problem, we inherited it but we are the ones who can fix the problem.
- Conduct cultural competency and cultural sensitivity trainings.
- Explicitly train that officers are in South LA to protect and serve the people of South LA rather than protect the people of LA from South LA.
- Train officers about the richness and culture of South LA, including its people and establishments. Have community members help conduct this training.
- Train officers that the people of South LA often have PTSD and that they have the fight or flight mechanism perpetually turned on, and train officers on how to deal with individuals and communities with PTSD, and with individuals with mental health problems in general.
- Train officers to be respectful to the community and treat the community with dignity.
- Train in de-escalation and respect even when the community member is perceived as being disrespectful or hostile.
- Train officers to not discourage or become hostile when community members inquire about or assert what they perceive to be their rights.
- Train all officers from the top down in community policing on an ongoing basis.
- Train officers to provide the same customer service citywide.
- Train officers to be empathetic.

**Monitoring and Oversight**

- Take complaints and concerns from public seriously and follow through with the officer(s) involved.
- Be especially thorough investigating use of firearms and other force.
- Document and pay attention to repeated problems shown by specific officers; intervene early; remove them from the force if necessary.
- Publicize results of the above actions so that the public knows they are being heard and their concerns addressed.
- Provide regular and wraparound mental health support to officers. Allow space for officers to relieve stress and take time off when necessary.

**More Respect & Better Accountability**

- Take above points to the highest levels of City governance.
- Treat people with respect – say “hello” first, be clear about why an interaction is happening.
- Be explicit and educate the community about how general stops should go and what officers should not do during a stop.
- Utilize a greater “customer service” style approach to law enforcement, with similar reward and punishment structures (i.e. a rating system based on interactions).
- Officers should apologize for inappropriately stopping and questioning someone.
- Realize that it’s not just individual officers who transgress or prevent accountability, but often the ones a step or two above them in the police hierarchy.
- Publicize results of complaints so that public knows they are being heard and their concerns addressed.
- Be transparent in actions taken (don’t hide police wrongdoing).
- Invest more deeply in community resources and restorative justice efforts; provide and invest in alternatives to arrests.

1. **Appendix I: Summary of themes from Dinner Dialogue Questionnaires**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you like about your experience today?</td>
<td>The beginning of an (open-ended, transparent) conversation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction/dialogue</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt that something would be done/there would be a change (a plan of action/possible solutions)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt I was heard/had a voice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe/respected place to voice an opinion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate what goes on in my community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group format</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to discuss issues/openness/honesty</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences of opinion/diverse group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of concern/passion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got a place to voice an opinion/express how I feel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent (session)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned new things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazing facilitation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What would you have changed about your experience today?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Have police chief present</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a microphone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger turn-out/larger group</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend more time on developing solutions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More diversity (no Hispanics present)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back and forth discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch commanders should be there</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Deadly when necessary” is not reasonable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(We should) keep in touch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindset of officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control speaker time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is there anything you would like to add that you did not have the chance to say during the dinner?</strong></td>
<td><strong>More public comment when police do something wrong.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People should be told what to do when police accost you</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give officers a VR test</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Institute community-based training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The youth programs that the police department has</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you have any recommendations for local organizations or partners that would be interested in learning more about this program?</strong></td>
<td>Church/school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some town halls at some local nonprofits</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTROC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD Tech, Youth Build, LATTC, Trust South LA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sororities and fraternities, student groups at schools, NAMI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td><strong>More young people should be included</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>