2021

REIMAGINING SAFETY

Northampton Policing Review Commmission Report

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NORTHAMPTON POLICING REVIEW COMMISSION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of the commission has been an enormous task, and we want to thank all those who contributed to this work. We thank all the members of the Northampton City Council and the Mayor of Northampton for responding to community calls for rethinking safety and creating this commission.

We would also like to thank all the city employees across departments who assisted us in this endeavor. We would like to especially thank *Annie Lesko, Laura Krutzler,* and *Court Cline* for the support they provided throughout the duration of the commission and their assistance relaying information, administering meetings, and navigating the city infrastructure.

The Commission relied heavily on *Noa Coffey-Moore*, our administrative assistant, who kept us going, organized information, kept us updated with all the meetings, and in general went above and beyond the bounds of their job.

We want to thank the public for their hours of contributions of comments, emails, and the engagement we've seen in our work across dozens of meetings. Their labor in sharing information, recommendations, personal experiences, and communicating their needs was invaluable to us all.

We would also like to thank the former commissioners who contributed to the work of this commission: *Lois Aherns, Kris Banks, Larissa Rivera-Gonzalez, Carmen Lopez,* and *Dana Olivo*.

EXECUTIVE **SUMMARY**

The Northampton Policing Review Commission has looked at the services and policies related to policing and police in Northampton. We took as a primary lens the idea that the right people should respond to calls to optimize results. Police reform and new forms of delivering safety services are not new, nor is research recommending a variety of changes and models of structures to be replicated. Underneath much of the motivation of policing reforms is the understanding that while other social services and infrastructure have been underfunded, police departments have become the default solution for many societal ills. Compounding the police department's obligation to respond is the fact that they are in many cases one of the few 24/7 services available in a community.

In looking for solutions, and successful models, we sifted through years of reports on peer responders, co-responder services like those of Dallas RIGHTCare, and the emergence of programs like DASHR in Denver. Some services, such as the 32 year old CAHOOTS program, have seen such success that they provide consultation services to other cities looking to implement their program. We also sought to understand the qualities local and specific to Northampton. We heard residents' experiences with police and policing, tried to identify what works, and also learned where gaps and concerns were present. We came back understanding that while the Northampton Police Department has adopted policies, engaged in training, and tried to serve the public equally, there are still issues which represent challenges to providing safety to everyone.

Many of our recommendations revolve around developing unarmed peer-response services situated within the city infrastructure. Properly staffed and funded, peer-responders would be able to handle calls to which the appearance of an armed officer may escalate the situation, or where a social intervention may reduce the dependence on carceral responses or hospitalization. Shifting these responsibilities away from police also allows them to focus on their core responsibilities around law enforcement.

Central to offering these services is establishing a Department of Community Care. As a dedicated part of the City of Northampton, this department would institutionalize many of the services that the city desperately needs and provide residents with new options seeking assistance with mental health and substance use. This department can also work with other emergency response departments and provide support through partnerships and develop new programs to support existing services.

We also recognized that in Northampton, where pride is taken in progressive and innovative solutions to problems, there is an opportunity to grow. While we will not be the first in the nation to enact some of these changes, we can be among the first in Western Mass to take steps to reduce the footprint of the police in areas which do not require an armed response, follow best practices supported by data and evidence, and respond to specific crises with well trained, unarmed teams.

COMMISSION **CHARGE, COMPOSITION, AND STRUCTURE**

COMMISSION CHARGE

After the brutal murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department and the abuses and killings of other Black and Brown people, including Breonna Taylor, across the United States, people across the country mobilized in their own communities, demanding that police departments and their budgets be reformulated. During the early days of June, several thousand individuals attended two major demonstrations, and on June 3, 2020, more than 500 people attended the Northampton City Council Budget hearing on Zoom[1]. That hearing lasted seven hours.

The NPRC is the response to Northampton residents calling for their elected leaders to rethink the city's approach to policing, rethink whether and what police services could be delivered by others, and rethink how we structure and fund community safety moving forward.

The NPRC's full charge was to investigate areas identified as important, including, but not limited to:

- Department size, structure, services, and budget
- Body worn cameras
- Use of force policies
- Union contracts
- Citizen complaint processes
- Civilian oversight/review models
- Recruitment and diversity policies
- Training and equipment
- Transitioning 911 calls for mental health, houselessness, substance abuse disorder, and other non-criminal services and domestic violence calls to civilian responders or social service agencies.
- A study of resources for governmental and non-governmental investment in needs that if met reduce crime.
- Data collection and reporting transparency
- An examination of alternatives to current policing policies and practices.

The NPRC was appointed and held its first organizational meeting September 22, 2020, where the Commission received its charge.

COMMISSION COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

The NPRC was established with fifteen resident members, with six appointed by the Mayor and nine appointed by the City Council President. The appointed Commission was to include not less than eight members who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (POC) or from other historically marginalized groups. During the course of the six months, the Commission lost five members and two were reappointed. Four of the commissioners lost were women, with three women of color leaving the Commission.

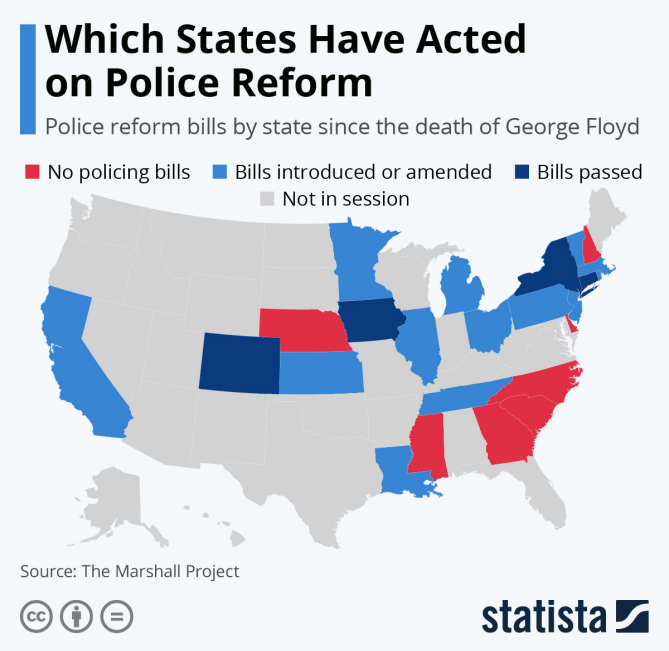
The Commission elected two co-chairs for the full commission. Commissioners were also divided into 3 subcommittees dedicated to an area of policing: Alternatives to Policing, Policies and Services, Spending and Contracts. A fourth subcommittee, Outreach, was established to increase outreach and engagement with underrepresented communities.

The full commission and subcommittees met for a total of sixty public meetings and three public hearings, with more than fifty hours of public comment scheduled to hear from the community. Meetings were held typically in the evenings, with a full commission meeting and subcommittee meetings held on alternate weeks. This schedule was adjusted and full commission meetings were increased to weekly meetings after December 2020.

Speakers with relevant experience in the fields of policing, substance use, harm reduction, unhoused people, and mobile responses presented to the Commission, including two hours of discussion with the Chief of the Northampton Police Department.

1 *" 500 people, 7 hours: Virtual City Council meeting draws crowd, calls to cut police budget" https://www.gazettenet.com/Hundreds-attend-city-council-budget-hearing-speak-about-cutting-police-budget-34612436*

POLICING REVIEWS IN **CONTEXT**



16 states have introduced passed bills related to policing reform as of July 2020 since George Floyd's death in May. "Which States Have Acted on Police Reform". https://cdn.statcdn.com/Infographic/images/normal/22172.jpeg

Policing in the US has been historically problematic for many marginalized populations. To compound this, as cities divested from social services and community supports[1], police departments, as one of the few 24/7 departments, have become the default solution. This has increased community reliance on police for non-criminal matters, increasing the interaction between members of the public and an armed response and creating unsafe situations for citizens and officers.

The need for meaningful change in policing practices across the country is not new. Police departments themselves have taken efforts to retrain officers, adopt policies to address brutality and misconduct, and improve their community interactions. These reforms, however, are often unable to overcome the problems of biased policing and their resultant impacts on communities. Trainings also cannot address the addition of demands on the time and capacity of departments as new functions are placed on police beyond their original responsibilities.

For over a century organizations and non-profit institutions have worked to reduce the need for police to be involved in communities outside of exigent and violent crises and criminal investigations. The common thread across these different approaches and models are: a need for reinvestment in community services and supports; a need to reduce contact of police with civilians; and a commitment to ensure the right responders are sent to civilian crises. Approaches to introduce these have ranged from budget reductions for police departments to the complete removal of the police department. Most changes are not the extreme and involve creating reinvesting in community-based programs and solutions for substance use, mental health, and crimes of poverty. Other options include adopting co-responder models which can lead to stark reductions in hospitalizations and arrests, and new departments or institutions capable of responding to quality-of-life[2] emergency calls. One of the longest running solutions has been the CAHOOTS[3] program with about 30 years of responding to non-violent emergencies.

The calls for change across the US have increased since the summer of 2020 with the recognition that the current paradigm of policing results in over-policing, but under-serving of many marginalized communities with sometimes deadly results. However, the actual interventions being proposed are not new and have years of research and data to show their effectiveness and safety.

In Northampton's context, the Northampton Policing Review Commission was created after city council meetings where hundreds attended with hours of public comment. Among the calls to defund or abolish, or on the other side to increase the current police department, all held the common thread of a need to understand and improve how safety is administered by the city. The NPRC is not a novel creation and in this sense Northampton is actually years behind other cities.

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1 Across the US, spending for policing (police, prisons and the court system) is almost twice as high as 'cash welfare' programs (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, food stamps, and supplemental Social Security payments). https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/06/04/us-spends-twice-much-law-order-it-does-social-welfare-data-show/

2 Quality of Life calls typically refer to calls to 9-1-1 that are non-criminal or low-level offenses such as loitering, public intoxication, graffiti, littering, and can include calls for behavioral and mental health crises.

3 The CAHOOTS program was established in 1989, but the form and role of the response program has shifted over the years. For more information see Appendix II

A National and State overview of responses and legislation from the summer of 2020, after the George Floyd killing, is remarkable considering the country was suffering economic and health impacts from COVID 19. Policy and procedural changes include reduction in budgets, elimination of police departments, ban on no knock raids and chokeholds, removal of school resource officers, documentation of improved data collection techniques, initiatives to create a more professional and educated work force, removal of barriers to reporting police misconduct and the complaint review process, recognition of how social issues are impacting police work, the creation of new municipal departments that address non-police interventions and the establishment of commissions to explore community policy and practices to name a few of the current initiatives.

Communities that have passed reform and reimagining efforts include Denver, Colorado; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Los Angeles, Berkeley, Sacramento and Santa Cruz, California; Olympia and Seattle, Washington; Ithaca and Rochester, New York; Chattanooga, Tennessee and more[4].

MASSACHUSETTS STATEWIDE

Massachusetts recently passed and the Governor signed legislation that includes:

- Creation of 8 other commissions including the creation of a new commission to explore a certification process for all municipal and state police officers.
- Conduct a study on qualified immunity
- Study Body Cam regulations
- Review the Civil Service System
- Stronger Use of Force policies and procedures for 'Less Lethal' weapons.
- Investigate structural racism in Police Departments
- Remove requirements that schools have officers

While this legislation is a start, the municipality approach to addressing systemic racism is currently preferred because it is quicker and takes into consideration the uniqueness and nuance of an individual community. We are offering three examples below of how a local approach to solving the problems of policing and addressing the societal issues that impact police performance can be viewed as superior to a statewide approach. Each of these efforts of reimagining municipal Police Departments surprisingly came to some of the same conclusions as this Commission is documenting in the Northampton report. These commonalities include a Department of Community Care and the identification of activities that do not require a Police presence. However, the process of arriving at these proposals were varied. In Brattleboro Vermont the Town hired consultants to do a targeted needs assessment in the community. In Ithaca, New York, the Mayor submitted a proposal to the City Council. In Austin, Texas the City Council recommended a series of funding reallocations. These three examples are outlined below.

BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

On August 19th, 2020 the Brattleboro Select Board issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Assessment on Community Safety. This needs assessment approach resulted in the hiring of two facilitators and a nine member commission of individuals who reviewed the policies and practices of the Police Department as well as community perceptions of the Department. The review resulted in a 200 page report and recommendations[5]. Some general conclusions of the report were:

- Racial bias and profiling are active and current problems in the community, including in
- Brattleboro Police Department's response to community safety.
- Some community members expect more of the Police than is safe for others.
- The current mechanisms for external review, accountability, or community control of the Police Department are scarce, inadequate, and ineffective.
- There is little or no accountability around the impact of diversity and inclusion and implicit bias training on the

4 Other cities currently or recently involved with these kinds of reviews include: Austin, TX; Berkeley, CA; Brattleboro, VT; Burlington, VT; Boston, MA; Cambridge, MA. While there is not an official listing across the nation of these bodies, a robust list of cities and legislative actions be found here: https://defundpolice.org/legislation-resources/

5 Brattle Community Safety Review Final Report: https://www.brattleboro.org/index.asp?SEC={0F7BDDC7-073C-4351-A659-7C2178A0DB8F}

communities that experience the most policing.

- There is a severe lack of truly voluntary support related to mental health, substance use and addiction, and parenting and child protection.
- Consistently across all areas of listening, poverty, homelessness, lack of belonging, and lack of ability to meet basic needs were named as some of the largest threats to the community's well-being and safety. Voluntary support, mutual aid, projects led by marginalized people, and basic needs like safe housing, good food, and places for belonging and connection are widely recognized as some of the biggest current safety needs in the community.
- Those respondents most impacted by policing want reduced Police presence with their communities not "community policing," which puts the onus of trust-building on the wrong party.
- Racial bias and profiling are active and current problems in the community, including in Brattleboro Police Department's response to community safety.
- Police participation and other involuntary interventions in mental, emotional, and spiritual health crisis response is ineffective and often harmful for many community members.

By conducting a thorough needs assessment in the Town of Brattleboro, the review had the freedom and access to report community processes, public comment, internal reporting structures and Police practices that resulted in the above findings. The recommendation section of the report did not include specific policy recommendations but instead provided a framework for the Town Council to explore the findings and their implications within the Town policy structure. We include this report as an example of how smaller communities are addressing their review. More importantly we were struck by how the findings of the Brattleboro report are similar to the findings of the Northampton Police Review Commission. Finally, the findings are not exclusively focused on the town Police Department but they holistically look at the services needed in that specific community as well as the overall town's responsibility to pay attention to the structural weak links in their government that foster unconscious bias.

ITHACA, NEW YORK

On February 22, 2021 Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick proposed replacing the city's 63 officer $12.5 million Police Department with a Department of Community Solutions and Public Safety[6]. This Department would include 'armed public safety workers' and 'unarmed community solution workers'. Under this proposal, all current officers would have to re-apply for a position within the new Department. The Mayor's proposal is currently under review in the City. If passed, the expected timeline to replace the departments and be fully operation is 2023.

AUSTIN, TEXAS

The Austin City Council determined that the top priorities in their city are public safety, civil rights and saving lives. They decided that the best way to address the social issues that impacted complaints on policing practices was to fund a stronger social safety net that was coupled with economic opportunity in their community[7]. This funding came from the Austin Police Department without a layoff of any police officer. Austin has a $434 million police budget. They reallocated $21 million from that budget by reducing overtime and putting the cadet classes on hold. This reallocation is scheduled to address substance use, gun violence, houselessness, a family violence shelter, mental health emergency responders and ambulances. The philosophy for this shift in funding was that money should be allocated into proven methods for preventing violence from spreading in the community.

The internal affairs function of the Austin Police Department will be moved out of the Department and placed within independent functions within the city. This move is designed to afford more autonomy and transparency over investigations and complaints against officers from the public.

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6 Ithaca Proposal Documents: https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/reimaginepublicsafety

7 Austin City Council Resolution: http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=342179

Other allocations of budget funds in the city are:

- $5M: Emergency Medical Services COVID response
- $4M: Mental health first response and community medics
- $2M: Violence prevention, including gun violence prevention program
- $14M: Family violence shelter and protection
- $6.5M: Homelessness solutions, including housing & services
- $500K: Victim services
- $1M: Substance Use programs
- $400K: Food access
- $250K: Abortion access
- $1.5M: Workforce development/jobs programs
- $2M: Equity Office, Office of Police Oversight
- $400K: Re-entry programs for formerly incarcerated people
- $300K: Parks
- $500K: COVID/epidemiology team at Austin Public Health
- $2M: New civil rights office

The above examples are provided to illustrate the progression of creative and bold initiatives that are currently occurring throughout the country. While the appointment of the Northampton Police Review Commission is a valid step toward responding to the outcry from community members, the acceleration of an active response to the recommendations made in this report will demonstrate a level of commitment that is on par with other communities in the country that have moved farther in this effort.

COMMISSION **RECOMMENDATIONS**

How would we want our child who is experiencing a profound bout of depression to be treated; by police, or by a supportive team of providers?

How would we want our sibling who has been evicted from their apartment to be assisted; by a police officer, or by a case worker who can assist with obtaining alternate housing?

How would we want our child who has been awakened from a drug overdose with naloxone treated, by a ride with the police or with people who can assist in drug treatment?

Black people have a long history of feeling unsafe, unprotected and subject to acts of random violence. So, it is for people who are houseless in Northampton; as well as people who live with mental health disorders or post-traumatic stress disorder; people who experience poverty or interpersonal violence or community violence; people caught in the throes of addiction.

Should police response to all of these vulnerabilities be the answer? The default? If a community has nothing else to offer - the police become the answer.

We offer alternatives to policing as the default solution. We recommend services that would make us all feel more safe, more comfortable. We want to view policing for our public safety rather than as the primary treatment for all of the issues that trouble us.

The Commission has used the guiding principle of ensuring the "right response to a call" is available for all people. To do this, we have attempted to reimagine public safety responses based on the needs of individual callers including and outside the existing options for delivery and service. While recognizing the positive contributions to emergency response that police have made, we also highlight areas for improvement to existing structures and responses as well. The recommendations we propose can be used as a starting point to create further meaningful changes as the city evaluates the results of their implementation and additional opportunities.

INCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC IN BUDGETARY PROCESSES

We recommend that the City address the immediate priorities, including that the new department will be established and funded in FY 2022 and fully operational in FY 2023. We also note that polciing and public safety are complex topics. The City Council and Mayor should bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders to have a conversation about the vision for public safety, including members of the public - especially those who may have had negative expereinces with police or who have been historically marginalized. Stakeholders from these demographics and geographic communities will have different views and live experiences than the budget staff when it comes to the police. They will likely have different preferences for how policing and public safety services are delivered. These views must be part of the conversation if we're to reach resource allocations that are fair and meet the community's needs.

PRIORITIZATION AND CATEGORIZATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

We have categorized our recommendations with those that should be addressed immediately and identify an additional set of functions that are currently within the NPD but are recommending they can go elsewhere. We also recognize elements which are a priority where gaps are clear and identified, but for which the Commission feels unable to make definitive recommendations on. Limitations which impacted our ability to make recommendations include complex or restrictive state laws and a lack of consensus on best practices. These will require more study and expert analysis before implementation of changes and improvements can be made.

In addition to our recommendations for changes to peer and co-responder responses for some emergencies, we acknowledge policies and services related to public safety that would remain under the police and require their presence under the current system. We have categorized our recommendations with those that should be addressed immediately and identify an additional set of functions that are currently within the NPD but are recommending they can go elsewhere. We also recognize elements which are a priority where gaps are clear and identified, but for which the Commission feels unable to make definitive recommendations on. Limitations which impacted our ability to make recommendations include complex or restrictive state laws and a lack of consensus on best practices. These will require more study and expert analysis before implementation of changes and improvements can be made.

In addition to our recommendations for changes to peer and co-responder responses for some emergencies, we acknowledge policies and services related to public safety that would remain under the police and require their presence under the current system.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS **SUMMARY**

IMMEDIATE RECOMMEDATIONS

- Create a new Department of Community Care
- Improve options for crisis response
- Promote the safety of the houseless
- Reduce the risk of substance use
- Transition responsibilities to peer and co-responder models
- Continue to provide police response for some calls
- Improve the current complaint processes
- Create a strategic plan
- Establish data-driven staffing levels for public safety
- Establish safe work hour caps
- Engage the police union(s)
- Conduct a needs assessment
- Evaluate successes

EXPANDED PEER & CO-RESPONDER FUNCTIONS

- Civilian flaggers
- Traffic
- Public disturbances
- Misdemeanor crimes against the person or property
- Service of warrants
- Medical emergencies
- Service of summonses
- General police presence and patrol
- Drug possession and other status offenses
- Animal control
- Minor traffic accidents and enforcement
- Restorative justice programs outside of police
- Further community response options

1. **CREATE** A DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY CARE

Immediate Priority

"I lived in Northampton with my partner. I came home from my work and my partner was intoxicated. They fell down a flight of stairs in our apartment and we thought that they broke their foot. So I called 911 ... and I requested an ambulance. Unbeknownst to me at the time when an ambulance arrives a police officer also does. This police officer arrived way before the ambulance did. It was actually a narcotics detective... he got agitated and one thing led to another, and eventually pepper spray was deployed, and my partner was taken away in handcuffs and did not receive the medical treatment that I requested. To this day, I think about that incident and how differently it could have gone if a police officer was not there..."

- Comment from public comment to NPRC

For many of our recommendations, we recognize the need for new types of responders, intervention models, and programs within the city to perform actions to ensure the residents of the city are cared for and expand access to safety. These responsibilities need to be housed in a city department with regular funding for their core activities, supplemented by grants in order to begin a new service or provide new training. To facilitate this, and in recognition that the City of Northampton does not have a department dedicated to this already, we recommend the City establish a new Department of Community Care, and that the functions of community care including peer response to mental health and substance use crises. This department ultimately needs to be available for the community with 24/7 staffing to support responses but may start smaller such as staffing for high call volume times and then scale up services and supports.

This department also needs to be accountable to those that it serves in a way that is not currently seen in city departments, or by social service agencies who contract with the city or state. The leadership and governance of the department should include people with lived experience of criminalization and marginalization, and those impacted by it. These people should be prioritized in hiring decisions at all levels. This includes, but is not limited to, Black and Indigenous people, people of color, immigrants, poor and working class people, unhoused people, disabled people, people harmed by sexual, domestic, and psychiatric violence, youth, LGTBQ people, and people of marginalized genders. Without a direct charge to include these individuals and represent a balance, any department that is created would fail in its equity and justice goals.

Those who have been directly impacted by policing must not only be consulted but involved in co-designing services. This should include regular input from the community, with periodic open meetings, and an accessible office. The Department would need to examine barriers which impact the recruitment and retention of individuals into leadership positions, and the participation of members of the community in its governance, and develop plans to address them.

The Department should be fully staffed to provide multiple types of responders to community needs. We highly encourage the department to prioritize the hiring of individuals with lived experience in addition to required training, professional experience, and certifications. These can include:

- **Peer-responders** - Individuals who have lived experience and required training and/or certification to respond to non-violent emergencies.
- **Co-responders** - Individuals with training and/or certification who could respond to crises with police or other emergency response departments.
- **Civilian Advocates** - Individuals with specialized expertise, training, and/or certification who are notified when there is a case. They can navigate resources for anyone whose trauma requires an advocate for access to additional support.

These positions will be unarmed and trained in de-escalation, harm reduction, and in a position to connect individuals with supports in the City outside of carceral options. Department staff will have a key role assisting an individual in de-escalating their crisis and navigating the often complex supports and services during a vulnerable time.

The Commission recommends that this department be intentionally independent from the Northampton Police

Department, but open to collaboration with all City departments. Given the nature of the responsibilities we are recommending this department take on, and the recognition of racism itself as a health crisis, we advocate that the department be situated underneath the Board of Health. This will give the department leadership and access to highly-trained professionals who have experience with some of the most vulnerable of Northampton while simultaneously serving the majority of the population as well.

As the department grows, it can respond to police functions, including civilian flaggers and detail employees, minor traffic violation enforcement, community education, general presence and patrols, inspections, animal control, and others that do not require the presence of an armed individual.

INTEGRATE SERVICES WITH THE EMERGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (DISPATCH)

The Emergency Dispatch Center has a pivotal role if there is a civilian Department of Community Care. It is a 24/7 service which handles all emergency communications through 9-1-1. They currently handle an average of 55,803[1] interactions across 911, business calls, and texts. The charter defines their responsibility as "...the receipt and appropriate dispatch of all public safety service requests, including, but not limited to calls for police, fire, emergency medical services, or animal control services"[2]. We believe this positions the department in a critical role of any expansion of community safety services, and would allow for contributions to an emergency dispatch scenario. Utilizing the Emergency Dispatch Center allows for a smooth collaboration between departments within the city, while easing the community into using the services without having to memorize new numbers or names.

Dispatch maintains thorough training above and beyond state requirements for their dispatchers and accreditation. Any new department or change in handling responsibilities will require investment be the city in retraining and addressing the necessary protocols to maintain service accuracy. Additionally, there is considerable expertise to be gained from existing models such as CAHOOTS in Eugene, Oregon, which has been doing this work for over 30 years (see appendix), which can also provide avenues to respond to liability concerns.

EXPLORE REINVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

One of the ways in which a city expresses its values is through its budget. Where funding goes and how it is used is a statement about what the city thinks and believes to be central and important. Adding a stable and successful set of services will require significant investment from the city to establish the department, the services housed within it, and to build relationships with existing services. The Northampton City Budget for FY 2021 included a removal of a Police Department budgetary increase, and a 10% budget cut to the department for a total of $882,602. The budget changes for FY 2021 have not been reinvested directly to community safety, but those funds now represent an opportunity to begin the work of establishing this new set of services.

Our interpretation of the budget cut by the City Council is that it was made in the spirit of reinvestment in our community. To continue this, we recommend the Department of Community Care be established by reinvesting the funds cut from the NPD in 2020 at a minimum. We believe that the City should carefully evaluate the services and supports it believes as important, and should make sure the Department is fully funded to respond and carry out those responsibilities. Funding allocations could also come from revenue generated by current policing practices including detail work. This money could be allocated specifically towards alternatives to policing, community care, and programs and services which are proven to reduce crime.

We recommend the City adopt a rubric that takes into account the idea of reinvestment, and use that to evaluate any budget increases. A close examination of their budget requests be reviewed using this rubric, and explore changes from the police department including equipment refresh cycles such as adjusting the number of new vehicles purchased each year, that may yield additional funds to be allocated towards new approaches to public safety.

We would encourage the city as part of the establishment of the department to include securing grant funding in addition to funds allocated by the city to supplement costs of building new programs and services. Due to the centrality of the responsibilities and the precariousness of grant funding, grant funds should not be the sole or majority sources of funding.

1 Emergency Disptach Center call volume for 2018-2020, data provided by PSCC. See Appendix II for a breakdown of calls.

2 5.04 Public Safety Communication Center of the Northampton City Charter.

2. **IMPROVE** OPTIONS FOR CRISIS RESPONSE

Immediate Priority

I really think there is a big, major problem with police responding to those with mental illness... I suffer from complex post traumatic stress disorder ...[and]...from a great deal of trauma from care providers and the police as an adult that further my entry into the system.

-from public comment to the NPRC

At present, our police departments remain at the center of crisis intervention for people experiencing emotional distress. An armed response may not make all feel safe and may at times increase the agitation of those in distress. Northampton needs to develop non-coercive responses to residents experiencing extreme emotional states or who are thinking of and planning to harm themselves or others and to re-envision the role of policing within crisis response. We strongly endorse the development of an alternative-to-policing mental health crisis response model for Northampton that should be locally relevant and drawn from the experience of the CAHOOTS model, which has functioned successfully in Eugene, Oregon. Such programs should partner with mental health agencies, community-based peer response programs, and include individuals with lived experience in their development, operations and evaluation.

When crisis calls come in through the Eugene police non-emergency number or through the 911 system that have a strong mental health component, that do not seem to require law enforcement and do not appear to involve an extreme risk of violence to a distressed person or to others, the dispatch will be routed to the CAHOOTS team. The team will go out and respond to the call, assess the situation, assist the individual if possible, and then help get that individual to a higher level of care or necessary service if that is what is needed. Police back-up is always possible if the situation ends up looking different than it was earlier assumed to be.

The response team works out of a van that is usually comprised of a medic (EMT or nurse) and a mental health crisis worker. Often the crisis worker is someone with lived experience of a mental illness. In this way, the CAHOOTS model works on the basis of what the Commission has heard so much public comment on, which is the value of involving programming that is "peer-led".

During the three decades of operation there have been no serious injuries of CAHOOTS workers. In 2019 the program reported that they had responded to 18,000 calls, with only 311 requiring back-up by the police. The program maintains an Advisory Board that includes people with lived experience. This model is adaptable to Northampton, as our local area is rich with mental health consumers/survivors/ex-patients with experience of providing non-coercive interventions with friends and other community members who are experiencing emotional stress.

NORTHAMPTON'S CONTEXT

Currently ServiceNet and Clinical Support Options (CSO) are agencies that hold contracts with the state or the Federal government to respond to mental health needs. Both agencies have a large presence in the Northampton area. Services include crisis intervention, day treatment, recovery programs, residential care, family support, and programming for people with developmental disabilities and houseless people. CSO has contractual responsibility for risk assessments of individuals to determine whether admission to Cooley Dickinson Hospital's inpatient psych unit or another facility is recommended for safety. Though the missions of both CSO and Service Net have grown and changed over the decades, various components of each are historically rooted in the community mental health movement that strengthened during the 1950s, which resulted in the Community Mental Health Act, signed into law by President Kennedy in 1963. This original act envisioned a network of community-based mental health agencies across the country whose responsibility it would be to respond to the mental health needs of the entire community. Due to strong trends towards privatization of funding of health care and mental health, the full promise of this original enabling legislation has never been fully met. However, these agencies are dominant providers of mental health services in the Northampton community. The role of

these agencies needs to be considered within a re-envisioned mental health response system that will place higher value on non-hierarchical interactions with service providers and non-coercive responses to distress calls.
Notable as a non-coercive mental health resource in Northampton is Afiya, the peer-led respite program in Northampton (affiliated with Wildflower Alliance, formerly known as Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community). Afiya strives to provide a safe space in which each person can find the balance and support needed to turn what is so often referred to as a 'crisis' into a learning and growth opportunity. The Afiya house is located in a residential neighborhood and is central to a variety of community resources. It is available to anyone ages 18 and older who is experiencing distress and feels they would benefit from being in a short-term, 24-hour peer-supported environment with others who have 'been there.' Typical stays at Afiya range from one to seven days. The majority of staff and guests at Afiya identify as having lived experience that may include: extreme emotional or altered states, psychiatric diagnoses, trauma histories, living without a home, challenges in navigating the mental health and other public systems, or living with an addiction.

Though comparatively small in size as a city, Northampton is not exceptional in its need to develop non-coercive responses to residents experiencing extreme emotional states or who are thinking of and planning to harm themselves or others. Many other towns and cities across North America have responded to the publicly voiced need to re-envision the role of policing within larger concerns pertaining to public safety for all residents.

The Commission and its subcommittees have engaged in study of a number of developing and existing municipal alternatives to dispatching uniformed and armed police officers to nearly every 911 call, whether crime-related or not. An important statistic to bear in mind while reading this commission report is that people labeled with mental illness account for approximately 25 % of all fatal shootings by police. This statistic has held steady between 2015 and 2018, as approximately 1000 people were killed during police officer-led community responses (Rogers, McNiel, & Binder, 2019). The fact that Northampton has not yet experienced such a tragedy does not represent a sufficient argument to avoid consideration of alternative response models organized on non-coercive approaches to mental health crises.

Despite the evidence of de-escalation training that is being offered within the Northampton Police Department, this Commission believes that police often do not have a useful role in responding to members of the community who are experiencing extreme emotional states or contemplating suicide or other forms of self-harm. Not uncommon for individuals contemplating self-harm, and for those seeking temporary relief from emotional misery is substantial use of alcohol and/or recreational drugs. Crisis responses to these complex presentations become even more delicate when these substances are present in the bodies of distressed individuals. Further complicating the picture are the daily problems experienced by houseless individuals who have also been assigned mental health labels. Response teams need to be equipped, either through their own direct efforts, or by rapidly coordinating with other community agencies in real time, to facilitate connections between a distressed person and appropriate resources, whether that is housing, food, peer-led respite, conventional mental health services, or other resources. Such resources should be made available on a voluntary basis rather than a mandated basis. Police may be engaged for back-up in overtly dangerous situations. However, based on the reported data from a few alternative mobile response teams around North America, the percentage of their calls requiring police back-up are minimal.

For more detailed information on crisis response, see Appendix II.

3. **PROMOTE** THE SAFETY OF THE HOUSELESS COMMUNITY

Immediate Priority

People who live without housing in Northampton are the least safe members of our community. Their lives are unsettled and frequently endangered. They are at risk of starvation, disease (addiction, heart failure, diabetes) exposure to the elements and worst of all, live at the whim of the larger community. The houseless community has frequent contact with the police, partially at the request of the larger community and property owners, and also because the homeless community is also subject to violence and threat.

To improve the safety of this community we advise the maintenance of a shelter system for evenings, and the continued development of the Community Resilience Hub[1] programs so that there are resources for people during the day. We also propose the development of a Housing First program, partnered with a city run administrative office that assists members of our community with access to housing and associated services. Such programs have been shown to both improve the well being of those without housing, and also decrease the co-morbidities that people without housing suffer, such as substance use, mental health instability and medical comorbidities.

There are multiple comorbidities that accompany houselessness, including poverty, inadequate income to support housing, mental health conditions, domestic and sexual violence, substance use and substance use disorders, past incarceration which limits employability and housing access, and lack of employment or employability. When these comorbidities persist, it becomes more and more difficult for people to exit the cycle of on-going homelessness.There are additional, structural barriers that promote houselessness, including a lack of affordable housing, income inequality, and ongoing effects of structural racism.

The police are frequently called on to deal with issues that result from houselessness. The police are called for:

- Agitated behavior
- Concerns about property trespass
- Domestic violence within the homelessness community
- Community perceived 'offensive' or discomfiting behavior
- Concerns about safety within the homelessness community

The Commission has heard and read much witness from the community which serves the homeless; and this witness informs us that many of the houseless do not feel protected by the police. Instead, they feel endangered by their involvement with the police. In order to promote safety for the houseless community and reduce the effects of criminalized poverty and potentially escalating interactions with police, the Commission urges Northampton to pursue the expansion of current services and the addition of new alternatives.

MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE SHELTER SERVICES

Housing advocates would say that some members of the community will continue to wish to live outside of formal housing. Northampton must continue to offer shelter services for people who require housing on a short-term basis. Northampton must continue to offer shelter services that are currently in use, and expand services during weather change (e.g. winter, or catastrophic storm events) to make shelter available to those in need.

1 https://www.northamptonma.gov/2166/Community-Resilience-Hub

CONTINUE AND EXPAND THE NORTHAMPTON RESILIENCE HUB

"Northampton has 2 pressing needs: The first is for a day center to support individuals who are homeless and within or eligible for the shelter system. The second is that Northampton anticipates a growing number of climate related events (flooding, temperature extremes, economic crisis, etc.) that could endanger the stability of vulnerable households... agreed to the need for a day center in Northampton where the basic needs of homeless individuals could be met. This day center would complement the existing shelter services ...by offering a warm, safe and respectful space for showers, personal storage and a mailing address"

- 2018 Northampton Community and Resiliency Hub Report[1]

The Commission strongly supports the development of a Resilience Hub. Such a facility will increase the safety for the homeless community in Northampton and reduce the calls to the Northampton Police for surveillance of the homeless community.

ADOPT A HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

Getting people into supportive housing situations reduces their police interactions, time in the correctional system, reduces health care costs and has better outcomes for them as individuals. Supportive housing recognizes collective accountability for outcomes instead of a fixed institutional role.

"Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life." Many housing programs offer financial assistance or lowered housing costs to allow individuals to gain housing, but they also may have barriers to access, such as restrictions on people with substance abuse disorders, or those who have been incarcerated in the past. Housing First recommends people obtain housing so people can stabilize their lives, and then have an opportunity to deal with other challenges in their lives such as the experience of violence, mental health or physical health treatment, and stabilization of substance use.

There is early evidence that this approach can lead to benefits in medical care and costs, improvement in mental health outcomes, and improved treatment success in people with substance use disorders. Most importantly, this approach aligns our community's values that we promote safety for all in the community, that it is important that people have the safety that housing will allow.

Although a number of agencies are available to assist with housing, their service can be complex and difficult to access. The Commission heard recommendations from Pamela Schwartz that Nortampton needs a structure that facilitates access to housing: an employed, financially supported staff to coordinate housing options for individuals. There is an array of relevant agencies to tend to these issues, and to a certain extent they coordinate with one another. We would recommend a Department of Community Care include a coordinator on its staff that would have the ability to efficiently refer people to the appropriate group within this array of agencies and increase the collaboration and coordination of services and supports.

For more information on housing, see Appendix II.

1 *Full report available https://northamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15476/Northampton-Community-and-Resilience-Hub-2020618-JWA*

4. **REDUCE** THE RISK OF SUBSTANCE USE

Immediate Priority

Harm reduction engages communities in a manner that attempts to build trust, addresses the needs of individuals using drugs, and reduces adverse effects of drugs and drug enforcement. This involves recognizing that people unable or unwilling to abstain from illicit drug use can still make positive choices to protect their own health, the health of their families, or their communities; and that police can work with other community or health actors to help facilitate this outcome and advance public safety. There is currently a program within the NPD that attempts to follow this model. The program attempts to avoid arrest, and referral to treatment rather than incarceration. The Commission supports such programs, but we also recommend additional support of programs that can intervene without police presence. We recommend support of professional and community-based programs such as Tapestry Health, HRH413, and Hampshire HOPE.

For more on harm reducation, see Appendix II.

5. **TRANSITION** TO PEER AND CO-RESPONDERS

Immediate Priority

In addition to the peer-led responses to calls and emergencies involving mental health and houselessness, we recommend that the city transition other services immediately to unarmed peer responders where possible. These services were identified as potential responsibilities to be carried about by the Department of Community Care, or in collaboration between the Department of Community Care and the Police Department.

WELLNESS CHECKS - *PEER RESPONDER*

Absent extraordinary circumstances, calls asking for someone to check on the well-being of another community member should be responded to by unarmed civilian community peer-responders.

SUSPICIOUS PERSONS - *PEER RESPONDER*

Absent some indication that the "suspicious person" is armed or behaving in some way that suggests imminent violence, these calls should be fielded by unarmed civilian peer-responders or co-responders. We feel that many such calls can be rooted in racial stereotypes and that an armed police officer should not be the presumed response.

LARGE NON-VIOLENT PUBLIC ASSEMBLY OR PROTESTS - *CO-RESPONDER COLLABORATION*

"I was what's described as a peacekeeper that helps with de-escalation. I'm hoping to provide unarmed safety services at protests...With only a couple dozen fellow peacekeepers, our peacekeepers, on our own... there were no police interventions, we were able to prevent all any violence there was zero reported violence within the five hour period without requiring police intervention... I would say that it wasn't easy when the local police brought in so much militarized tactical police from the State cops, State police force, which brought armored vehicles, and you know, canine unit and tactical gear. I definitely feel that the over militarization made people feel threatened and didn't actually calm things down, I would say, quite the opposite, I would say it definitely riled up the crowd..."

-from public comment to the NPRC

Unless there are overt indications of violence, public assemblies and protests should be met and managed by unarmed civilian community peer-responders or co-responders. Because these incidents can turn violent quickly however, good practice would require armed police officers to be on alert and nearby.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - *NEEDS FURTHER STUDY*

The Northampton Police Department has a strong program in this area. The work of the many local organizations that provide counseling, support and shelter for those subject to abuse is essential. The NPD's work with these organizations through the Domestic Violence Intervention Project and its on-site civilian advocates provide an important resource that is helpful to some of those subjected to abuse. Removing the person who is the source of violence from the life of a person being victimized stops that violence while they are detained.

However, police involvement can also add to the trauma, and as many as half of those subjected to violence do not feel safe reporting it. Even though they want the violence to stop, some of those subjected to it are very wary of involving the criminal legal system in their lives because of the negative impact that it may have economically and the lack of control many feel once the criminal process starts. There is also little evidence that the increasing criminalization of this violence has reduced it. For these reasons, we recommend further study on how non-criminal options can be made available to those subjected to abuse, and how the city can support violence prevention work.

See Appendix II for a detailed analysis.

6. **IMPROVE** THE CURRENT COMPLAINT PROCESSES

Immediate Priority

We were tasked with reviewing the policy as to how complaints against individual officers are handled. Though we do not offer a detailed proposal for change in this area in this report, we note however that the current policy and practice is clearly inadequate. To have a minimally meaningful process for the review of complaints against NPD officers, the Department should implement changes in the following areas:

1. How, when and where a complaint may be filed. We found it highly problematic that complainants must take their complaints of the police to the police department. It seemed obvious to us that many would feel intimidated or worried about filing complaints this way. Complaints forms should be available on line and in hard copy form at various social service and other private and public agencies in the community. Moreover, all complaints should be aggregated in a central city location so that they can be independently audited by appropriate agencies outside of the police department.
2. Investigation of complaints should not be done by the Chief, nor should it be exclusively by coworkers of the officer against whom the complaint has been lodged.
3. A decision on the merits of the complaint should not be left exclusively to the discretion of the Chief.
4. The merits of complaints are currently judged as: (a) meritorious because of a finding of violation of the law, (b) meritorious because of a violation of NPD policy, or not meritorious. We believe that more categories of merit should be added. Public testimony was replete with examples of passionate complaints that do not fit category a or b but nonetheless are at the heart of the animus between some community members on the NPD. Chief Kasper described such complaints as "customer service complaints". We wish to stress that a more nuanced look at responding to such complaints is needed other than characterizing them as unsubstantiated. The NPD should develop ways of restoring trust and good will with community members whenever possible (even when the officer is not guilty of breaking a law or policy).
5. The penalty for any transgression of NPD policies should not be left to the sole discretion of the police department or union. For example, the community might be empowered to require the reassignment of an officer to a "desk job" who has lost public confidence as someone who can be entrusted to engage with the public in a respectful and non-threatening manner (even when the officer has not broken a law or NPD policy).

7. **CONTINUE** TO PROVIDE POLICE RESPONSE

Immediate Priority

The following are tasks for which the NPD is currently responsible and for which we feel the NPD should continue to be responsible. These are services for which we deem an armed police response to be appropriate.

VIOLENT FELONIES AGAINST THE PERSON

Reports of violent felonies such as murder, rape, other sexual assaults, robbery, assaults with firearms or other weapons, carjackings and home invasions by definition risk serious harm to members of the community and/or the community at large. These are matters traditionally handled by an armed police response and the Commission recommends that there be no change in this area. However, this provision is limited to reports of crime in progress or crime that has taken place very recently. Reports of crime, even serious crime such as rape or robbery that are reported hours or days after they take place, may not require an initial armed police response.

FELONY PROPERTY CRIMES

While these crimes, which include burglary, breaking and entering, larcenies of motor vehicles or under Massachusetts law, property with a value of over $1200, may not pose the same risk of violence as with crimes against the person, we nonetheless feel that an armed police response is appropriate, at least where the crime is reported as "in progress." Where the report is for this type of crime that has happened in the past, as for example a homeowner who returns home from a weekend away to find that his home has been broken into, response by an unarmed community peer-responder or co-responder is the more appropriate response. We note that the same response may be appropriate when home or business burglar alarms are tripped and NPD is automatically notified or notified by a calling party. We also note that as in other categories there may be need for follow-up by armed NPD Detectives or unarmed forensic technicians.

MAJOR PUBLIC DISTURBANCES (RIOT)

The events of January 6 have reminded us that public disturbances have the capacity to turn violent within a very short period of time. When a public gathering professes an intent to behave in a violent manner or takes a turn towards violence against any individual, an armed police response is appropriate.

SALE OR DISTRIBUTION OF DRUGS

The illicit drug trade carries with it an inherent threat of violence. Many dealers of drugs are armed or have the ability to quickly arm themselves when arrest is threatened or when disputes among dealers or dealer and customer arise. We recognize some support for the legalization of all drugs which would alleviate a large portion of this problem, and some of us urge City officials to support statewide efforts toward legalization. But as long as drugs and drug dealing remain illegal and the NPD is required to enforce drug laws, distribution requires an armed police response.

ACTIVE SHOOTER/TERRORISTIC THREATS/HOSTAGE TAKING

These scenarios are inherently violent and dangerous to the community and require an armed police response. To this end, it is worth noting that Northampton has acted to remove its School Resource Officer (SRO), who was presumably originally placed to respond to (or prevent) school shootings. It is important that the city verify that there is a plan in place to respond quickly to such incidents in the public schools or at Smith College.

REPORTS OF ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS

We live in a society in which the federal and state governments have tolerated if not condoned the possession of guns. Many guns are owned and possessed legally. However, when authorities receive a report of possession of a weapon by someone known or suspected to not be properly licensed to carry or possess a weapon, an armed police response is warranted. Note that any brandishing or threatening with a weapon would be considered a violent felony, even if no one is injured and is covered by Response to Violent Felonies Against the Person.

MAJOR AUTOMOBILE OFFENSES

While we take the position that many if not most traffic matters can likely be handled by unarmed civilian community peer-responders or co-responders, reports of motor vehicle operation that presents an immediate threat to the public may also require an armed police response. This category includes some but not all instances of reckless driving and operating under the influence of alcohol.

INVESTIGATION OF SERIOUS CRIME

Armed NPD Detectives should not be inhibited in investigating serious crimes against the person or property. For example, there have been recent reports of a spate of nighttime catalytic converter thefts from automobiles parked in driveways. Police officers and detectives should be free to conduct stake-outs in an effort to apprehend persons engaged in felonious criminal acts. Similarly, reports of robbery or rape may require a detective to investigate by seeking out suspects or known confederates of a suspect. Such activities can be dangerous and as such armed police detectives are appropriate for this work. On the other hand, reports of past break-ins or thefts are more appropriately responded to by unarmed civilians and forensic technicians to gather fingerprints, trace evidence, DNA, bodily fluids and the like.

8. **CREATE** A STRATEGIC PLAN

Immediate Priority

Chief Kasper informed us that there was an effort to develop a strategic plan last year which was interrupted by the pandemic. Strategic plans are maps that guide and focus organizations in achieving their goals. While some strategic plans may sit on a shelf, the best institutions have vibrant plans that impact the behavior of the organization. The NPD will be affected by any action of the City of Northampton to reimagine policing. Informed by events of the past year, an informed strategic planning process with citizen input will assist the NPD to be part of a reimagined concept of public safety for the City of Northampton. Such a strategic plan will help the NPD to be an integral part of a social safety network that could be a model for other cities and towns.

9. **ESTABLISH** DATA-DRIVEN STAFFING LEVELS

Immediate Priority

The current practice of the Northampton Police Department is to ensure at least five (5) officers are available for a shift. This allows officers to respond to calls, support one another, and infrequently to respond to a call requiring the entire shift. While there are no state or federal mandates on staffing levels, we would encourage the city to review and implement policies for staffing appropriate to call volume and needs, and establish those parameters using accurate data to determine optimal staffing for shifts. The staffing policies established can ultimately include multiple response areas, so that new established positions in the department of community care or other emergency departments can contribute to the overall staffing requirements for public safety within the city.

10. **ESTABLISH** SAFE WORK HOUR CAPS

Immediate Priority

Through salary, overtime, and detail pay, police officers represent the majority of the highest paid city employees, including many routinely making more than the Mayor[1]. In addition to base salaries, the NPD has routinely paid approximately $250,000 or more in overtime pay per year, and officers have received thousands of dollars, sometimes upwards of tens of thousands of dollars in pay per year from police detail work. This represents, in the most extreme, an individual working 5,277 hours a year, or over 100 hours per week. Put another way: The average salary is $59,000 and ranged from $49,317 to $151,278. The range of overtime is from about $50 to almost $13,000 a year. Police details range from a low of about $50 to as much as almost $75,000. While we believe in a person's right to earn a decent living, we see trends which seem to show a significant difference between base salary and actual pay. We are concerned about officers overworking, which represents potential danger to the community in that they are driving at high speeds and carrying weapons.

We recommend that the city and NPD establish clear and safe limits on employee working hours per week to avoid overtired and/or impaired safety employees[2]. This is to ensure officers are well-rested and prepared to engage in high-risk, high-stress situations involving public safety, while not impeding their ability to work and earn a decent wage.

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1 Employee salaries and gross pay for Northampton https://northamptonma.gov/1385/Employee-Gross-Salaries

2 This would need to be negotiated in good faith between the City of Northampton and the police union(s) impacted.

11. **CONDUCT** A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Immediate Priority

One aspect of our work revealed that there are many gaps and problems in services and a wide range of voices which we did not hear from. It also revealed a difficulty in obtaining accurate data from which to evaluate existing policies, service delivery, and time allocations of city personnel. This was compounded by the complex interconnection of official and unofficial response policies, existing sensitive relationships, and the multitude of service agencies and options. We would recommend that an independent organization be brought in to do a formal needs assessment to review all city infrastructure as it relates to public safety.

There are many limitations of the data available that are central for the effective management of safety responsibilities within the city. We would recommend that the city work with an experienced independent agency[1] to provide the analysis to identify with more robust data areas of improvement, find opportunities to increase safety, and help guide any reallocations of budgets.

12. **ENGAGE** THE POLICE UNIONS

Immediate Priority

Police unions are powerful entities that have grown in influence in the US, especially in recent years. As changes to policing occur police unions can provide an opportunity for collaboration or a challenge to new developments. As is happening in many cities, we encourage the City of Northampton and the Police Union(s) to engage in good faith bargaining over any changes necessary. As Ron DeLord, chief negotiator for the San Antonio Police Union, puts it, "The unions need to bend...They need to be prepared to bargain over things that their community thinks are fair". While the managerial and departmental oversight power held by the city is strong, we believe using changes and contract negotiations within the negotiation window and through impact bargaining provide spaces for minimizing disruption to union members and contune to increase staff diversity.

We encourage creative solutions to personnel, additional oversight, department structure, and budgetary changes for the department including voluntary furloughs and wage freezes, evaluation of staffing schedules, and expenditures across the department to preserve employment options and access to benefits for officers during transitional periods. There are precedents for these creative reactions to support officers and the city, as well as potential new solutions.

13. **EVALUATE** SUCCESSES

Immediate Priority

Reasonable and measurable objectives should be established for each recommendation enacted. The objectives should include a timeline for expected results, with achievable milestones. At an appropriate point during each fiscal year, evaluate the success of the programs, and recommend any reinvesting of funds from the NPD to further non-police programs, if any, with sufficient notice so that the NPD can plan appropriately.

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1 There are a few agencies which cover this kind of consultation, including AH Datalytics, who have worked with cities doing analyses such as Austin, Oakland, Ithaca, New Oreleans, and others. https://www.ahdatalytics.com/our-work. As they appear in the New York Times: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/upshot/unrest-police-time-violent-crime.html

14. **EXPAND** PEER AND CO-RESPONDER FUCNTIONS

After the evaluation and adjusting of implementation of the previous recommendations, we encourage the city to engage in the further work of transferring responsibilities that do not necessitate an armed response to other departments. We recognize that additional training in many of these areas will be required, and may be facilitated at least initially by co-responder models of safety in collaboration with the Department of Community Care and other departments within the city.

FURTHER COMMUNITY RESPONSE OPTIONS

The initial community responder model we have described would prioritize calls related to behavioral health, homelessness and substance use. In the next steps, we suggest evaluating how community responders could respond to quality-of-life concerns and low-level community conflicts, including wellness checks, noise and nuisance complaints, investigating insurance claims, and suspicious persons. We encourage the City to involve the community, especially those most impacted by changes, in additional steps. For more information, see the Center for American Progress and the Law Enforcement Action Partnership's paper, "The Community Responder Model: How Cities Can Send the Right Responder to Every 911 Call"[1].

TRAFFIC DETAILS AND CIVILIAN FLAGGERS

Off duty traffic detail work presents a particularly unique service that is currently performed by members of the NPD. Many officers take advantage of working these traffic details as an opportunity to supplement their NPD salary. The Commission feels that there is no reason for armed police officers to be directing traffic at the Recycling Center, in front of schools, community events or at construction sites. These jobs could be handled by trained civilian community peer-responders or co-responders.

Since 2008, Massachusetts has permitted civilian flaggers to work low speed roads or low traffic high speed roads in construction zones. These flaggers must go through one of many[2] approved flagger certification programs[3], such as those provided by the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) Transportation Center[4]. Using these flaggers would provide well paying jobs to a wider section of the population, while reducing unnecessary police presence. Some savings may be realized, as the prevailing wage for road flaggers is slightly less than those paid to police, and the minimum payment that police receive of 4 hours for working less than 4 hours, or 8 hours for working between 4 and 8 hours, would not apply. We suggest further study to determine the effect on public safety and the municipal budget.

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1 The Community Responder Model: How Cities Can Send the Right Responder to Every 911 Call: https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/criminal-justice/reports/2020/10/28/492492/community-responder-model/

2 List of approved Massachusetts Civilian Flagger programs: https://www.mass.gov/doc/approved-flagger-certification-programs/download

3 Massachusetts Civilian Flagger Cerification: https://www.mass.gov/doc/flagger-certification-program/download

4 UMass Amherst Transportation Center: https://www.umasstransportationcenter.org/umtc/default.asp

PUBLIC DISTURBANCES

This category includes crimes such as disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace and breach of peace. These offenses should normally be handled by unarmed civilian community peer-responders or co-responders trained in de-escalation techniques with police on standby in the event that the incident proliferates and/or turns violent.

MISDEMEANOR CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON OR PROPERTY

Crimes such as threats, simple assault and battery and minor thefts can and should be handled by unarmed civilian community peer-responders or co-responders trained in de-escalation techniques. We recognize however that this is only a presumption. For example, an unarmed person who attacks a stranger and is in the process of beating him with his fists may be guilty only of a misdemeanor but the severity of the attack may well merit an armed police response.

SERVICE OF WARRANTS

Warrants can be for all sorts of things. A warrant for armed robbery should obviously be executed by an armed police officer. But a vast majority of outstanding warrants are for non-violent and often very minor offenses. In such circumstances unarmed civilian community peer-responders or co-responders should alert the alleged perpetrator of the existence of the warrant and provide them with another opportunity to present themselves to the court in question. Repeated failure to appear could of course justify arrest by armed police officers.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Dispatch currently makes decisions regarding medical emergencies based on the quickest response possible. That seems to be in the best interest of our community. The availability of trained civilian responders will create a non-police option to non-emergent medical calls. Some 911 calls are just for transport to the nearest emergency department.

SERVICE OF SUMMONSES

We are uncertain as to how often NPD officers are asked to serve court summonses. To the extent they are asked to do so, this service should be shifted to unarmed civilian community peer-responders.

GENERAL POLICE PRESENCE AND PATROL

We have heard no evidence that the presence of armed police officers either on foot or in marked cruisers deters crime to any greater degree than the presence of unarmed community peer-responders or co-responders. While there may be situations in which armed police patrol is appropriate in limited circumstances, this is not the preferred response. Under this category in which an unarmed civilian community peer-responder or co-responder is the preferred response we include several other services that are often now provided by NPD Officers such as providing directions, maintaining a

DRUG POSSESSION AND OTHER STATUS OFFENSES

lost and found, assisting as crossing guards and maintaining a security presence at school and other community events. In this category, we include minor drug possession, drug overdose, public intoxication, and trespass. For such transgressions, we recommend that the first response should be from an unarmed civilian community peer-responder.

MINOR TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AND ENFORCEMENT

We feel that minor traffic accidents can and should be responded to and investigated by unarmed civilian community peer-responders or co-responders. We also believe that most minor traffic law enforcement can be shifted to unarmed community peer-responders or co-responders or a civilian transportation department. This is a relatively new idea with which many other communities around the country are experimenting. We feel that the City should look to move the handling of these matters away from armed police officers and actively seek out and coordinate with other communities experimenting with traffic enforcement through a civilian agency. We note that this category does not include driving offenses that present an imminent threat to the public or serious traffic accidents in which there is serious bodily injury or loss of life.

ANIMAL CONTROL

It is our understanding that while the City has an animal control officer and that they are currently under the auspices of the NPD. We feel that all animal related calls which include vicious dogs, missing or endangered pets, unwanted wildlife such as squirrels or bats, should be handled by unarmed animal control officers who are not connected with the NPD whenever possible.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS OUTSIDE OF POLICE

There has been strong interest expressed, both within the commission and through public comment, in broadening responsibility for community safety to include more direct involvement from residents. The types of broadening reforms being investigated and implemented in many towns and cities in North America often involve efforts to center the needs and wants of members of specific communities adversely affected by current efforts to reduce crime and make wrongdoers accountable.

Cities that are involved in implementing their broadened concepts of community safety are sometimes turning towards investigation of principles attributed to "restorative justice" philosophy. These cities do not anticipate full replacement of their existing criminal legal systems with their focus on retribution and heavy carceral tendencies. What the new community safety approaches are founded on are the following assumptions:

1. A crime represents a wound to the community, not just to the person victimized. It involves a violation of people and of interpersonal relations. This is in contrast with the concept of crime as a violation against the state.
2. Criminal violations imply obligations for the offender and a committment from the community to participate in the healing. For victims, it becomes a community effort to facilitate some aspects of the necessary healing and empowering of that person or those people.
3. Primary victims of crime should be given direct authority to voice how they have been affected by the harm, what they have experienced, what their losses are. These approaches take back the articulation of the personal dimensions of a crime from state authorities and give the voice fully to the person most directly and negatively affected. This principle of "who gets to tell the story" should apply even when an offender has not been identified.
4. Offenders (the accused, and in many instances already adjudicated individuals) may be included in heavily structured conversational processes in order to provide opportunity to take full responsibility for the offending actions and to be present for the development of a restitution agreement. This agreement sometimes includes prison time, sometimes house arrest, but always required actions to acknowledge full responsibility and to attempt to mitigate harm done. As with community obligations to victims of crime, efforts should be made to support and encourage offenders to participate in the process of making themselves whole.

It is important to note what "restorative justice" is not.

1. It is not "mediation"
2. It is not organized efforts to achieve "forgiveness".
3. It is not designed primarily to reduce recidivism or repeat offenses (though noted by Howard Zehr, sometimes referred to as the "grandfather of restorative justice" in his publication The Little Book of Restorative Justice (2015),

"reduced recidivism is a by-product" of movement towards restorative justice)

4. It is not a fixed model or program for a community, but rather a roadmap to guide extensive community dialogue that can lead to de-emphasizing carceral approaches to justice and amplifying opportunities to hold both victims and offenders as parts of the community, and to recognize the relevance of the often ignored but definitely needed healing to affected community members who were not primary victims.

This section has been offered not as a definitive overview of the processes involved in re-imagining community safety through implementation of restorative justice principles and practices nor the specific benefits that could accrue to the City of Northampton and its residents. The information here has been offered in the hope that during the implementing NRPC's recommendations the City will engage facilitators for citywide dialogue that considers re-construction of justice institutions and practices on the foundations of restorative justice philosophy.

We would like to name a caution that is critical to any consideration of introducing principles and practices of restorative justice. That is the potential for a restorative approach to simply replicate "patterns of racial and economic disparities that are prevalent in society" (Zehr, 2015). It would be important for the City of Northampton to remain cognizant of the potential for community dialogue and program development to default to another way to punish already marginalized residents who are perceived as doing harm under the guise of reform. Another concern, should the City decide to move in this direction, relates to whether and how the entire community is encouraged to be involved in discussions and implementation of a new justice focus. It is a powerful truth that the justice process belongs to the community.

APPENDIX I: CONTEXTUAL STATEMENTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

There are many recommendations that resulted from hours of discussion and deliberation. To help provide the context of those discussions, the processes used, and the reasoning behind the recommendations some subcommittees have submitted statements to assist in understanding.

ALTERNATIVES TO POLICING

The Alternatives to Policing Subcommittee has met during the last six months to examine the experiences of residents within the specific context of Northampton and its various forms of policing. Early on, testimonies from community members and advocates made it clear that negative interactions with police officers in Northampton have a clear impact on the homeless population and those without stable living arrangements.

Testimony highlighted the lack of access to bathrooms and warm water during winter, along with the issue of police officers attending mental health related incidents and other non-criminal incidents on the streets of the city. Based on these public testimonies and additional research on model programs in the United States and Canada, the Alternatives to Policing Subcommittee is concluding that a respondent with no gun would be more appropriate than is dispatch of an armed officer. The Sub-committee will continue its investigation, focusing on incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, and drug overdoses to document residents' experiences with police responses.

The Alternatives to Policing Subcommittee has explored several non-policing response models. These have included:

- Co-respondent models
- Peer-led models
- Use of existing non-police human services in Northampton

To make concrete and sustainable change, we must address the issues underlying the targeting of minorities. Policing should never be used to control others who are powerless in our community, and who may not be in positions of privilege that would allow them to address negative interactions with the police. The successes or failures of any changes made to the current structure of the Northampton Police Department must be measured by the negative or positive impacts in this area.

One of the challenges in this work is the lack of awareness among community members related to their own privilege and position in the community. When the current policing policies and practices have benefitted some groups of people while being harmful to minoritized people, it is critical that those with privilege recognize this dynamic, work proactively to understand it, and partner to change what is historically not working for those without privilege.

This Subcommittee has examined these dynamics and is attempting to create options for alternative forms of public safety and public health that ensure that those community residents most affected by policing are not left voiceless. Our investigations have yielded much data on alternative response models that involve the replacement of police presence in street situations that do not require an armed officer with crisis professionals and peers with lived experience of the types of distress that leads to a 911 call. Alternative models of response are the primary focus of this subcommittee's work and its recommendations to the full commission.

Change in our public safety system will take time. We envision a phased process whereby we put increasing resources into programs that will research, design and implement proactive, data-driven practices that will reduce the scope of policing, focusing on supporting people rather than policing them.

POLICIES AND SERVICES

Our Subcommittee's work was guided by the charge given to the Northampton Policing Review Commission (The Commission) by the Mayor and City Council in July of 2020.

With this understanding the Policy and Services Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) set out to do three things: identify and review as best we could, all of the services that the Northampton Police Department currently provides, consider the degree to which current NPD practices meet the needs of the full Northampton community including both its marginalized members and those who are less so, and imagine whether and how the services we reviewed could be delivered by non-police entities. Despite our good intentions, we must admit that our review is likely incomplete for many reasons including time limits and challenges imposed by complying with open meeting law. Indeed, Chief Kasper advised our committee of numerous errors that were made in our interim report which understandably damaged the trust between our Commission and the NPD. We regret and retract any such errors. We did our best to give particularly close attention to police activities that had been critiqued in community feedback or seemed lacking in the opinion of Subcommittee members. In our review of those practices, we noted progressive leadership in the Northampton police department such as being the first department in Massachusetts to participate in the Obama Administration's White House Police Data Initiative (PDI) by releasing policing data (e.g., use of force and motor vehicle stop driver demographics) to the public via the Department website (https://www.northamptonpd.com/npd-open-data-portal.html). Such data are a helpful way to promote transparency about police activities and clearly distinguishes the NPD from its local peers. We heard some positive testimony, for example statements of gratitude, of Northampton police performance from members of the community but also many more negative testimonies. We heard testimony that some people of color lack trust and confidence in their safety around any armed police. Notably, we also heard many complaints about harm from Northampton police experienced by houseless persons and people with mental health challenges.

We hold the view that detailed examination of the NPD practices and services has many justifications including our expectation that, regardless of what is recommended by the Commission and adopted by the city government, the NPD will continue to function in some form for the foreseeable future

The Subcommittee, therefore, requested information from the NPD about practices including, mental health, complaint procedure and logs, schools, strategic planning, and other services. Chief Kasper agreed to meet directly with our subcommittee. From her, we learned more about NPD's role in responding to numerous reported crimes [1]in Northampton (e.g., in 2019, NPD responded to reports of sexual assaults, cases of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, other assaults, robberies, breaking and entering cases, and larcenies) as well as the NPD's relationships to social services, range and volume of calls, training activities, domestic violence, traffic stops, allocation of officers per shift and the role of Dispatch.

In public testimony many callers wondered why police were deployed to situations that would be better served by medical or psychiatrically trained personnel. The need for collaboration between agencies and departments became increasingly evident and must be considered in any reform or alternative model proposal. In many cases alternatives are not available and in some cases not even known. It was clarifying to learn that Dispatch is a separate department from the NPD and, while there is a strong working relationship, they have a different reporting structure.

In addition to having the benefit of public comment in Commission and Subcommittee meetings, the Subcommittee heard from Jenny Cox, Director of Crisis Services of Clinical & Support Options. Crisis Services is often called by the NPD when addressing a behavioral health situation. Ms. Cox shared her view with the Subcommittee that Crisis Services currently relies on the NPD for not uncommon situations where an individual in mental health distress is at serious risk to themselves or others and that clinical skills are often not sufficient to de-escalate the situation. She described that Crisis working together with police has often been necessary to address mental health emergencies. When asked if peers might do this work, she indicated that Crisis uses peers on a limited basis and that she values their role on the clinical team. Yet, she expressed skepticism about whether anyone outside of law enforcement could safely handle a violent individual whose mental illness includes loss of behavioral control and/or contact with reality. She noted that mental health professional and peer contact works best when the mentally ill person requests or consents to their involvement.

1 See Appendix II for Major Crimes report data by year

The serious challenge arises when the mentally ill person refuses any help but is also acting in a way that is dangerous to themselves or others. Finally, it is important to note that that Ms. Cox described her relationship with the NPD as significantly better than other area police departments in their willingness to seek collaboration with mental health professionals and to defer to mental health professions on the critical question of when to act to hospitalize a mentally ill person against their will.

> *The Commission heard often detailed testimony from the peer community and especially the WildFlower Alliance (which runs a state funded peer respite program in Northampton) about the value of peer intervention. Peers are individuals having lived experience with trauma, psychiatric diagnosis and/or extreme emotional states. Peer-to-peer support is primarily about how people connect to and interact with one another in a mutual relationship. Peer-to-peer supports the dignity of those in crisis and avoids the authority and emphatically hierarchical impact that is inherent in a police response and sometimes in a mental health professional response as well. Even so, when pressed, advocates of the peer approach admitted that peers are not prepared to handle all situations and must sometimes rely on police to help them to address the most dangerous (if rare) situations.*

The Subcommittee received written testimony from the Director of Campus Safety at Smith College (Debra Duncan). Smith College is a major institution in Northampton with international recognition and a population of over 2500 students residing on its open campus. Smith College Campus Safety officers are unarmed and unable to make arrests. Smith relies heavily on services from the NPD via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Within the last year, NPD has assisted Smith officers in two incidents involving persons threatening themselves or others with deadly weapons. Smith College is known for its political activism often garnering national attention. In fact, as of this writing, Smith College is being heavily criticized by the New York Times, Fox News, and others for creating an atmosphere that is racially hostile for its White employees. Chief Kasper voiced worries that Smith College could be the target of political retribution. She expressed concern that NPD might not be able to respond rapidly to Smith emergencies (and other emergencies) if the NPD loses more personnel.

On a related point, Chief Kasper pointed out that the NPD becomes involved in many non-crime activities because they are one of few 24 hour services available to the community. She notes that many community problems occur "after hours" and that these are referred to the police when there are no other appropriate 24 hour services available. One major implication of this point is that efforts to replace policing in precisely these areas must be designed and budgeted for 24 hour service and possibly include some form of unarmed civilian "patrol".

APPENDIX II: DATA AND RESEARCH

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The movement to take domestic violence and sexual assault seriously, to not dismiss it as a personal and private matter, has made important steps forward in the rights of women and all people subjected to this violence.

"For me, as a survivor of sexual assault, safety is re-funding the NPD budget to its previous level so the department can be returned to full capacity. Further cuts to the Northampton Police Department directly threaten my safety. Safety, for me as a survivor of sexual assault, is hiring ten officers to replace those lost so that response times are not reduced and I won't get killed."

- Comment from public comment to NPRC

The work of the many local organizations that provide counseling, support and shelter for those subject to abuse is essential. The Northampton Police Department's work with these organizations through the Domestic Violence Intervention Project[1] and its on-site civilian advocates provide an important resource that is helpful to some of those subjected to abuse. Removing the person who is the source of violence from the life of a person being victimized stops that violence while they are detained.

However, police involvement can also add to the trauma, and many do not feel safe reporting the violence at all. A national survey from the ACLU in 2015[2] indicated that 88% of people working in the field reported that police "sometimes" or "often" do not believe survivors or blamed survivors for the violence, and that 55% said that police bias in this area against particular groups of people was a problem in their community. More than half reported anti- Black, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-LGBTQ attitudes among responding officers.

***"On a number of these calls I've heard really vocal support for police departments coming from survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence, and I am here to remind everyone on the call - Everyone-
That we are not a monolith. I am a survivor of domestic violence; I am a survivor of sexual assault. And I believe that the Northampton Police Department, regardless of what people perceive their record and image to be, should be defunded, and that monies that are currently allocated to that department could be reallocated to social and human services. I feel forced to disclose, but it's just a reminder that we are not a monolith. There are survivors who believe in the defund movement who believe in investing in our communities, not in guns, not in police, and I'm one of those folks."***

- Comment from public comment to NPRC

This past June, 45 sexual assault and domestic violence state coalitions, including Jane Doe Inc. [3](the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence), issued a statement[4] recognizing the ways in which the movement has repeatedly failed Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) survivors, leaders, organizations, and movements, by choosing an increasing reliance on the criminal legal system as the primary approach to domestic violence rather than community-based solutions that support healing and liberation. State and federal policy has in many cases required these organizations to work with the criminal legal system in order to obtain funding.

There is little to no evidence that the criminalization deters intimate partner violence. Prison sentences subject those who use violence to more violence. The criminal system holds people accountable by shaming them. Shame and punishment does not deter violence, but instead can be a powerful stimulus of violence[5].

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1 Domestic Vlolenc Intervention Project: https://www.northamptonpd.com/other-resources/domestic-violence.html

2 Responses from the Field: Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Polcing: https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/2015.10.20_report_-_responses_from_the_field.pdf

3 Jane Doe Inc: https://www.janedoe.org/

4 Moment of Truth: https://vtnetwork.org/in-the-news-moment-of-truth/

5 Gilligan, J. (2001). Preventing Violence. United Kingdom: Thames & Hudson.

An economic approach. At present, few policy dollars are allocated to programs and policy that reduce the risk of intimate partner violence.

Money and resources provided directly to those subjected to abuse will allow them to make decisions to remove themselves from abusive situations. Both conditional and unconditional payments have shown results. Massachusetts law provides employees who have been subjected to abuse up to 15 days of leave, but losing out on that income may mean people do not use this. Domestic abuse is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women. Securing stable housing can become difficult, due to an eviction history brought on by the abuse, or damage to one's credit by an abuser.

Male unemployment is strongly correlated with domestic abuse. Providing supportive training and employment resources could reduce violence. In addition to a preventative approach, minimizing intervening in such a way that the abuser is put at unnecessary risk of losing their job should be a policy in these cases. If a person is arrested and misses a shift at work when they are already in a shaky economic or work situation, this creates another experience of loss of responsible power over one's life. If financial penalties are then imposed in these situations the person is pushed further into economic instability.

A public health approach. We suggest funding programs that reduce adverse childhood experiences (ACE), and work with people who have experienced them. Examine the reasons why people desire to have power & control over others. Those who use violence have often experienced trauma themselves, which undermines a person's sense of control. We need to understand the connection between intimate partner violence and the violence that is done to men and boys by the correctional system, racism, and by wealth inequality and poverty. See Healing Together: Shifting Approaches to End Intimate Partner Violence.

Holding those who use violence accountable for their actions and creating supportive environments for them will do much more to stop violence than punishment. Some examples are Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), a successful program in Vermont. The Strength at Home Men's Program (SAH-M) works with current and ex-military members who have subjected a partner to intimate partner violence.
Support for community-based justice circles may look different than the traditional model of engaging non-profits to provide services to clients. Instead, providing spaces, food, childcare and transportation to create safe spaces for support may be the most effective. Provide support for Safe Passage's primary prevention education and training workshops held in area schools.

A decriminalized approach. Serious, repeat offenders must be prevented from continuing to harm. A focused deterrence approach has been shown to be effective for these offenders, along with non-police advocates working with people subjected to abuse to ensure that interventions would not jeopardize their safety and would serve their needs.

Restorative justice programs are often not allowed specifically for domestic violence, if state funded. A restorative justice program that is driven by and centered on those subjected to abuse, and where the person who used violence accepts responsibility for the harm as described by the victim, should be explored. In order for these programs to feel safe to those subjected to abuse, they must be able to decide the level of involvement by the criminal legal system. A clear separation must be made between these programs and the police. See "Opportunities and Pitfalls: Facing the Restorative Justice Movement".

Multiple levels of intervention are needed, starting with restorative dialogue and moving up to punitive approaches if necessary. If incarceration is needed, steps must be taken to reduce the trauma of incarceration.

ADOPTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REFORM

The programs referenced above are not one size fits all. We recommend further study of the specific needs of Northampton to craft a program that provides alternatives, with input from those most affected by violence, and from the current organizations working in this area, including Safe Passage, the Center for Women and Communities, Womanshelter/Compañeras, and the New England Learning Center For Women In Transition (NELCWIT). The local Men's Resource Center (site not updated since 2006) was a partner in the Domestic Violence Intervention Project. Any programs developed must be accountable to their users.

What alternative crisis response services would provide alternatives to a police response that more people would use? Domestic violence response is one of the most dangerous responses for the police. How do we reconcile that with alternative crisis responses? Is that because of the inherent escalation from a police response?

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https://survivedandpunished.org/

"TransformHarm", a resource hub about ending violence. The site offers an introduction to transformative justice. https://transformharm.org/

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ALTERNATIVE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE

During the course of this Commission process, members of the Alternatives to Policing Subcommittee have studied the most prevalent models of alternative mental health crisis response that have been adopted in the United States and Canada. What makes comparative research difficult for trained criminal justice and social science researchers, as well as for members of this Commission is the tendency for actual program development to lack of fidelity to a specific model. This is to say that a number of cities have developed models of dispatch and response to mental health crises that draw on aspects of several models. This reality makes it difficult to develop research questions that can provide definitive results that show impacts on municipal budgets; satisfaction ratings by police officers/civilian responders/the general public; or outcomes for the individuals in need of support and stabilization.

Nine models and alternative responses to mental health crises in community are mentioned in a Vera Institute of Justice 2019 literature review on police-based and alternative first responder models. Preliminary findings are reported below for the first three models, which are far more commonly implemented than the last six in the listing.

Case management services: These models tend to pair behavioral health professionals with police officers. Together the team focuses on people in the community who are considered "high utilizers" of either emergency services, or police services. The teams conduct outreach and follow-up to encourage more connection with mental health services and decreasing contacts with police and emergency services. While contact with police and emergency services decreased dramatically in Houston and Los Angeles where this approach was adopted, the reviewers from Vera Institute did not find any peer-reviewed literature on either of the programs to indicate benefits to the involved individual residents.

Co-responder teams: These models pair an officer with a mental health professional to respond to people in the community experiencing a mental health crisis. Some communities have also included a peer specialist or peer advocate (person with lived experience). The Vera literature reviewers found no significant reduction in arrest rates when co-responder models were used, they did find a program in DeKalb County, Georgia that experienced significant reduction in psychiatric hospitalization when psych nurses were on the team as first responders. In addition, this same county had reduction in municipal budgets were reduced by 23 % over calls handled by police alone. End-user satisfaction surveys completed by officers and consumers in a number of co-responder programs suggest high levels of satisfaction with this response model (Saunders & Marchik, 2007; Ligon & Thyer, 2000). It should be noted that despite reductions in the "frequent user" phenomenon and municipal cost concerns, narrative data collected across the United States and Canada from mental health crisis workers involved with this model suggests that there is some concern about any continued involvement by police in these calls. Mental health professionals and peer specialists voice their opinion that police are typically unnecessary in these dispatches. (Watson, Compton, & Pope, p. 26).

Crisis intervention teams (CIT): This strategy focuses on developing a high level of coordination and explicit partnership among first responder agencies, behavioral health agencies, advocacy groups, and people with relevant lived experience (peers and family members of someone labeled with mental illness). Early research, which includes comparative outcomes between models such as mobile crisis teams and co-responder models suggests the following benefits: increases in referrals to mental health services; slight reduction in stigmatization of people labeled with mental illness which led to slight reductions in arrests. While research is quite scant on benefits of CIT, especially around costs, researchers note that what qualifies as a "crisis" to police officers may just be another everyday seizure to a person with a disability. This is a good reason to place behavioral health specialists and peer specialists in the first responder position. Another key issue connected with this model, which is emerging as the most popular alternative to all-police models, is the availability of a continuum of mental health crisis services. Peer respite and professionally-run respite programs are promising but in short supply, and are non-existent in some locations.

EMS and ambulance-based responses: This approach prioritizes ambulance response with staffing by emergency medical

technicians, especially in areas where there is high incidence of suicide and homicide.

Developmental disabilities-sensitive teams: Though rare, some locations enlist collaborative multidisciplinary teams that seek to build understanding and sensitivity across criminal justice and disability communities in order to reduce adverse community responses involving residents with developmental disabilities.

Mobile crisis teams: Involves response teams usually consisting of a social worker and a nurse with a goal of reducing

unnecessary hospital transports; instead offering community-based mental health services and support. Mobile crisis approaches share with the co-responder model the inclusion of people with lived experiences ("peers) on the response team.

Officer notification and flagging systems: Involves access to a database (flagging system) by police officers that alerts an officer engaged in a mental health response to the distressed person's earlier consent to contact their current or previous mental health provider.

Stand-alone trainings on mental health and intellectual/developmental disabilities trainings: These are offered to police officers and dispatch employees involved in community mental health crises to improve their ability to recognize developmental disabilities and respond with greater sensitivity.

Trained support people/advocates: These models involve trained individuals who accompany people labeled with mental illness when they are involved with the criminal legal system. The support person in this model does not provide legal representation; instead works with a community organization that serves the needs of people with various disabilities and conditions when they become involved with the criminal legal system.

What has permeated public comment periods during this commission process are testimonies to the importance of embedding in any newly created response teams some individuals with lived experience, who may self-describe as "psych consumers", "psych survivors" or "ex-patients". The benefits of involving people with lived experience on the team include reductions in the use of control (such as restraints and involuntary admissions), increases in trauma-informed approaches, focus on "person-centered planning" and "self-determined crisis management" (the latter emphasizes active and empathic engagement of the distressed person in determining what they feel they need or want for stabilization and calm).

Sean Donovan of Wildflower Alliance (formerly Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Center) offered very moving testimony at an Alternatives to Policing Sub-committee meeting. He offered his opinion, based on numerous conversations obtained during nine years in peer-led suicide prevention work, that interventions failing to provide choice regarding transport to a hospital often lead to greater silence on the part of the distressed person. Sean stated that the most common reaction from individuals who have had wellness checks by police is that "they never stopped thinking about killing themselves, but they just learned the hard way to not talk about it anymore." Both mental health professionals and psych survivors are well aware that not talking about feeling suicidal feelings and plans constitute a risk factor for actually killing oneself. A "power-over" approach on the street or in the hospital can often lead to future alienation and a desire to not share the extent of the distress with any professional, in particular with a police officer.

At least one representative of Northampton Abolition Now (NAN) attended each of the Commission's meetings, as well as most of the Sub-Committee meetings. When several NAN representatives were present, they offered commentary and submitted information for Commission members to review, which included documentation of alternative mental health crisis response programs around North America. Advocating the development of an alternative response system that values and includes people with lived experience of mental illness in leadership roles, NAN made the following statement in their Blueprint for Abolition:

"Peer-led mental health programs and crisis response teams, created by, led by, and accountable to the communities

which they aim to serve, embody the humane, trauma-sensitive approach to mental health and crisis support that we envision for the Northampton community. The current mental health system is characterized by approaches that often

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stigmatize, re-traumatize, and disempower people who come into contact with it. Rather than continuing to pour more resources into a model which has not proven to be effective or desired by the people targeted by police and state violence, we could choose instead to invest in models that encourage mutual, relationship-based exchanges that do not rest on control, coercion, and 'power over' dynamics." (Blueprint for Abolition, p.21)

During a December 1, 2020 public hearing held by the Commission, nine individuals advocated for peer-led alternative response teams for mental health crisis dispatches. One of these community members, who identified as a mother of two children, community organizer, and survivor of domestic violence voiced her opinion that "cops have been elevated in status" in all the work they do. In instances of personal crisis, she advocates "peer to peer interventions that maintain dignity, that convey that both parties are human". She feels that "the badge and the gun make it a not human exchange".

In a February 11, 2021 public hearing, a business owner and Northampton home owner who identifies as a white woman shared her impression that our current system of policing non-criminal activities is "wielding of power in such an unbalanced form". In reflecting on the range of non-criminal and social needs that are often referred to the Police for response, she asked "Why do we put so much responsibility on one sector ?" She ended her public comments by stating that as a white person she felt the need to speak out, as she frequently hears from her friends of color speak of their fears of complaining due to their experience of being overly surveilled.

Information related to program development issues and early results of non-policing mobile response teams was obtained by extending invitations to out-of-area community advocates and founder-directors of such programs. Guest presenters included Rachel Bromberg of Reach Out Response Network in Toronto, Canada and Tim Black of CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets) in Eugene, Oregon.

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PROGRAMS THAT REDUCE SUBSTANCE USE

Harm reduction policing engages communities in a manner that attempts to build trust, addresses the needs of individuals using drugs, and reduces adverse effects of drugs and drug enforcement. This involves recognizing that people unable or unwilling to abstain from illicit drug use can still make positive choices to protect their own health, the health of their families, or their communities; and that police can work with other community or health actors to help facilitate this outcome and advance public safety. There is currently a program within the NPD that attempts to follow this model. The program attempts to avoid arrest, and referral to treatment rather than incarceration.
However; there are other harm reduction programs in the city, and they deserve more support so that police do not become the only source of harm reduction services. Tapestry Health has a long history of harm reduction services (needle exchange, Narcan distribution). HRH413 also offers services to individuals who are not yet ready to enter abstinence but need services to remain safe and secure

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS CENTERS

These centers allow individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis, including involvement with substance use, to be greeted by peers and trained professionals who can effectively respond to the crisis and provide the person with the appropriate level of care without involving law enforcement or the emergency department.

The "Rediscover Assessment and Triage Center" (ATC) in Kansas, Missouri is a regional crisis center that addresses both mental health and SUD related crises. It was originally established through collaboration with the criminal justice and hospital healthcare systems. The center has expanded to include walk-ins and referrals from community-based providers. Case management and connection to peers are areas of significant focus at the triage center. There is an accessible center for individuals to receive robust and appropriate mental health and substance use disorder services without getting involved in the criminal justice system.

Tucson, Arizona's Crisis Response Center (CRC) provides services in coordination with community stakeholders through implementation of a no wrong door policy, and has access to a comprehensive treatment system for SUD available 24/7. The no-wrong door policy makes substance use treatment more accessible. It reduces the need to call on law enforcement. The CRC increases personalized, comprehensive care.

Sources in Northampton include Tapestry Health, CSO and Servicenet

PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

The presence of peer support as integral part of SUD treatment services are extremely effective in crisis response services and other programming to appropriately engage individuals experiencing substance use crises and reduce reliance on law enforcement.

AnchorMore, a pre-crisis program in Rhode Island, deploys Peer Recovery Specialists to overdose hotspots to engage high-risk individuals. Weekly team calls identify areas where overdoses have been most prevalent, and calls may be convened more often if there is a marked increase in an area not previously identified. Teams of peers are sent to these areas and dispense Narcan (opioid overdose reversal medication) kits. During these interactions, peers establish connections with active users, and will provide referral to treatment and recovery services when individuals are interested. This program has demonstrated a high rate of engagement for services with an at-risk population. By using peers to engage high- risk individuals, services are administered without LE, and peers make connections with the population before, during, and after crises.

Kentucky's Bridge Program, a peer support program, provides post-overdose peer support to individuals with SUD presenting in EDs. It also involves hospitals providing induction onto MAT. This crisis point is seen as a successful point of intervention and engagement for care. By engaging individuals using peers at this point of crisis, involvement with LE is avoided and the individual is engaged with the appropriate care.

CO-RESPONDER MODELS

Pennsylvania's peer support community-based care management teams involves outreach to clients in EDs post overdose and extends such outreach to correctional facilities, primary care settings, and other community-based settings. The aim of the outreach is to engage individuals in their successful Center of Excellence program, expanding access to MAT, providing case management to address other social determinants of health, and encouraging continued involvement with health and mental health treatment. Peers are effective in engaging individuals experiencing substance use crises with other services, reducing current and future involvement with LE by connecting them to substance use and mental health services.

Programs in Northampton include The Wildflower alliance, and programs within CSO and Servicenet

CO-RESPONDER MODELS

See Improve Crisis Response.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

These services support individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders (COD) without involving Law Enforcement or the criminal justice system. Individuals experiencing homelessness or income insecurity are also supported by these programs, which help to reduce crises and help stabilize individuals post-crisis, reducing law enforcement involvement.

Supportive Housing for Individuals with COD have proven success. Extensive "Housing First" literature emphasizes the value of engaging homeless individuals with COD in scattered-site housing environments (sometimes termed "wet housing") with supports to help them succeed in the housing, while making better decisions over time about managing their various challenges. Sober housing or "recovery residences" are a valuable element of the continuum of support for individuals (including those with COD) who may wish to live in a supportive sober environment to help them maintain abstinence. Prioritizing supportive housing and resources sets individuals up with services that can reduce interaction with LE due to substance use and homelessness. Individual Placement and Support Model (IPS) of supported employment had cumulative employment rates of 60%,compared to 24% of those in a conventional program.

Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) for people experiencing first episode psychosis is driving an increased focus on supported education and employment. In the OnTrackNY CSC program, 44% of participants had co-occurring substance use, and education and employment rates increased from 40% to 80% with six months of program participation. These programs do not criminalize substance use. Instead, they provide individuals with financial and employment support necessary for their recovery, rather than involving them with law enforcement.

Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPS), individuals with lived experience of mental illness and/or SUD who have undergone formal training and certification, can gain employment to serve others. CPS have shown positive impact on those who receive this support. Access to CPS provides individuals in recovery the supports they may need to assist them avoid or to work through a crisis without involving law enforcement.

Motivational Enhancements (ME) and Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions have shown potential for success for individuals with co-occurring schizophrenia or other SMIs and SUDs receiving appropriate integrated interventions. Evidence suggests that those who participated in these interventions participated more in treatment, reduced substance use, spent more days in stable housing, and experienced fewer hospitalizations and arrests.

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DISPATCH CALLS FOR SERVICE

The Emergency Dispatch Center handles the 9-1-1- dispatch, as well as busniess and after hours call numbers for various departments, including DPW. In 2019 they handled 10584 calls emergency calls alone. Below are the details of those calls and their categories as listed within the department's record managment software. It is important to note that calls can only be tagged with one classification, and that the actual disposition of those calls may differ from the log created during the initial contact with a caller.

Police Calls					
Dispatch Classified Call Natures	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
911 Hangups	600	595	625	737	887
Abduction/Kidnapping	1	0	0	0	0
Burglar Alarm	1511	1505	1488	1478	1366
Animal Calls	523	567	531	510	388
Annoying Phone Calls	402	338	376	318	348
Assault	93	101	126	119	84
Assist Other Agency	284	389	423	462	336
Assist/Service Calls	804	864	895	799	668
Auto Crime/Theft	23	17	20	27	16
Bomb Threat/Suspicious Package	363	362	310	175	177
B&E Building	17	13	64	39	32
B&E Vehicle	425	427	349	202	224
Building/Property Check	7467	8734	7016	5687	6726
City Ordinance Violation	716	723	567	482	342
Civil Problem	49	36	33	31	25
Community Policing	619	736	570	366	312
Conterfeit Bills	7	11	21	6	9
Damage/Vandalism	558	522	469	309	367
Demonstration/Protest/Parade/Special Event*	N/A	23	17	22	17
Disabled Motor Vehicle	615	680	591	465	355
Documention of a Call-No Response	277	165	208	171	159
Disturbance	904	837	745	803	710
Disturbance-panhandling	53	31	22	21	15
Domestic Disturbance	245	230	193	173	184
Downed Tree	62	43	50	61	95
Drug Addiction Response	52	39	55	37	45
Drugs	66	62	66	45	31
Intoxicated Person	406	286	253	288	157
General Annoyance	13	18	52	54	75
Harassment/Stalking	201	195	165	146	168
Indency/Lewdness	15	17	10	16	12
Juvenile issue/problem	158	176	176	181	173
Liquor Establishement Check	222	187	174	139	84
Medical	1643	1705	1676	1692	839
Medical-Overdose	40	47	51	47	37

Police Calls					
Mental Health Medical	410	481	432	443	453
Mental Health Outreach	1	13	13	9	1
Missing/Found Person	76	50	62	43	31
Monitor Bar/Crowd	66	74	51	17	6
Motor Vehicle Stop	5902	5188	3872	3438	2230
Noise Complaint	529	557	419	485	621
Park and Walk	2567	2555	2481	2168	936
Parking Violation	373	542	464	388	193
Lost/Found Property	439	511	419	408	329
Public Service	358	355	302	167	176
Well Being Check	722	769	851	1000	859
Robbery	7	12	3	3	6
Serve Paperwork	619	637	554	563	420
Sex Offender Registration	155	146	193	181	143
Shoplifting	180	152	197	165	147
Snow Tow	214	247	235	324	76
Suspicious/Wanted	1900	1799	1704	1453	1943
Theft/Larceny	426	398	387	370	426
Traffic Accident	1347	1307	1343	1346	804
Traffic Control	71	71	129	107	97
Traffic Enforcement/Radar	2250	3531	2853	1852	852
Traffic Complaint/Hazard	859	903	867	861	722
Trespassing/Unwanted Guest	532	605	591	763	717
Underage Party	5	10	6	6	1
Unknown Problem	119	167	183	190	117
Unshoveled Sidewalk*	N/A	N/A	N/A	96	24
Vehicle Maintenance	497	514	402	393	926
Violation of Court Order	56	53	62	66	41
Warrant Service	342	223	201	187	91
Weapons/Firearms	35	12	24	20	24
Mutual Aid came in from Another Police Agency	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	0
Assist with Fire Related Event	281	248	241	245	239

*N/A indicates that the call code is newer and did not exist during that year

Dispatch Call Volume					
Dispatch Received	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
911 Calls **	N/A	N/A	10407	10976	10548
Business Calls	59798	117713	46436	47712	41247
Text to 911***	N/A	N/A	27	27	30

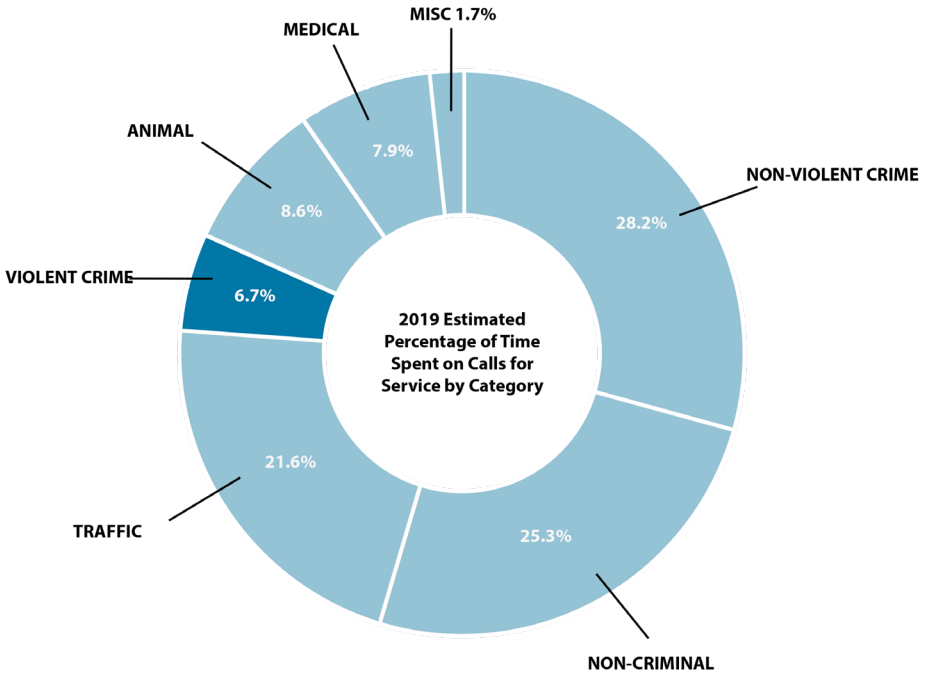
**New 911 system received during 2017, no accurate call data for 911 calls/text to 911

*** Text to 911 is not accurate since this includes testing the new system and dispatcher practice

Northampton Police Department
Major Crimes

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Murder	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sex Crime	43	48	55	53	29	56	49	48	51	41	46	66	59	50
Robbery	15	23	12	10	7	11	15	17	22	13	14	23	8	9
Assault	441	476	497	477	582	612	619	570	555	502	505	531	410	435
Arson	4	10	3	41	2	1	4	5	4	7	7	4	1	9
B&E	130	195	179	165	222	170	164	152	173	125	103	83	122	62
MV Theft	80	62	49	33	45	22	25	28	22	22	15	16	23	20
Drug Crime	188	214	164	162	143	196	177	166	110	149	134	102	98	74
Larceny	998	1081	1030	1085	993	993	1155	1102	911	942	828	811	714	589

https://www.northamptonpd.com/npd-open-data-portal/crimes-and-call-activity/246-major-crimes-by-year-2006-ytd-summary-data.html



The 2019 Estimated Percentage of Time Spent on Calls for Service is based on the 2019 Man Hours for Service Report generated by the NPD. We recognize, as advised by the Chief, that the report may have inaccuracies based on reporting practices and limitations, as well as categories having fluid definitions, we believe it a useful exercise to understand activity. In an attempt to understand what happens in Northampton, we categorizes calls into 6 types based on the general guides provided by the police, defined below:

- **Violent Crime** - *Assault, Auto Crime, Theft of Auto, Breaking & Entering - Business, Breaking & Entering-Motor Vehicle, Breaking & Entering- Other, Breaking & Entering- Residence Civil, Bomb found/Suspicious Package, Bomb Threat, Disturbance, Domestic , Roberry, Weapons/Firearms*
- **Non-Violent Crime** - *Serve Restraining Order, Violation of 209A, 911 Hang up, Aircraft Emergency, Alarm/ Burglar/ Holdup Panic , General Annoyance, Annoying Phone Calls, Assist/ Service Calls, Civil Problem, Crime Scene Services, Damage/ Vandalism, Disturbance, Drunk/ Incapacitated, Drugs, Driving Under Influence, Counterfiet Bill, Harassment/Stalking, Violaton of HPO, Indecency/Lewdness, Investigation, Juvenile Problem, Noise Complaint, Officer Needs Assistance, City Ordinance Violation, Outside Brush Fire, Parking Violation, Private/Trespass/Parking Tow, Shoplifting, Suspicious/Wanted, Theft/ Larceny, Trespassing/ Unwanted Guest, Underage Party, Unknown/3rd Party*
- **Non-criminal** - *Administrative, Document/Prop, Fire Alarm, AOM Review/Training, Assist Other Agency, Liquor Establishment Check, Building Property Check, Community Policing , Contained Appliance Fire, Demonstration/March/Protest, Disabled MV, Disturbance - Panhandling, Drone Complaint, Drone Deployment, Electrical Hazard , Process/Retrieve Evidence, Special Event/ Parade, Fuel Spill, Garage/ Meter Maintenance , Gas leaks (Gases), Hazmat, Serve Harassment Prevent Order, Lift Assist, Missing/ Found Person, Monitor Bar - Crowd, Odors (Strange/Unknown), Park and Walk, Prisoner-Feed/Transport, Property, Lost/Found, Public Service, Public Service- Check Welfare, Ride Along, Unshoveled Sidewalk, Smoke Investigation, Snow Tow, Sex Offender Registration Audit, Sex Offender Registration Structure Fire, Serve Summons, Supplemental, Downed Tree, Vehicle Fire, Vehicle Maintenance, Warrant Service, Water Rescue*
- **Animal** - *Animal, Animal inspection, and Noise Complaint - Animal*
- **Medical** - *Alarm Healthwatch/ Help, Drug Addiction Response, Medical - Deceased Person, Medical Emergency, Medical - Mental Health, Medical - Overdose, Medical - Suicide / Attempt, Mental Health Outreach, Mutal Aid Medic Sent*
- **Traffic** - *Motor Vehicle Stop, Abandoned MV, Traffic Accident, Bridge Overpass Accident, Traffic Control, Traffic Enforcement/ Radar, Traffic, Complaint/Hazard, Train/Subway/Commuter Rail*
- **MISC** - *MISC*

APPENDIX III: CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

There were many limitations which have impacted our work as a commission and thus the scope of our recommendations. They were especially prevalent with given the enormous task and charge of the commission as well as the relatively short time frame for which recommendations had to be made.

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

One of the largest limitations was the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic and shift to remote work introduced new challenges to many aspects of our work. The first was the introduction of remote meetings. Remote meetings represent opportunities to increase accessibility with the addition of translation services, live transcription, and the ability to connect from additional locations instead of needing to be physically present in downtown Northampton. However, they also introduce limitations. They require internet access to participate, and often inhibit some of the relationship building. They often do not capture all the non-verbal communications we would have access to in person. The use of a new platform also introduced technical levels of expertise necessary for their administration from staff.

SCOPE OF THE COMMISSION'S CHARGE

We want to recognize the immense scope of this project, and the amount of work required to address these issues from volunteer commissioners. The initial charge encompasses 18 individual items as the core, but also leaves open the need to study additional items which are, in fact, necessary to make informed recommendations. Other similar commissions relied on paid consultations to facilitate the report, outside and independent agencies to compile information and data, and/or have taken years to produce detailed recommendations. Our limitation to 6 months of volunteer labor was taxing on individuals and the commission as a whole.

OPEN MEETING LAW

The Commission worked to operate within Open Meeting Law while also accomplishing a task which required by its nature lots of communication. This translated into holding over 60 public meetings, but even at that rate of meetings impaired or restrained our ability to share information, thoughts, and achieve consensus around different topics. This slowed down our work. These open meetings also require creative thinking and the involving of third parties to collect information and statements from individuals who expressed concern and fear at being identified in public records. Members of the community wanted mechanisms to ensure their anonymity while giving comments and keep their names and particular situations out of the public record. This was compounded by being part of a small community where specifics of an incident could be easily used to identify them even if their name was redacted in a Zoom meeting recording.

The same Covid-19 restrictions which prevented in-person public meetings have also prevented some of the ways in which we would have held meetings and interacted with community members, especially those in marginalized positions who did not have access to the necessary tools to connect. The Commission could not hold focus groups or interact with those in the community in large numbers. While we adapted to this by increasing public comment periods in meetings, held 3 hours-long public hearings, created an online outreach form and a print form, and accepted email comments, the effect was not the same as those additional community contacts may have been.

NON-RESPONSE FROM AGENCIES

The Commission worked to contact and connect with key agencies which serve in emergency and crisis response, serve marginalized communities, and respond to victims. We recognize that 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic introduced new challenges for these agencies and their operation, and the demand for their services increased at the same time, and that may have impeded their ability to respond to us. Many of these groups also have formal and informal relationships with policing in Northampton as well, and may have viewed participation in this review as endangering those relationships. While this introduced a complication to our work and limited our recommendations, it did encourage our creative thoughts to address issues which have become bureaucratically complex.

LENGTH OF TIME TO GENERATE INFORMATION

Information and data are a central piece of understanding the realities of a situation, and to find opportunities for improvements. However, the methods of retention, the need to protect identities of involved parties, and even the systems used to track data required a large amount of human intervention to prepare, or presented inexact information. The additional work to prepare documents for release to a public entity introduced periods of waiting on critical work. While we anticipated some delays, they introduced additional delays in our ability to process and incorporate results in our analyses. There are still outstanding requests at the time of this publication which we encourage the city to pursue to maintain records and ease facilitation of future work in these areas.

GENDER COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION

The Mayoral and City Council charge for the membership make up of Northampton Police Review Commission was as follows:

The commission shall include representation of not less than eight (8) members who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, or from other historically marginalized communities who have been targeted and harmed by U.S. policing practices. The commission shall elect its own co-chairs who shall be resident, non-elected members.

Throughout the duration of the Commission the above representation was maintained; however the representation of females was significantly compromised due to the departure of four female members. Since there was no gender equity specified in the Commission membership, the departure of these women did not require a gender focus on replacing the vacancies. At the close of Commission deliberations, three members were female, eight members were male, and one was non-binary. This gender imbalance is considerable. This oversight in the formulation of membership of any city-wide committee or commission should be avoided in future.

APPENDIX IV: SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS

During the Commissions 6 month period, in addition to the hours of public comments, individuals who presented to the commission and were consulted by individual commission members are listed below:

- Linda Baker, Professor Emerita, Keene State College
- Tim Black, Director of Consulting, Whitebird Clinic/Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets (CAHOOTS)
- Rachel Bromberg, Co-Founder, Reach Out Toronto Response Network
- Jennifer Cox, Director Crisis Services for Clinical Support Options
- Sean Donavan, Wildflower Alliance
- Wendy Foxmyn, Community Member/Consultant/Mediator
- Jody Kasper, Chief of Northampton Police
- Mary Kociela, Director Domestic and Sexual Violence Projects, Hampshire District Attorney
- Becky Michaels, Director of Community Prosecution Practices, Hampshire District Attorney
- Kelly Schuetze, Director Northampton Emergency Dispatch Center
- Pamela Schwartz, Western Massachusetts Housing First
- Jess Tilley, Co-Founder HRH413
- Mary Walz-Watson, Registration Coordinator Western Massachusetts, SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) Program.
- Gisella Zunisa, Director, University of Massachusetts Amherst Center for Women and Community

APPENDIX V: RECOMMENDATIONS TO HELP FUTURE COMMISSIONS

While outside the charge of the Commission, we have noticed a number of issues which we believe endemic to much of the participation in civic life, and areas where improvement is possible. When possible, we have included items which may be implemented to improve commission work in the future.

Some, but not all, commissioners are experienced with work within the City of Northampton. For those unfamiliar, there was a learning curve. We appreciate the flexibility given to commissions and bodies to determine their structures, but also would recommend that the city lay out common structures that bodies can implement and then adapt for their needs. This document could also lay out roles and expectations for individuals to make informed choices about their involvement in the body's work.

We recognize the immediate need of this commission's work and the nature of the charge, but we recommend strongly that the City Council and Mayor's office consider establishing reasonable charges and timelines. This will help retain commissioners and allow those interested to have an idea of the time commitment this will represent.

Central to much of the work of a review commission is knowing who to contact for what. The city clerks did an amazing job orienting us, answering questions, directing responses, and more. But that could have also been facilitated by a document that outlines city departments and points of contact for them appropriate for information requests and collaboration, as well as showing reporting structures. Embedded within this could also be information including contacts for technology questions, lists of available programs, data storage protocols, and other necessary information for the city. Ideally this would also be of use for the administrative staff hired to work with commissions to learn the tools they will need to use, and how to achieve goals such as updates to webpages.

Of much frustration was and confusion was how to comply with Open Meeting Law requirements. While we received a brief training from the City Solicitor, who was also available by email and responded to many requests, we were left with the legal text. To add to the confusion were excerpts available in different locations which detailed exemptions and separate protocol for holding meetings while under pandemic restrictions. A text written in a more accessible way would assist in understanding the law and all for commissions to establish reasonable communication pathways as they build their structure.

We appreciate the diversity requirements added to the charge of the commission, and recognize their importance. However, the diversity of an appointed commission of civilians like this is also dependent upon those applicants feeling they have the ability to participate fully. Many barriers exist that inhibit full participation of some residents in many civic bodies, such as accommodating schedules for families with young children or individuals who work nights and evenings. Even as we recognized and thought about it carefully we were not able to address them fully within our structure.

We recommend that the City explore funding opportunities for participation in commission work. Especially in those instances where often un- and underpaid individuals will be contributing their labor and energy. This could include making grant funds available to pay commissioners in need of financial assistance or to be used for childcare or assisted care for family members while they are engaging with public work. We also recommend that for those bodies who will be engaging with members of marginalized groups that funding be made available for token compensation for time and participation.

We realize that many of the individuals who contribute and serve on bodies in the city are employed and work during the day, which is why many meetings are held on weekday evenings. We also note that when we were able to hold public hearings on a weekend, we saw over 150 individuals attend the Zoom session, which was higher than weeknight public hearings.

We recommend that the appointing body consider the process for holding alternates to commissions. The City Council President acted swiftly and diligently to assist our commission to address member loss, and hope that a process can be established to make that work easier in the future.

We recommend that as the City moves out of restrictions and resumes in-person activities, that remote and hybrid access to meetings continue or even expand. Eliminating the requirement to participate in person for residents increases the accessibility of meetings. In addition, it allows for increased participation from members of the body, and opens the possibility of participation from young families who may be juggling meals and bedtimes for children, or for those caring for older adults with increased needs. We know a number of initiatives are underway to increase participation and we hope they are embraced.

APPENDIX VI: PROCESSES OF DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners were given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, the process, and work as part of the NPRC. If they chose to and felt comfortable sharing what can be a very personal and vulnerable exercise, we have added them here.

MY EXPERIENCE ON THE POLICING REVIEW COMMISSION – NICK FLEISHER

One might ask why would anyone want to be on this Commission. The task appears like an impossible attempt to resolve longstanding core conflicts in our society including racism, economic inequality, liberal and conservative views about law and order, and technology versus touch. I think that I came to this like many Commission members, with a narrower view of the issues. I probably would not have asked to be on the Commission if I thought it through.

So what motivated me to be part of this project? I am a middle a class white male, a social worker, and most recently a corporate administrator for a non-profit, now semi-retired. Yes, I was looking for a new challenge which spurred me on. But there was an ideological aspect to my interest, and, as I think is true for my fellow commissioners, I was passionate about my beliefs and wanted to have my voice heard. I have worked in human services since I was 16 years old when I interned at a state hospital in Philadelphia. I have seen how organizations can be static, depersonalized and worse, and have always worked to oppose these forces in my positions as a social worker and as administrator. I have done my best to improve organizational culture in all of my leadership positions.

So, why the Policing Review Commission? I was able to listen to the chaotic and passionate demands last year for the City Council to cut the police budget due to a range of concerns which I won't list here. My work since 2010 with the Crisis Services program in Northampton reflected for me a very different view of our police department. I saw a department that saves lives on a frequent basis and that has been transformed over the past 10 years due to effective leadership. I knew about things that police had to deal with that were not in the public view. Over that period, policing had become more informed, more respectful of social services, and more interactive with the community. I hold Chief Kasper in very high regard. The NPD is an organization that is moving in the right direction.

With the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement, I began to realize that I had barely a clue about the experience of minorities in relation to police. The media made it very evident that there was a systemic problem. I began to read and educate myself but continued to be puzzled that almost none of the complaints in public hearings were about the Northampton Police. Were they an exception or not?
Then the Commission began. It was not easy for me. Here were a group of strangers with passionate feelings and no template for how to proceed. This made me anxious. Early on I suggested that we might hire a guide, a consultant to give us direction. This went nowhere, and I was told starkly to step back and let things unfold. I also heard the public and several commissioners say that my white male privilege made my views biased. I am privileged, and I was committed to hang in with this and learn. I was saddened to see five commissioners, mainly persons of color and women, drop out due to time pressures but I knew it was more than that. This Commission was a pressure cooker... powerful feelings, constant public scrutiny, everyone feeling victimized by someone, not infrequent insults, and, in my opinion, a huge lack of information (myself included). It took half of our commission duration for us to get past the buzzwords, the polarized positions, and to begin the work of our Commission. In retrospect, the Mayor and City Council could have trained us better on how to work with open meeting requirements.

Once we settled down a bit and got into a routine, things changed. I found that the tone of meetings improved. I began to feel respect among commissioners. Their views were interesting, at times moving, and insightful. The fact that all commissioner perspectives were subject to public criticism, I think, brought us together to some extent. I also began to

interact with some of the public followers (both privately and in meetings) and felt their respect and intelligence. I valued their input and learned from them. The experience has been very rewarding.

My views both changed and clarified. My appreciation for the longstanding experience of people of color with the institution of policing grew. My understanding of my own privilege expanded to more acceptance while not discounting my own experience and perspective. I found the more radical perspectives on police abolition reminded me of my own struggles as a younger person with the Viet Nam War and with anti-drug laws. My conversation with one public follower made me aware that the abolitionists wanted the same thing as me (and were incredibly smart) but were not burdened by my experience of working in real world settings. I no longer thought it would be sufficient to put more social services into policing. This might help improve mental health response, but people of color deserve more. Even if Northampton has few residents of color, we (White people) are all beneficiaries of racial bias in our country. This is a difficult concept for many to grasp. Demonizing the police does not further the discussion. I agreed that there needed to be a new department that could have a culture of its own separate from police but that would work with police. This new department would be a seed for innovation and expansion and steeped in values of connection and unconditional respect, minimizing authority and hierarchy. Northampton could be a place to do this.

I still view untargeted reductions in police funding unwise and not a solution although I understand the desire to have less police. I don't think it can work like that. You either have police or you don't, but you can't have half police. That would be like having half a fire department and fighting half the fires. Funding for a new department needs to be a city wide issue, and it is for the Mayor/City Council and experts on the city budget to figure out funding priorities. I think that a smart and detailed initiative is ripe for state and grant funding. The NPD has already had a 10% cut, more than most cities, and that can provide some seed funding for the alternative service. The Chief, if brought into this process as an advocate and not an enemy, could also contribute creative ideas. Overall, I feel the funding issue exceeds the expertise of the Commission.

I am grateful to my fellow commissioners who worked together to get through this challenging process. I sincerely appreciate the hours of listening by members of the public who could not directly participate. You are truly dedicated. I also have appreciation for the calm leadership of our Co-Chairs, Dan and Cynthia. I think the City of Northampton where I have lived for 45 years is an amazing community with caring, intelligent and creative souls. I hope we can work together to make our town accessible (economically), welcoming to all, and a place of tolerance that stands out among all cities. Changing policing is one step in that process.

- Nick Fliesher

REFLECTIONS FROM ONE COMMISSIONER ON OUR PROCESS - CAROL OWEN

Though the main product of our commission journey will be a report to the City of Northampton with our recommendations for modifications in the role for policing, I thought it might be important to include a process piece. Here I offer my first thoughts on where this commission process has taken me. I encourage others to weigh in on how the commission process has affected you, and where it leads you in terms of favoring certain recommendations. Whether we include a process piece in our final report may not be as important as using the opportunity to reflect individually on where this process has brought each of us. Hopefully, that self-knowledge will smooth the way forward to our final report.

What this project has brought to me as a white cisgender upper-middle class woman and long-term homeowner in Northampton is a more authentic understanding of the life stories of members of the community who identify as Black or Brown, as well as people labeled with psychiatric and physical conditions, and survivors of trauma and poverty whose victimization has landed them on the streets without access to housing.

A question I encounter that is posed by residents who do not share the lived experiences of people I just mentioned goes roughly as follows: "Why does a civilian commission tasked with critically examining the professional roles of police and associated financial implications pay such close attention to the individual stories of people who are not a part of the

mainstream, of the people who have built this town ?"

My response to this question entails speaking to the reality that these residents whose stories we want to hear are vulnerable in particular ways and are often more visible to patrolling officers. As a function of their vulnerability and public visibility, they have often had more encounters with police. They have lived experiences that we need to hear if we are to continue to uphold public safety for all residents.

Exposure to these stories has brought me to a firmer sense that regardless of social class membership and home ownership or renter status there will be a greater prospect for all residents of Northampton to feel more connected with the larger community if we are able to shift funding and interventions in the direction of addressing unmet social needs. This new policy direction has to include strong coordination of systems set up to address these social needs. I consider social needs to include material resources like housing and food; supportive social and health services; as well as social inclusion.

- Commissioner Carol Owen

THOUGHTS ON GROWTH - DAN CANNITY

I've struggled reflecting on what seems like a whirlwind of activity and action. Like many on the commission, I think if I had known the amount of commitment, both in terms of time and emotional labor, I would have been more hesitant. Especially given the impact of the pandemic on all of our lives. But now being at the end of the process, I can appreciate the experience for what I've seen, gained, and given.

This process has allowed me to meet and engage with many bright and knowledgeable people I would not have otherwise met. I appreciate these new relationships and can't wait to see how they develop. I was also privileged and inspired witnessing some incredible growth as people wrestled deeply with the complex ideas of safety, and I've been able to learn from them as they did so as well coming at problems, and solutions, from such different perspectives. I've also been able to observe many different styles and processes of interaction. I'm naturally a collaborative person, and appreciate open communication with everyone. Working within the structure of Open Meeting Law and city infrastructure necessitated changes and developing new ways of listening and engaging with people. I hope I have retained enough of all of them to increase my own ability to communicate such emotionally intense and complex ideas with others as well.

While engaging in this work, I noted that our commission fell into the same trap that many other commissions, analysts, and other cities fell into in our work. We could see the implications and effects of structural racism and the impact it has on the community, but it's hard to define, qualify, and measure given the available data. While struggling with this, most communities reduce the impact of racism in policing by reducing the number or footprint of the police and structures and nature of policing. This is where we landed as well. We have made recommendations to tackle the low hanging fruit to make that reduction effectively and safely. But that also means that while we might also improve the experiences of people of color, race and racism have lost their centrality. I hope that as the process continues and more difficult areas are assessed and improved, that those who carry this work forward will find a way to build on what we've done and bring race back to the fore.

I've found myself thinking this is the sprint of the work. The marathon, the actual implementation of meaningful and systemic changes, is something I look forward to seeing and assisting in as we continue forward as a community.

- Dan Cannity

APPENDIX STATEMENT FOR NPRC FINAL REPORT - NNAMDI POLE

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole wishes to note that he believes that the entire NPRC process was flawed by giving insufficient time and attention to testimony from members of the Northampton Police Department (NPD) and their supporters.

In his opinion, the NPRC was structurally and philosophically biased in favor of implementing major NPD reforms with willful ignorance about the details of NPD operations and practices that might have resulted in a more nuanced view. There was a strong inclination to apply lessons learned about policing in general to the specific case of the Northampton Police Department (while ignoring or dismissing the many ways that the NPD differs from most departments). He notes that the interim report suffered from failing to properly vet some information with the NPD (or meet with NPD officers) before publishing it. He personally retracts any errors that were made in the interim or final report and regrets any harm that it may have caused. He also regrets that the NPRC did not invite more testimony or other information from victims of crime who were helped by the Northampton Police Department. It is very important to him that policing reform efforts do not compromise the NPD's ability to respond to serious crime in a timely fashion. In fact, he remains concerned about many unintended side-effects that could occur from applying the recommendations of this report too quickly. For example, a weakened or diminished NPD could have the unexpected effect of more reliance on "outside" and more aggressive police departments during emergencies. Also, our effort to limit the NPD officer job description to exclusively focus on tasks requiring an armed response may lead "community-oriented" officers to leave the NPD and "military-oriented" officers to join it. In his view, both of these consequences would be a clear step backward from where we are now. Overall, Nnamdi Pole believes that the restrictions imposed by open meeting law created numerous inefficiencies that likely detracted from the overall quality of the commission's work. Consequently, he recommends that readers of our final report understand its limitations. There are probably many details that have been overlooked or unintentionally mischaracterized. Having said all of that, in his view, this final report represents months of sincere effort, credible expertise, deep thought, hard fought compromises, innovative ideas, and very hard work. He has learned a lot from his fellow commissioners even when he did not fully agree with them. With regard to the final report, he supports the overall idea of reducing unnecessary contact between armed police officers and marginalized members of the Northampton community. Yet, as full Professor of Psychology and licensed Psychologist, he could not help but notice the missed opportunity to promote more healing between the NPD and the members of the community that do not trust them. He was struck by numerous examples of NPD officers with no direct evidence of wrongdoing who were nonetheless unwelcome (or mistrusted) simply because they have the potential to misuse their force. He believes that if such healing is going to occur then NPD will need to take the initiative in a non-defensive and humble way, showing a sincere understanding of why they are treated with skepticism (or a sincere willingness to learn). In his view, it was unhelpful and inappropriate for some NPD officers to "opt out" of speaking to commissioners when invited to do so simply because they disagreed with the NPRC process and criticisms. Ultimately, police officers should always behave as if they understand that they work for their community and are always answerable to it. Police are invested with awesome powers. Those powers come with the responsibility of earning and maintaining the public trust.

-Nnamdi Pole

A REFLECTION OF LEASHED ABOLITION AND SYSTEMIC POSTURING - JOSEY ROSALES

Following the months of protests that took place over the summer I felt an intense sense of guilt for not putting myself out there for the principles I believed in. I told myself that when an opportunity presented itself for me to make a difference, I would jump at the opportunity. Luckily that happened. The Mayor and the City Council of Northampton sent out a call to action to look at policing both in Northampton, and as an institution. I was fortunate in being one of the original commissioners selected to take on this challenge. As the first few weeks went it became more and more salient to me just how deep rooted this carceral system goes.

Being a student and now teacher of history, the origins of policing is deep rooted in the white supremist tradition of slave catching, as well as the anti-worker traditions of strike busting and union busting, and time and time again police have taken non-neutral stances on issues in support of capital over people, and property over humanity. This is an issue that no police department is untainted by, even here in our relatively progressive bastion of Northampton, there are still deep seated disparities of class, race, sex, gender, and power that are produced by many of our institution, most visibly being the police force. Though there are community members who have had good relationships and interactions with the NPD they exist amongst a larger cacophony of structural violence in the form of both hostility and negligence toward community members and populations who do not have the same experience or perceptions of the police. There are a number of reasons why these perceptions exist, but ultimately it is an inherited history of violence and power that

drives these realities in marginalized communities. The impact of these structures being both a lack of resources to the communities that need it most, and an over policing of these same communities because our society has shifted the responsibility to the police over a number of decades and has also shifted from a mindset of solving societal issues to criminalizing them. One could argue that the solving portion was only available to those who fit particular racial identity, i.e. redlining, G.I. Bill, much of the New Deal.

To speak frankly, can individual cops be good people, yes, but there are no good cops. This, though an inflammatory sentiment, is routed in the world view that cops uphold the law, and the law is not always just, and thus through the criminalization of particular individuals, groups, and marginalized identities the police, using there State monopoly of violence, use their position in society to uphold the status quo and enforce laws that are unjust and a system that is rooted in white supremacy. All while shipping community members into prisons, a legalized form of slavery (read the 13th amendment), often to be coerced by the State to use their labor power to make products for corporations for virtually no compensation. In this way, and many others such as the disparate treatment of uprising that question or aim to uproot the current status quo, policing upholds property/capital while it puts down people and often marginalized people. So again can an individual be good, yes, but once they are doing the work of a coercive State that values unjust laws and property over their fellow man and fosters a Them v.s. Us mentality: I argue that the police are not here to serve the people but rather to keep them in line for the benefit of the State and Corporations/Capital.

So as the work of this commission continued I worked tirelessly to have our commissioners use what little community power we had and this small soap box to have larger, more nuanced, conversation of what the role of policing is in our community and of society writ-large. We fortunately had many perspectives present and seemed like we were really positioned to make some bold recommendations even if those recommendations had no real structural power. That is ok because if we were to ask big enough, we provide, if nothing else, the starting position for future negotiations to do what perhaps we could not. But as the weeks went by and more and more was uncovered about the gears of this machine I found myself distraught, nihilistic, and appalled about what we as a community were allowing our leaders and officers to do.

Year after year outside of the agreed upon quality of life additions to the budget the police department was asking for more funding and larger funding. All while touting a decrease in crime, which has been seen in almost all municipalities regardless of size or funding, and virtually no meaningful metrics outside of a desire to be more advanced. What is the purpose of militarizing our police force if not to turn it into a standing army in our community, and to be used on who exactly? All this additional funding, and no comprehensive metrics for the increase all while skirting responsibility and accountability. The financial, crime, and temporal data they showed us gave me the feeling of a house completely in disrepair and unaccountable to the people they were meant to serve. The record keeping was abysmal, asking the bigger question what was all this money for, and how could it be better spent. This all lit a fire under me to push this commission to radically reimagine what a Northampton could be if we reallocated funds away from policing and to new structures and institutions built with equity and inclusion at their foundation. To leave old models of community care and safety in the disparate past in which they were created and start a new while uplifting those most impacted by the violence of this system.

And week in and week out some my commissioners either for reasons of optics, lack of data for an alternative, (an alternative which is seldom studied or funded because of the threat it poses to the current status quo and for whose data cannot be derived because few municipalities have strived to be as bold to acknowledge and meaningfully uproot those institutions.), fear of non-legitimacy, community threat, or an overall lack of understanding of the politics, meaning, implementation and mission of police abolition have thus anchored the work of this commission in a milquetoast appeal to the status quo with a bit of meaningful harm reduction. At the end of the day I know that if any of our recommendation were to survive the bureaucratic process it would mean a Northampton that is marginally better for those who are the most impacted, but if this and or future administrations undermine the work or fail to properly invest in this transformative work, our whole report will be seen as a tremendous failure that will levy the perspective that abolition or any form of police defunding and reallocation is preposterous one that is doomed from its inception. And so I sit here at the end of the process deflated that my name will end up on a report that I don't believe at its heart was as radical as it could have been, and we could have been so radically transformative. If we had done nothing else but

asked more we could have paved a way for real structural change in the future seeing as our commission was defanged from the start. I write with a heavy heart feeling as my margianlized identities as a young, queer, gender non-binary, Guatemaltecé immigrant, have been used to grant some false legitimacy to a report that I am conflicted in co-signing. My belief is that the report is a step in the right direction but it is one the institutions of power have allowed us to take and not one made with a true sense of autonomy, it is a step that, for some of our more marginalised community, will reduce the structural harm they experience, but not one that will undo the institutions that allow for such harm, it is a step that could have spoken truth to power and paved the way for a future I wish for all my community members, but ultimately one that is made timidly at the behest of the police State and for the purposes of upholding the institutions currently in power. I sign my name to this knowing that it isn't what I believe in as an end goal but because it will hopefully be the next step toward a future where all can bask in a community that uplifts them while improving the lives of those the system was never meant to protect.

-- Josey Rosales

PERSONAL STATEMENT BY CYNTHIA SUOPIS (CO-CHAIR)

My time on the Northampton Police Review Commission has been rewarding, uncomfortable, challenging and productive.

I had the opportunity to meet and work with Northampton residents that I would most likely not have encountered in our community if it were not for this appointment. I met community members who felt very safe in Northampton and others whose safety was challenged and compromised due to their economic, health, neurodivergent, houseless and BIOPOC status. With my fellow commissioners I listened to hours of public comment, presentations, and conversations that highlighted my gaps in knowledge about policing and lived experiences. I was introduced to research that dove deeper than the headlines on the history of policing and race in America. The detail and courage displayed in our interviews, public testimonies and deliberation gave me hope that we have all the tools we need to reimagine safety in our community. As one of my fellow commissioners said, "If we can't do it in Northampton, it cannot be done anywhere". I never looked at this issue as 'pro police or anti police'. I was always guided by the principle of providing a safe community for all who live, visit and work in Northampton. I know we can do this.

I am thankful for the close working relationship I had as Co-Chair of the Commission with Dan Cannity who gave me space to stumble and learn the complexities and gravity of what was at stake in our deliberations. I am forever grateful to the public who provided us with current thinking on police reform and I am moved by the passion of so many young people who came to the majority of our meetings and listened patiently to our deliberations. Our community is in good hands with our youth and young adults.

The Commission changed me. This experience was a gift and I thank all my fellow commissioners who participated in this process. We look forward to hearing public reaction to our recommendations and I am thankful for this opportunity.