**HRC Transmittal of Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center Report
"City of Mountain View Human Relations Commission: Community Stories of
Experiences with Mountain View Police"**

November 2020

Dear Mountain View City Council, Police Department, and Community Members:

The Spring of 2020 saw some of Mountain View's largest local protests, arising from a national movement for racial justice and police reform sparked by the killing of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer. The community turned to the City, and to the Human Relations Commission (HRC), to address community-police relations in our city.

In response, the HRC formed a subcommittee to collect stories from Mountain View residents, workers, community leaders, and visitors about their interactions with Mountain View police. By engaging in this work, the HRC sought to address two objectives:

1. Provide a comfortable space for sharing personal stories that increase visibility and understanding of local police interaction with the community

2. Gather information for an HRC report to the Mountain View Police Department and City Council to help inform future police policy and programs

The HRC was committed to inclusivity, making sure to reach diverse voices, including non-English language speakers and those with limited access to technology.

Attached is the report authored by the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) that is the culmination of months of this story-collecting effort. PCRC is a non-profit partner with deep and broad community engagement experience that facilitated community forums at which many stories were collected, and themes were reported and discussed. The report was made possible by close collaboration between PCRC, the HRC, and City staff, as well as the participation of many community members who shared their time and stories with us. We thank you for your trust and faith in this process and in us.

How We Engaged the Community

In order to gather stories from the Mountain View community, we held four virtual listening forums over Zoom, hosted an online portal for anonymous story submissions for almost two months, and conducted one-on-one interviews with community members.

- The four listening forums were conducted online via Zoom video conferencing from August 31 through September 24 and had a total of 87 participants. The English language forum had 45 participants; the youth forum (in English, for ages 15-24) had 15 participants; the Spanish language forum had 10 participants; and the Mandarin language forum had 17 participants.

- The online portal was available for approximately eight weeks. Fifty stories were submitted through this site in English, one was submitted in Spanish, and no stories were submitted in Chinese.

- The one-on-one interviews were conducted by the members of the HRC Subcommittee on Community-Police Relations, either in person or over the phone. Of the 45 people interviewed, 26 were unstably housed or homeless. Others interviewed were nonprofit and community leaders, business managers, and volunteers in Mountain View. Some were interviewed in Spanish.

Through all of these methods, a total of 183 individuals contributed stories to this report, which were then coded according to common themes that emerged.

Interpreting the Data

Before presenting a numerical breakdown of these themes, we want readers to bear in mind key limitations with respect to whose voices are represented in this analysis. The data collected reflect a convenience sample - that is, people who were willing and able to share experiences through one of the story gathering methods described above.

It is important to note that while City staff and HRC Subcommittee members engaged in months of extensive outreach and took many steps to create a supportive environment for sharing (including offering interpreting services, providing small-group facilitation, and taking measures to promote confidentiality), there were limits to participation. For example, while those who attended the online forums participated actively, overall attendance at three of the forums (youth, Spanish language, and Mandarin language) was relatively low; nearly all stories submitted via the online portal were written in English; and fear and discomfort with disclosing experiences with police were likely barriers to participation for all groups.

The experiences and themes reflected in the data cannot be generalized to the entire population of Mountain View or to particular subpopulations. However, the stories gathered still provide a robust set of data reflecting the lived experiences and voices of the numerous community members who shared their stories with us.

Story Themes

Themes expressing satisfaction with Mountain View police (total 82 mentions) included:

- 29 mentions of General Expressions of Satisfaction (e.g., good, great, grateful)

- 21 mentions of Positive Police Community Relations (e.g., police presence built trust, left a positive impression)

- 12 mentions of Helpful Police Assistance (e.g., addressed issues like car breakdown)

- 10 mentions of Pleasant Police Interactions (e.g., friendly, caring)

- 7 mentions of Felt Safe Due to Police (e.g., police response brought reassurance)

- 3 mentions of Good Effect on School Environment (e.g., School Resource Officers [SROs])

Themes expressing concern with or improvement needed in Mountain View police (total 266 mentions) included:

- 43 mentions of Domineering Police Behavior (e.g., bullying, overbearing, heavy-handed, arrogant)

- 42 mentions of Race-based / Biased Treatment (e.g., due to race, accent, appearance, victim-blaming)

- 41 mentions of Police Not the Appropriate Personnel (e.g., mental health needs, SROs, non-emergency situations)

- 35 mentions of Need for Police Training (e.g., de-escalations, communication, age-appropriateness)

- 34 mentions of Lack of Trust in Police (e.g., fear, avoidance, hesitance to call)

- 27 mentions of Negative Community Relations (e.g., interactions or presence in community left a negative impression)

- 23 mentions of Need for Police Accountability / Transparency (e.g., desire for understanding, input, oversight on police policies)

- 8 mentions of Community Bias Leading to Unnecessary Police Response (e.g., community members calling the police on someone due to their race or socioeconomic condition)

- 7 mentions of Unnecessary Police Force (e.g., physical imposition)

- 6 mentions of Unnecessary Ticketing (e.g., excessive, disproportionate)

Presentations of Findings

Since completing data collection and analysis, the findings reported above have been presented to the public twice. The first time was in a public report-out forum held via Zoom on the evening of November 18. This event had over 100 attendees, not including HRC members, or PCRC or City staff. During this meeting, attendees were broken up into eight smaller groups (one of which was Spanish speaking and one of which was Mandarin speaking), where they discussed different scenarios loosely based on actual stories collected. The small-group discussions elicited a wide range of reactions from participants. Several were surprised by the situations described in the scenarios; some expressed concern and understanding for individual police officers as well as fellow community members; some wanted to have police policies explained or clarified; many related their own personal experiences with police; and many suggested changes to improve difficult situations with the police in the future. We observed that some community members had difficulty accepting that other community members have had very different experiences with the police than their own. We hope this forum increased awareness and empathy. Assistant City Manager Audrey Seymour Ramberg also shared the findings at a meeting of the City Council Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Race, Equity, and Inclusion on the evening of November 19.

As this report's findings are further disseminated among members of the Mountain View community, it is our hope that they will continue to be revelatory and provide more paths for increased empathy and understanding in our city.

Final Thoughts and Considerations

Before concluding this transmittal, we would like to share several key considerations.

First, we do not have demographic data for all storytellers because of the special considerations we took to protect their confidentiality. However, based on the demographic information we do have, we saw a few notable patterns emerge along demographic lines.

- In the Mandarin speaking forum, most comments made reflected positive experiences with the police. Despite their overwhelmingly positive accounts, however, the Mandarin speaking participants still expressed some concerns, such as how to access police services and resources more effectively (from knowing phone numbers and websites for the police, to having adequate language interpretation when interacting with police officers).

- In the youth forum, the overwhelming majority of the 15 participants had direct, negative experiences to share, many with SROs, and some with other officers from MVPD.

- Of the 26 storytellers whom we know were homeless or unstably housed, 7 told stories that are included in the Community Bias Leading to Unnecessary Police Response theme, representing 7 of the 8 stories in this category. This suggests that this is a crucial theme for the homeless community in Mountain View.

Second, and relatedly, we would like to underscore our intention to have this report reflect many different perspectives that the diverse members of this City have of their interactions with local police. This, in turn, allows individuals in the Mountain View community, including those in leadership roles, to hear and gain insight into perspectives on local policing that might be unfamiliar to them. In several of our interactions, we discovered that some people had difficulty understanding how different some people's experiences are from their own. Each theme described in the report represents a lived experience in the Mountain View community that merits the attention of all who are a part of our City.

Lastly, we are hopeful that the greater dialogue spurred by this HRC community engagement process will help improve relations not only between the Mountain View community and police department, but also between community members themselves. Our city is already such a special place, and we are honored to have been able to play this part in its growth and progress.

Respectfully submitted,

HRC Subcommittee on Community-Police Relations
IdaRose Sylvester, HRC Chair
Julie Solomon, HRC Commissioner
Annette Lin, HRC Commissioner

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups that contributed to the creation of this report. Without their great efforts, we would not have been able to engage the community or issue this report to the scale that we have.

- The staff and volunteers of PCRC, with special thanks to José López, PCRC Manager of Facilitation Services

- The staff of the City of Mountain View, including the Communications Team and the City's Multilingual Community Outreach Program (MCOP), with

special thanks to Nancy Ducos, MCOP Community Outreach Coordinator, and Audrey Seymour Ramberg, Assistant City Manager

- The Mountain View community, for your trust and for working together to create a stronger community!

PCRC

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City of Mountain View Human Relations Commission:
Community Stories of Experiences with Mountain View Police

Table of Contents

Introduction and Background

National Movement for Racial Justice and Police Reform
The killing of George Floyd in May 2020 by a Minneapolis police officer was a painful reminder of countless other instances of police and societal violence against African Americans across the country. This has spurred a national movement for racial justice and police reform to address systemic racism that results in disparate outcomes for African American, Indigenous, and people of color, not just in criminal justice, but also in the areas of health care, education, housing, economic opportunity, and environmental impacts. National police reform efforts also raise concerns about the role and methods of policing for the community as a whole, not just for people of color.

Human Relations Commission Subcommittee on Community-Police Relations
As the movement swept the nation, Mountain View saw some of the largest local protests in recent memory. In response, the City recognized the opportunity and obligation to connect with residents to listen to concerns, provide information, promote dialogue, and find a path forward together. On June 4, 2020, the Human Relations Commission (HRC) met with Police Chief Max Bosel, who discussed the Police Department's values and policies and invited the HRC's assistance in engaging the community. Community members also suggested the involvement of the HRC. The HRC formed a Subcommittee on Community-Police Relations, composed of HRC Chair IdaRose Sylvester and Commissioners Julie Solomon and Annette Lin, to help facilitate a community engagement process to gather stories from Mountain View residents, workers, and visitors about their experience interacting with the police in Mountain View. The City hired the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) to work with the HRC subcommittee and Assistant City Manager Audrey Seymour Ramberg.

About the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center
PCRC's mission and vision is to partner with individuals, groups, and institutions to empower people, build relationships, and reduce violence through collaborative and innovative processes. PCRC provides this support in various ways, namely by helping people communicate and solve problems together through mediation, facilitating group meetings, and building public engagement skills. As a neutral third party, PCRC also assists people and entities in conflict to develop mutually acceptable agreements.

PCRC's goal is to support organizations and residents in becoming active participants and collaboratively sharing information beneficial to their communities' future. PCRC's role in these collaborations is to consult with partners through effective and inclusive community engagement and co-construct a process that facilitates positive long-term relationships and productive community forums for everyone involved. For more than 30 years, PCRC has encouraged and nurtured individuals, families, and organizations' collective strengths to improve communication and community participation. PCRC's role in working with the HRC and the City was to help plan the engagement process, facilitate virtual listening forums, analyze the themes from the stories gathered, and document them in a written report.

Overview of the Community Engagement Process

The objectives of the community engagement process in Mountain View were to: (a) provide a space for Mountain View residents, workers, and visitors to share personal stories that increase visibility and understanding of Mountain View police interaction with the community; and (b) to gather information for an HRC report to the Mountain View Police Department and City Council to help inform future police policy and programs.

There were three methods for gathering community stories: virtual listening forums with small group dialog; a website portal for people to submit stories in writing; and one-on-one interviews for people with limited access to technology, more difficult-to-reach groups, and people who felt most comfortable with direct conversation. A total of 183 people participated, as noted in Table 1. (In a few instances, participants provided more than one story describing separate interactions with Mountain View police.)

Table 1. Total Stories of Experiences with the Local Police

By Engagement Method	Participants
Virtual Listening Forums	87
Online Story Submissions	51
Interviews	45
Total	**183**

Methods

The Principles of Engagement
PCRC's method of community outreach and capacity building is a process based on relationships and trust. Therefore, PCRC uses the *Principles of Engagement* to ensure authentic community engagement centered around inclusion and respect, core to its mission and vision.

The following PCRC principles were adhered to throughout the community outreach and facilitation process:

1. Be clear about the purpose or goals of the engagement effort and the populations and communities engaged.
2. Go into the community, establish relationships, build trust, work with the formal and informal leadership, and seek community organizations and leaders' input.
3. Remember and accept that community self-determination is the responsibility and right of all people who comprise a community.
4. Partnering with the community is necessary to create change.
5. All aspects of community engagement must recognize and respect community diversity.
6. Awareness of a community's various cultures and other diversity factors must be paramount in designing and implementing community engagement approaches.

The specific methods for the listening forums, online story submissions, and interviews are described below.

Outreach

HRC subcommittee members and City staff from the Multilingual Community Outreach Program (MCOP) and communications team did extensive outreach to inform people about the listening forums and online story portal. This outreach included: emails and calls to the groups and individuals in the HRC's and City's various networks, with special targeted efforts to reach Spanish and Mandarin speakers, youth and people of color; emails and calls to local schools, nonprofits and faith-based organizations; multiple rounds of social media posts; announcements on the City's website; newspaper advertisements; and posting of flyers. The HRC subcommittee members also recruited participants for one-on-one interviews as described in more detail below.

Virtual Listening Forums

Four two hour listening forums were conducted on Zoom video conferencing from August 31 through September 24. The forums were designed to create space for different constituent groups: with one focused on youth (ages 15-24), one led in Spanish, one led in Mandarin, and one led in English for general participation.. These gatherings aimed to provide a comfortable, informal environment where community members could speak from their own experience on local policing in the City of Mountain View. In the opening segment of each forum, the HRC subcommittee and PCRC presented information about the forum purpose and process. Where feasible given simultaneous interpretation constraints (see below), PCRC then divided participants into virtual breakout rooms of 5 to 12 people and facilitated small group discussion using a dialogic form of engagement. Small group highlights were reported out to the full group in the closing segment of the forum.

Simultaneous Spanish interpretation was provided for the English forum, and simultaneous English interpretation was provided for the Spanish and Mandarin forums. Due to the technology limits for providing simultaneous interpretation in multiple Zoom breakout rooms, the Spanish and Mandarin forums were kept in one group.

Several steps were taken to protect confidentiality. No video or audio recording was allowed during the small group dialog sessions; facilitator notes were taken, but no participant names were written down. Participants could choose whether to turn on their videos or use their actual names on the Zoom platform. City staff were not present when participants were sharing their stories. However, staff involved with planning the forums were on hand at the beginning and end of the forums to hear the opening and closing comments by PCRC and the HRC subcommittee.

A total of 87 community members attended the four virtual listening forums. The Zoom platform accounts for each "unique user" who logs into the forum, which means that people who logged out and back in were not double-counted. The general English language forum had the highest attendance, with 45 unique users attending. The youth, Spanish, and Mandarin sessions had 15, 10, and 17 unique users attending, respectively. (Table 2).

Table 2. Virtual Listening Forum Attendance

By Constituent Groups	Attendance
English Forum	45
Youth Forum	15
Spanish Forum	10
Mandarin Forum	17
Total	**87**

The primary feedback collected during the listening forums was from the small group discussions. PCRC facilitators asked the small group participants to describe (a) an interaction with the Mountain View Police Department (MVPD), (b) what happened during this experience with the MVPD, (c) what can be improved with these interactions with the MVPD, and (d) how the experience affected future interactions with the MVPD. PCRC notetakers captured the participants' answers in aggregate across participants as they shared their thoughts on each question but did not attribute comments to specific individuals. As referenced above, all responses were kept anonymous and answers were not attributed to particular participants.

In addition, poll questions were posed at various points in the forum regarding participant demographics, perspectives, and session evaluations. Poll results were read out loud during the forum and kept by PCRC for internal facilitation feedback. Unfortunately, many people did not choose to participate in the polls. Therefore, demographic information about forum participants is not available.

Online Story Submissions
To complement the four listening forums, the City created a website, Engage.MountainView, to allow community members to submit stories in writing. This provided an option for community members who might not be comfortable attending the forums but still wanted to share their story. Also, the online portal added a layer of anonymity for community members who did not want to register for a Zoom event and log in with a personal account, given the topic's sensitivity and the fear of reprisal that some people expressed. Separate portals were provided for English, Spanish and Chinese speakers, with instructions in each language. Like the forums, the questions on the website asked people to describe (a) an interaction with the MVPD, (b) what happened during this experience with the MVPD, (c) what can be improved with these interactions with the MVPD, and (d) how the experience affected future interactions with the MVPD. To maximize participants' comfort level about anonymity, people were not asked to provide demographic information when submitting their stories through the online portal. However, some participants shared their race or other demographic details in the context of their story.

The online portals were available for nearly eight weeks. A total of 51 stories were submitted on experiences with police in Mountain View. One was in Spanish. The rest were in English. No stories were received in Chinese (Table 3).

Table 3. Online Story Submissions

Number of Online Submissions	51

Interviews

One-on-one interviews were conducted by members of the HRC subcommittee to reach people who did not have the technology, internet access, or time to participate in online forums or submit stories online, or felt safer talking directly to someone. Several other interviewees felt they wanted to share their stories one-one-one for reasons ranging from wanting help focusing their stories via questioning, to wanting to interact with members of the HRC subcommittee to understand the nature of the work better. A total of 45 interviews were conducted (Table 4). Interviewees were recruited through direct outreach by HRC subcommittee members. Interviews were almost exclusively conducted in person, with COVID-19 protocols in place, but a few were conducted on the phone.

Many of those interviewed were members of vulnerable populations, including those who are unstably housed or homeless (n = 26). Several members of this population were not English speakers. Other people interviewed were non-profit and community leaders, business owners or managers in the city, and other individuals from a wide range of backgrounds. Interviewers used the same questions as the forums and the online portals.

In addition, two local student organizations provided written summaries of interviews and surveys they had conducted on topics related to local policing, wanting to share this information with the City. Methodologies were different, but the feedback from these summaries identified and reinforced many of the themes collected directly through the HRC community engagement process. The feedback from these other organizations is not included in the analysis of themes presented in the Findings section below.

Table 4. Community Interviews

Number of Interviews	45
Number of Written Summaries from Other Organizations	2

It is important to point out that the format of the stories and frequency and variety of the themes and topics differed across the three data collection methodologies, even though the questions were the same. The stories shared in the listening forums were elicited through a conversational (or dialogical) process, and the note-takers captured bullet points that reflected different people commenting at different moments, depending on the progression of the questions and the dynamics of each group. The written submissions, in contrast, were complete, cohesive, uninterrupted stories. The interview content was midway between these extremes. In addition, across the data collection formats, the degree to which people focused on narrating a series of specific events versus reflecting on what should or should not change about the police also varied.

Data Analysis Methodology

The stories in the virtual forums, online submissions, and interviews were reviewed to identify the most common themes using a multi-step process. In the first step, stories were reviewed to identify those that referred to direct experiences with Mountain View police rather than generalized sentiments about policing with no actual encounters. Those stories not relating to

experience with Mountain View police (n =2) were not included in the coding of themes. In the second round of review, the stories referring to direct experiences with police were coded to identify keywords and phrases that were stated in the stories or that could be used to describe or summarize elements in the stories. This coding produced a number of topics that were repeated across the engagement methods; these topics were then grouped into themes that fell under two general categories: expressions of satisfaction with local police and expressions of concern or improvement needed. A final round of analysis counted the number of keywords and phrases under each theme, resulting in the frequencies shown in the Findings section below.

It is important to note that themes can overlap in qualitative coding and analysis. The decision to code a unit of text to one theme, another theme, or both, involves judgment, and therefore a degree of subjectivity. The quantification of the themes provides information about more common versus less common experiences and viewpoints among the participants. As is discussed in the Challenges and Limitations section (below), the themes are drawn from the stories that were collected as part of this process, not from all interactions of Mountain View community members with the Mountain View Police Department. The experiences, themes and the frequencies reported here cannot be generalized to the entire population of Mountain View or particular subpopulations. However, the stories gathered still provide a robust set of data reflecting the lived experiences and voices of the numerous community members who shared their stories with us.

Findings

The themes from the stories collected through the virtual listening forums, online story submissions, and interviews are provided below (Table 5). The themes are not an exhaustive list of all the topics raised in the stories but showcase the topics that were raised multiple times.

The frequencies reflect the number of times a theme was mentioned. A story could have multiple themes and could include a combination of positive and negative themes according to the storyteller's experience. At times, the themes relate to what the participant said about what they experienced; at other times, the themes reflect what the participant suggested could be done to improve similar experiences in the future. The themes are described in greater detail with exemplary quotes from the online story submissions and interviews to showcase the themes in the participant's own words when available. (Direct quotes were not collected during the virtual listening forums.) In some instances, paraphrasing has been used to maintain participant anonymity.

As referenced above, the themes have been divided into two broad categories depending on whether the theme was an expression of satisfaction with police experiences or an expression of concern or needed improvement with police experiences. Expressions of concern or needed improvement were most common (n = 266) compared to expressions of satisfaction (n = 82).

Table 5. Small-Groups Sessions, Online Submission, and Interviews

Themes on Police Experiences	Frequency
Expressions of Satisfaction (82)	
General Expressions of Satisfaction (e.g., good, great, grateful)	29
Positive Police Community Relations (e.g., police presence built trust, left a positive impression)	21
Helpful Police Assistance (e.g., addressed issues like car breakdown)	12
Pleasant Police Interactions (e.g., friendly, caring)	10
Felt Safe due to Police (e.g., police response brought reassurance)	7
Good Effect on School Environment (e.g., School Resource Officers [SROs])	3
Expressions of Concern or Improvement Needed (266)	
Domineering Police Behavior (e.g., bullying, overbearing, heavy-handed)	43
Race-based/Biased Treatment (e.g., due to race, accent, appearance)	42
Police Not the Appropriate Personnel (e.g., mental health needs, SROs, non-emergency situations)	41
Need for Police Training (e.g., de-escalation, communication)	35
Lack of Trust in Police (e.g., fear, avoidance, hesitance to call)	34
Negative Community Relations (e.g., interactions or presence in community left a negative impression)	27
Need for Police Accountability/Transparency (e.g., desire for understanding, input, oversight on police policies, discipline)	23
Community Bias Leading to Unnecessary Police Response (e.g., community members calling the police on someone due to their race or socioeconomic condition)	8
Unnecessary Police Force (e.g., physical imposition)	7
Unnecessary Ticketing (e.g., excessive, disproportionate)	6

Expressions of Satisfaction with Police Experiences

The expressions of satisfaction with police experiences occurred in the forums, online story submissions, and interviews 82 times. These experiences included police calls for service and other types of police contact, as well as interactions with or observations of Mountain View police in the community. Some expressions of satisfaction provided more detailed descriptions of the experience and included specific topics, whereas others were more general.

General Expressions of Satisfaction. The most frequent expression of satisfaction (n = 29) is related to a general feeling of satisfaction without describing details about a specific experience. Illustrating these general sentiments, one participant stated, *"The officers I have met have exceeded my expectations in professionalism and courtesy. They have a highly positive engagement with the community"* (Online Story Submission).

Positive Police-Community Relations. Police-community relations showed up in the stories as both a positive and negative theme, depending on whether or not the storyteller felt that the police presence in the community was appropriate and helpful in fostering a connection with and favorable impression of the police. The positive police-community relations theme (n = 21)

reflects stories where the presence of police in the community and the way they interacted with the public was viewed as appropriate and positive, promoting connection, communication, and trust. When the experience with local police was satisfactory, the suggestions were generally to continue the good work and expand these interactions to proactively amplify the positive instances. One of the online story submissions that exemplifies this theme stated, "By meeting with him… My son realized the officer is a dad, a community leader, and a first responder in addition to being in law enforcement" (Online Story Submission). (The stories expressing concerns about police-community relations are discussed later in this report).

Helpful Police Assistance. Some participants described the service or assistance provided by the police as "helpful" (n = 12). These helpful instances included making traffic stops, addressing car problems, making home visits, and addressing emergencies. One of the online story submissions states, *"Twice I called when frightened by things going on outside, in one case the sound of gunfire. All police officers were very courteous, extremely helpful, and always professional. I was told it was always better to call when in doubt than not to do so"* (Online Story Submission).

Pleasant Police Interactions. In this theme (n = 10), participants described an interaction with the police that was caring and friendly. One of the participants stated, *"I was walking out the door with my son, and an officer was walking around his car nearby. I was nervous because I didn't know if he was there to investigate something, but he stopped, and we said hi. He waved us over and gave my son a badge sticker! Really appreciated the friendly interaction"* (Online Story Submission).

Felt Safe Due to Police. This theme relates to experiences in which the participant stated that the police made them feel "safe" when contacted to address a situation (n = 7). Several participants mentioned that their sense of safety increased when the police arrived or were called for an incident. One of the parent participants stated, *"My 9-year-old was riding a bike with her teenage brother and fell down. A community officer showed up out of nowhere and helped them (even helping with a band-aid). We were all very thankful, but for her, it really made her feel safe - which is priceless"* (Online Story Submission).

Good Effect on School Environment. The expressions of satisfaction with School Resource Officers (SROs) (n = 3) were provided by parents who felt good that the police were present at their children's schools and interacting with students. One of the parent participants stated, *"Officers have always been polite and helpful in our various interactions throughout the years. I appreciate how they try to teach and get to know the school kids. I've seen them helping out with Bike to School days and on campuses at various times"* (Online Story Submission). However, it is important to point out that this expression of satisfaction with SROs is in contrast to the concerns about SROs expressed during the youth forum, as will be discussed below.

Expressions of Concern or Improvement Needed with Police Experiences
The majority of the coded keywords and phrases (76%) can be grouped into the broad category of experiences expressing concerns or areas for improvement (n = 266). The concerns and suggestions for improvement relate to a number of specific themes that are described below.

Domineering Police Behavior. This theme relates to instances in which storytellers shared experiences where the police exercised a certain bravado, rudeness, or arrogance that the storyteller felt was heavy-handed, overbearing, or bullying (n = 43). These instances were brought up as problematic behavior that was perceived to be out of line with proper police protocol and unbecoming of the police officer role as a professional. One online story submission described, *"They were shouting at him from the front patio to "shut the f* up, or we're going to arrest you"...We were trying to calm my son down and also telling the police officers that we no longer needed their assistance"* (Online Story Submission).

Race-based/Biased Treatment. Biased treatment due to the storytellers' race or socioeconomic characteristics was named in the stories with a high frequency (n = 42) compared to other themes. This includes stories in which the storyteller stated that they were approached by the police because of their race, with implications of racial profiling (n = 29).

One online story submission (from a participant identified as both Latinx and African American) stated, *"When we first moved into an apartment complex . . ., my husband got stopped by the police 3 different times around the building, they said he matched the profile of a report of someone selling drugs around the neighborhood, . . . even though he told them he lived right here"* (Online Story Submission). Another story was told in a one-on-one interview by a middle aged African American woman. "I get pulled over a lot. Often, there is no stated reason for the stop. The questions I get asked are inappropriate: are you on parole or probation? White people are never asked this."

This theme also includes stories in which the officer explicitly took an action or communicated something that the participants felt was biased or problematic based on assumptions about race, accent, age, gender, or appearance, which the participant felt was unnecessary to the assessment of the situation (n = 13). One online story submission described an experience in the following manner, *"I remember that police officer arriving and making a comment about how no one in our neighborhood would steal a motorbike, that it had to be someone from San Jose or Oakland planning to come back for it...the comment struck me as a prejudice that seemed inappropriate for an officer of our city"* (Online Story Submission).

Police Not the Appropriate Personnel. The range of roles that the police are tasked with was consistently brought up in the stories, especially related to situations that participants thought did not require police presence because they were not emergencies or because mental health or another type of expertise was required. Participants expressed that such situations were not addressed with the proper personnel (n = 41). Some participants suggested that rather than policing, other services can be provided in some circumstances. This could be accomplished by reallocating funds and instead using social workers, mental health professionals, school counselors, or other service providers that better suit the situation.

For example, one online story submission stated, *"This kind of over-involvement of armed police for things that should be resolved by unarmed workers is dangerous, especially to people of color who rarely receive the benefit of the doubt in ambiguous situations. Incidents like mine and many similar should be handled either by non-police officers OR by unarmed police officer[s] ..."* (Online Story Submission). Another online story submission stated, *"When he was in his*

elementary school, having an escalation, instead of a mental health professional, a police officer was called…They don't need to be in schools with children with disabilities because that is not their job" (Online Story Submission).

Need for Police Training. When the stories reflected negative experiences, the storyteller would often bring up the need for police training (n = 35) on interpersonal and other skills to better engage and meet the needs of the communities they serve. The stories would suggest that being educated in mental health, disabilities, and age-appropriate responses (for SROs) would improve many situations. One parent shared this concern when stating, *"I have a child who has severe autism. We've had two interactions with police in Mountain View, and they've been ok. But that was when my child was younger….What is the training around individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities or those with dementia?"* (Online Story Submission). It was also recommended that training to raise awareness of implicit bias could reduce police profiling and harassment, particularly among low-income communities and people of color. Prominent in this theme was the importance of prioritizing de-escalation training to address domineering police behaviors such as intimidation, force, and violence that directly contribute to the fear and avoidance expressed in the stories classified under this and other themes.

Lack of Trust in Police. Several stories brought up a lack of trust in the police due to uncomfortable experiences with problematic police behaviors and a feeling of threat due to police presence in the community with guns, imposing vehicles, and uniforms (n = 34). Some stories related to situations where people couldn't trust the police due to past experiences with bias, yelling, escalation, or physical imposition, where it was felt that the response was disproportionate and did not fit the situation. Some stories questioned the need to involve the police for fear of escalating a situation that the storyteller preferred be addressed without the involvement of law enforcement. One community member shared when seeing an African American man in the middle of the street who appeared to be mentally ill, *"I thought about calling the police to help him out but decided there was a greater risk to him from the police rather than the traffic"* (Online Story Submission). A participant in a one-on-one interview related a story of her young, African American son's experiences being stopped on a regular basis: "Memories stay with kids forever. Do they (the police) think about that and how kids will be hurt and how they will think about police later?"

Negative Police Community Relations. This theme (n = 27) relates to stories in which the storyteller described a negative reaction to the police presence in the community or indicated that the way the police handled a situation was not sensitive to community perception (e.g. when working with immigrant communities). In some stories, the participant stated that the police should increase their community relations efforts as a suggestion for how to address the concern raised in the story. For example, attention to community relations was mentioned as a way to address lack of police trust and police domineering behavior. The need for improved community relations was brought up as something that should be addressed at both an institutional and an individual officer level and through community engagement events. One community member stated, *"I know police must approach people with caution, but through the interaction, I suspect that they are trained to view everyone as a potential criminal. But, that mentality will not help positive community relations"* (Online Story Submission). Additionally, one interviewee who has frequent encounters with police as a homeless person, stated that with Mountain View Police

Department, "it's luck of the draw" – he never knows if an experience with the police will be good or bad, depending on which officers respond to a given situation.

Additionally, the stories reflected in this theme shared that the police need to be mindful of the public perception of their presence in the community. This could include showing up with uniforms, guns, or imposing vehicles for events that do not warrant them, such as festivals, city events or community meetings, or providing a disproportionate response that the storyteller felt did not fit the situation. For example, an excessive number of police cars responding to a non-violent incident was perceived as an unnecessary show of force. These experiences of how the police show up to community spaces were especially crucial to the relational component of building community with people of color or vulnerable communities (i.e., unstably housed, immigrants, youth, and those with cognitive or physical differences), which often have a strained relationship or have had traumatic experiences with the police, according to the participants that shared these experiences.

One interviewee who is homeless described an incident in which he was charging his phone in a public area when the police, responding to a call, drove up to him in an SUV with camouflage gear to tell him he couldn't use the power and that he had to leave. He felt that responding to this situation in such a manner was intimidating and an unnecessary show of power. Another interviewee, a community activist, stated: "I have watched our police chief address a human relations commission sponsored event with a gun and a badge. Why does he have to bring and display his gun? Especially on video? I attended a safe parking stakeholder meeting at a local church that included a police officer wearing a bullet proof vest and weapons. There was nothing risky about this meeting. It left me feeling intimidated and actually limited my ability to fully enter into the meeting."

Need for Police Accountability and Transparency. The stories reflected in this theme expressed the need for police transparency for members of the community to better understand resource allocation and police accountability (n = 23). Some participants who viewed their experience as unresolved or unacceptable suggested an independent advisory board or auditor that would be tasked with a neutral and impartial review of actionable items involving the police. According to one online story submitter (self-identified as African American), *"We immediately filed a complaint, and however, the MVPD determined there was no wrongdoing and no corrective actions were taken...We remain deeply concerned and angry over this incident"* (Online Story Submission)

Community Bias Leading to Unnecessary Police Response. The focus of this theme (n = 8) is how the biases that exist in the community can lead to unfair police response and scrutiny. This theme reflects instances in which members of the Mountain View community called police to investigate certain individuals who felt they were doing nothing wrong. In the stories that describe the theme, the storytellers believe that police were called on them not for any behavior, but primarily because of their demographic characteristics and appearance, for example their race or socioeconomic status. Frequently, these individuals stated that when the police respond to the calls, they were not treated poorly, but that being stopped could be humiliating and a waste of time. One homeless individual describes his strategy for feeling safe in Mountain View as "out of sight, out of mind," saying he avoids sleeping where he can be found so that the police are not

called on him. Another homeless individual said in an interview that he *"does not necessarily fault the police."* He says that some members of the Mountain View community call the police right away when *"they just see a homeless person or a stranger in their neighborhood,"* and the police "are just responding to that."

Police Force. The police use of force and physical violence was a relatively infrequent theme (n = 7). Still, it is included in the report as it was called out specifically by some storytellers who stated that police became physical, and force was applied unnecessarily. One interviewee shared a story of her friend sleeping in a public place in Mountain View who was woken up by police hitting her with a baton. This person who was hit is now too afraid to come forward directly with this story. Another interviewee who is homeless shared that, in the many times he has been arrested, Mountain View police used unnecessary force on him. However, he also stated that, as he became better known to officers, they have treated him better.

Unnecessary Ticketing. This theme reflects stories in which participants described what they perceived as unnecessary tickets or penalties (n = 6). While the frequency of this theme is relatively low, it was clustered in the narratives provided by some vulnerable populations (i.e., unstably housed, youth). One online story submitter stated, *"I will be attending court to try and fight the ticket, but I am still very bothered by the fact that my brother's vehicle was impounded and it was very hard to tell my parents this all happened while I was simply doing my job"* (Online Story Submission). Most of the examples of this theme were provided in the interviews, which were conducted in areas where people are living in recreational vehicles (RVs) or visiting agencies to receive food assistance. Within this theme, police roles in the community were interwoven with comments about the need to improve relationships with and services for the most vulnerable populations.

For example, one interviewee recounted to a member of the HRC Subcommittee a story about her family's RV continually being towed or ticketed as they moved around different streets in Mountain View and described the constant stress and worry over where they will be able to live. Another interviewee described how homeless people who had found shelter at the Mountain View train station were driven from the station because they kept getting ticketed for sitting on the station's benches. In addition to losing this source of shelter, if they were unable to pay their tickets, it could eventually lead to their arrest.

Discussion

It is important to note that within the overall themes, there were differences across various subgroups, such as the participants in the Mandarin forum (n =17), the youth forum (n = 15), and interviews with homeless and unstably housed people (n = 26).

In the Mandarin speaking forum, most comments made reflected positive experiences with the police. Despite their overwhelmingly positive accounts, however, the Mandarin speaking participants still expressed some concerns, such as how to access police services and resources more effectively (from knowing phone numbers and websites for the police, to having adequate language interpretation when interacting with police officers).

On the other hand, in the youth virtual listening forum, only one positive police experience was mentioned. In that group, the need to improve police community relations (n = 10) was the most frequent theme, followed by the police not being the appropriate personnel (n = 8), especially on school campuses. The last three themes among youth, domineering police behavior, race-based/biased policing, and the need for police training, were tied at four instances each.

The 26 interviewees stories from the homeless and unstably housed population (which represented over half of the total interviews) expressed unique experiences in their stories, with more complex and frequent interactions with police. The theme with the highest frequency was domineering police behavior (n = 9), followed by the need for improved community relations (n = 7), excessive ticketing (n = 5), and lack of police trust (n = 3). In addition, some positive police interactions were reported (n = 7) within this population. Some interviewees brought up inequality and the lack of resources or services for low-income constituents (such as those living in vehicles or immigrants), with people segregated due to their poverty and experiencing distinct interactions with police. As stated above, the participants in this subgroup or those providing services to this population expressed the need for more psychologists and health/social workers to address non-emergency situations instead of more penalties or law enforcement.

Challenges and Limitations

In interpreting the data, it is important to bear in mind key challenges and limitations with respect to whose voices are represented. Participation in the virtual listening forums depended on Zoom access and comfort sharing personal stories of experiences with the local police in an environment in which anonymity and confidentiality could not be guaranteed. The City's Multilingual Community Outreach Program (MCOP), other City staff, and the HRC Subcommittee conducted extensive outreach to encourage participation in the listening forums and, in collaboration with PCRC, took many steps to create a supportive environment for sharing, including offering interpreting services, providing small-group facilitation, and employing measures that promoted confidentiality. However, although those who attended the forums participated actively, overall attendance at three of the forums (youth, Spanish-language, and Mandarin-language) was relatively low.

The online portals allowed anonymous submission of stories in three languages. However, the use of the portals required Internet access, as well as literacy skills. Nearly all stories submitted via the portals were written in English.

The interviews provided a key opportunity for members of traditionally marginalized groups and other community members to share stories one-on-one with HRC subcommittee members, confidentially, by phone or in person. Community leaders and other community members who are not marginalized also participated in these interviews. Commissioners conducted outreach through community leaders and in person at Hope's Corner and in an area where many RV dwellers live. However, this outreach was focused on a narrow segment of the community, and fear or discomfort with disclosing experiences with the police was still likely a barrier to participation.

It is also important to bear in mind that none of the story collection formats had accommodations for speakers of languages other than English, Spanish, and Mandarin. Additionally, across the formats, participation was likely also limited by the emotional difficulty of reliving experiences perceived as negative and a lack of interest or motivation to share experiences perceived as neutral or positive.

In short, the data collected and the associated distribution of themes reflect a convenient sample of people who were willing and able to share experiences through one of the data collection formats. The experiences and themes, therefore, cannot be generalized to the entire population of Mountain View or particular subpopulations. However, they still provide a robust set of data reflecting the lived experiences and voices of 183 community members sharing stories about interactions with Mountain View police.

Conclusion

As noted earlier in this report, the objectives of the community engagement process were to: (a) provide a space for Mountain View residents, workers, and visitors to share personal stories that increase visibility and understanding of Mountain View police interaction with the community; and (b) to gather information for an HRC report to the Mountain View Police Department and City Council to help inform future police policy and programs. The process was successful in engaging 183 people from diverse segments of the community to share stories of their experiences with Mountain View police. Although the findings cannot be generalized to all of Mountain View, they do provide insight into the experiences of multiple segments of the community.

The themes from the stories were broadly categorized as either an expression of satisfaction with police experiences (n = 82) or an expression of concern or needed improvement with police experiences (n = 266), with expressions of concern or needed improvement representing approximately three-quarters of the coded keywords and phrases. The five most frequent themes fall under the category of concern or needed improvement and relate to domineering police behavior (n = 45), race-based/biased treatment (n = 42), police not the appropriate personnel (n = 41), need for police training (n = 35), and lack of trust in the police (n=34). Within the broad category of positive expressions, the theme with the highest frequency was a general sense of satisfaction and appreciation (n = 29), from stories that did not provide detailed descriptions of the nature of the experience with police. The second most frequent theme in the expressions of satisfaction is related to an experience of positive police community relations (n = 21).

The HRC community engagement process on Mountain View policing and the themes expressed in the stories shared to provide a meaningful foundation for continued dialog, learning, and action, with the most immediate next steps outlined below.

Next Steps

The themes from the virtual forums, online portal, and interviews were shared with the community at a report out session on November 18, 2020. A brief update was provided to the City Council Ad-Hoc Subcommittee on Race, Equity and Inclusion on November 19, 2020. The HRC will transmit the themes to the City Council on December 1, 2020, as part of a comprehensive update on the City's Race, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan. The community feedback provided through the process will be used by the Council and the Police Department to inform future police programs and policies.