



Metropolitan Council
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37208 Special Committee

Report and Recommendations

A Living Document.

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Letter from the Chair

January 2020

“You either die or go to jail,” said Deirdre Nicole of Gideon’s Army during our first meeting. Her statement sums up the hopelessness of many residents living in 37208. But incarceration is a symptom, not the sickness.

The sickness is a lack of opportunity, and that is why the work of the 37208 Special Committee is paramount.

In the Brookings Institute report, *Work and Opportunity Before and After Incarceration*, Adam Looney cites poverty as one of the major predictors of incarceration. Twenty-seven percent of prisoners grew up in families in the bottom 10 percent of income distribution—earning less than \$14,000 annually. Family conditions are also linked to high incarceration. African American boys raised in single-parent homes are two times more likely to be incarcerated than those in two-parent homes.

In searching for solutions, the 37208 Committee has concentrated on two areas: Prevention and Post-incarceration.

As a resident of zip code 37208, I take the work our Committee is doing personally. I deeply appreciate their efforts to provide sustainable solutions. Second, I want to thank Vice Mayor Shulman for creating this Committee and giving us the charge to recommend solutions.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, I invite you to join us in our campaign to reach the goals outlined in this report. Ten years ago, Nashvillians responded with vigor and tenacity to support neighbors navigating the aftermath of the flood. We will need the same resolve to address the systems of oppression that lead to this devastating statistic.

- Councilman Brandon Taylor

37208 Committee Mission Statement

Reduce recidivism and prevent incarceration by addressing the root causes of poverty and violence in the 37208 zip code, providing resources both fiscal and material to community-based organizations and MNPS schools, and enlisting the support of both the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County and local private organizations.

Committee Members/Meetings

CM Brandon Taylor (Chair)
CM Sharon Hurt
CM Freddie O'Connell
CM Kyonzte Toombs
CM Tanaka Vercher
Mr. Kirk Adkisson
Ms. Erin Coleman
Ms. Yolanda Hockett
Ms. Deirdre Nicole
Mr. Andrew Krinks
Mr. Aaron Marble
Ms. Whitney Pastorek
Mr. Jonathan Williamson
Mr. Marcquel Randall
Mr. Jamel Campbell Gooch

Meetings:

- Thu, Nov 21, 3pm, McGruder Family Resource Center
- Thu, Dec 19, 4pm, McGruder Family Resource Center
- Sat, Jan 25, noon-2pm, McGruder Family Resource Center (community listening session)

Executive Summary

37208 deserves reparations and justice.

In October 2019, Vice Mayor Jim Shulman created a set of special committees to address issues facing the Metro Council and tasked each committee with developing recommendations in response to the committee's framing question.

Vice Mayor Shulman's question to the Special Committee on 37208 was, "Zip code region 37208 has the highest percentage of **incarceration** in the country, according to reports. What needs to be done to correct that?"

During its first meeting, Deirdre Nicole of Gideon's Army summarized the experience of residents living in 37208, stating, "You either die or go to jail." The relationship between 37208 and the **criminal legal system** is a deadly cycle. The lack of access to resources necessary for thriving – affordable housing, healthcare, education, career pathways and opportunities for wealth building, and so much more – results in contact with the **criminal legal system**. Policing practices have historically – and continue to – focus on low-level offenses in impoverished communities and communities of color. Contact with the criminal legal system then further

drains residents' economic and social capital, thus resulting in an additional lack of resources. Residents cyclically face **physical death and social or civil death**.

The deadly cycle of poverty and incarceration in 37208 is rooted in a long history, beginning at least 150 years ago with the racialized systems and practices that have shaped our country into what they are today. From slavery to the development of the prison system to **Jim Crow to redlining**, every neighborhood in the United States has been impacted by deliberate, **systemic inequality and institutional racism**.¹

This Committee recognizes that its work in 37208 must acknowledge and name these violent histories and racist systems in order to develop recommendations and ensure effective implementation of those recommendations. This deadly cycle can be disrupted; however, it will require bold and courageous intentionality, collaboration with residents most directly affected by the criminal legal system; and tangible, long-term commitment by the Committee, Metro Government, and the broader community.

What do reparations look like for 37208? The United Nations identifies five conditions for what constitutes "reparations": 1) Cessation, assurances and guarantees of non-repetition; 2) Restitution and repatriation, or restoring ; 3) Compensation; 4) Satisfaction; and 5) Rehabilitation.² The following recommendations address some pieces of reparation and build the case for it - but they are only a beginning.

Key Goals

As the Committee began its conversations, it quickly articulated the importance of establishing clear goals, given the wide array of complex social, racial, and economic dynamics that impact families in 37208. Work resulting from the Committee's recommendations should address issues caused by past interactions with the criminal legal system, while also looking ahead to prevent future interactions with the criminal legal system. While we must support residents and families whose lives have been endangered and negatively affected by incarceration and racist policing practices, we must also prevent crime, violence, and violent systems from affecting families in the first place.

The Committee chose to focus on the following goals:

- **Supporting Reparations and Reentry:** Improving Reentry Policies and Practices to Reduce Recidivism
- **Preventing Incarceration:** Addressing Root Causes of Poverty and Violence

¹ <https://www.nashvillescene.com/news/cover-story/article/21007855/history-repeats-itself-in-north-nashville>

² <https://policy.m4bl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Reparations-Now-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf>

After examining the complex issues related to the high incarceration rates of 37208, the Committee is proposing the following recommendations, along with specific “Action Recommendations” that can be implemented immediately:

1. Support Reparations and Reentry.

Improve Reentry Policies and Practices to Reduce Recidivism.

- Reduce, eliminate, and reform **criminal justice fines and fees**.
- Support programs and policies to increase opportunities for **driver’s license reinstatement**.
- Work with General Sessions and Criminal Court judges to **reform and end money bail** practices and reduce pre-trial detention.
- Increase opportunities for **records expungement and voting rights restoration**.
- Increase access to affordable housing and reduce discriminatory barriers for accessing housing after leaving incarceration.
- Expand **restorative practices** in the criminal legal system.
- Audit Metro’s **privatization practices** in the criminal legal system to identify opportunities for real cost savings and improved quality of life outcomes for 37208 residents.

2. Prevent Incarceration.

Address the Root Causes of Poverty and Violence.

- **Transform policing practices** to increase public safety, reduce racial disparities in the criminal legal system, and prevent involvement in the criminal legal system.
- **Increase accountability** by supporting and enhancing the work of the Community Oversight Board.
- **Embed trauma-informed practices** into the criminal legal system, Metro Nashville Public Schools, other Metro departments, and across the community.
- Increase opportunities for and significantly increase investments in **positive youth development**.
- Increase opportunities for and significantly increase investments in **economic mobility** for residents in 37208.
- Encourage MNPS to **provide resources** to priority schools in the 37208 zip code and surrounding areas.

Reparations and Reentry

When residents exit incarceration, they are faced with the challenges of successful reentry to society: housing, transportation, a good job, family reunification, and financial wellness. Metro must support residents with a holistic approach to reentry.

Recommendations

1. **Criminal Justice Fines & Fees:** Reduce, eliminate, and reform criminal justice fines and fees practices.

Incarceration leads to cycles of debt for residents through confusing and financially debilitating fines and fees. Criminal justice fines and fees disproportionately affect low- and moderate-income residents - especially in communities of color such as 37208 - and can impact probation and parole, driver's license revocation, housing and employment navigation, and access to benefits. The resulting cycles of debt can hinder the growth of the city's economy, reducing access to credit and increasing reliance on social services, benefits, emergency financial assistance, and alternative, higher-interest rate financial services such as payday lending.

- a. **Fines and Fees Study:** Evaluate Metro's criminal justice fines and fees system to understand its impact on residents, costs to the City, and opportunities for reform.³ Metro began to evaluate its criminal justice fines and fees system in 2019 with support from PFM Center for Justice & Safety and the National League of Cities "Cities Addressing Fines and Fees Equitably" (CAFFE) initiative.⁴ Metro should complete this work, re-launch engagement with key stakeholders that had been engaged, and release the study with recommendations for fines and fees reform.
- b. **Fines and Fees Reform:** Implement recommendations from the previously mentioned Fines and Fees Study to reduce, eliminate, and reform criminal fines and fees practices in Metro.

³ In its 2017 Report, Metro's Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee Report recommended to "Commission an impact analysis of proposed and existing court fines, fees, and taxes and the collateral consequences affecting financial security and capability." The committee recommended that the study include but not be limited to "the legal and budget feasibility of some sort of forgiveness/reduction program regarding city fines, fees, and costs imposed on the criminally accused;" "what conduct is currently criminalized by city ordinances that could be dealt with as efficiently in a civil context;" and "the extent to which the city could adopt alternatives to cash bail for city offenses."

⁴ <https://wpln.org/post/nashville-aims-to-ease-court-fines-and-fees-with-help-of-outside-consultant/>

- c. **Financial Empowerment:** Connect individuals involved in the criminal legal system to financial empowerment counseling to focus on reducing debt, increasing savings, and improving credit scores. Access to one-on-one financial counseling through the Nashville Financial Empowerment Center can assist residents in untangling complicated financial issues imposed on them by the criminal legal system. Metro should consider creating a strong partnership for the jails and the Criminal Clerk's Office to refer residents to the Nashville Financial Empowerment Center.

2. Driver's License Reinstatement: Support programs and policies to increase opportunities for driver's license reinstatement.

In 2015, about 36,500 defendants were booked on driver's license citations. For many of these defendants - 65 percent or about 24,000 people - the only charge was a driver's license charge.⁵ As described in the Steering Clear Public Investment Plan proposal, "Many individuals lose their license due to poverty - they get behind on child support, court costs, or other fees often unrelated to driving or safety - and then struggle to get it back." Without a driver's license, residents face challenges with accessing housing, employment, and medical care. Since launching "Steering Clear," a cross-departmental driver's license diversion program, Metro has reduced these arrests and fines, bringing the number of driver's license citations from 1381 citations in September 2018 (when the program launched) to 632 citations in January 2019.

- a. **Steering Clear:** Support the ongoing operations of the Steering Clear program to help individuals who have lost their driver's license navigate the driver's license reinstatement process and avoid driver's license suspensions or revocations in the future.

3. Money Bail Reform: Work with General Sessions and Criminal Court judges to reform and end money bail practices and reduce pre-trial detention. Many individuals facing charges and cash bail are jailed simply because of their inability to pay. The bail system disproportionately impacts residents in poverty, often keeping them in jail. Families can be further impacted by garnishing.⁶ Metro should create bail reform measures such as pre-trial release, alternatives to bail, and eliminating garnishing. Reforms should ultimately lead to the abolition of money bail, as community organizations have advocated.

⁵ <https://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/Finance/docs/PIPs/FY17/SteeringClear.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.nashvillescene.com/news/pith-in-the-wind/article/21089611/justice-orgs-challenge-nashville-bailrelated-rule-as-illegal-and-wrong>

- a. **Pre-trial Pilot Projects:** Develop pilot projects to reduce pre-trial detention.⁷
4. **Voting Rights Restoration and Expungement:** Increase opportunities for records expungement and voting rights restoration.

Navigating records expungement and voting rights restoration is a complicated and arduous process without access to assistance. Felony disenfranchisement laws are confusing. Many individuals who have been incarcerated may not know that they can restore their voting rights after completing their sentences. Regaining voting rights is a key piece of civic engagement, social mobility, and democracy. Voter disenfranchisement is voter suppression. According to the Restore Your Vote Tennessee project, across Tennessee, 8.2 percent of the entire statewide voting age population is denied the right to vote because of a felony; however, that includes 21 percent of the black voting age population. According to the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee, one in 12 voting age Tennesseans are unable to vote because of a prior felony conviction.⁸

- a. **Voting Rights and Expungement Services:** Increase access to assistance for voting rights restoration and records expungement through community clinics and courts such as the Music City Community Court.⁹
 - b. **State Policy to Restore Voting Rights:** Urge the Tennessee General Assembly to file and pass legislation to immediately restore voting rights of individuals convicted of felonies once they've served their sentences.
5. **Affordable Housing:** Increase access to affordable housing and reduce discriminatory barriers for accessing housing after leaving incarceration.
- a. **Affordable Housing Development for Residents who have been Incarcerated:** Create innovative affordable housing development solutions for residents who have been incarcerated. Project Return's PRO Housing (ProH) program is an example of this, acquiring and rehabbing properties to create affordable housing options for residents exiting incarceration, while also providing construction

⁷ In its 2017 Report, Metro's Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee recommended to "Improve court efficiency and judicial education by deploying pretrial pilot projects that substantially reduce incarceration rates, the associated costs, and increase court appearances."

⁸ <https://www.nashvillescene.com/news/pith-in-the-wind/article/21078582/restore-your-vote-highlights-and-fights-felon-disenfranchisement>

⁹ <https://www.pridepublishinggroup.com/pride/2019/11/21/judge-rachel-l-bell-creates-bordeaux-north-community-justice-center/>

employment opportunities for those participating in Project Return’s PRO Employment program.¹⁰

- b. **Barrier Removal for Accessing Housing:** Work with landlords to remove barriers faced by individuals with criminal convictions as they try to access affordable housing options. Explore opportunities to work with the State legislature to enact laws to limit landlord liability for housing individuals with criminal convictions.¹¹
- c. **Affordable and Workforce Housing Development Citywide:** Significantly increase investments in affordable and workforce housing development citywide through the Barnes Fund, MDHA, and private investments. Increasing the entire stock of affordable and workforce housing will reduce pressure in the market and increases opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals to access affordable and workforce housing.

6. Restorative Practices: Expand restorative justice practices in the criminal legal system.

Judge Sheila Calloway has led successful restorative justice practices in the Juvenile Court system for the last few years, creating diversion opportunities that allow juvenile offenders to make amends with their victims and the community. Metro should continue to support restorative practices in the juvenile court system and pursue opportunities to expand restorative practices - including funding for and partnerships with community organizations such as Gideon’s Army - in other parts of the criminal legal system and in Metro Nashville Public Schools.

7. Audit Metro’s Privatization Practices: Conduct an in-depth audit of the privatization of incarceration and probation systems.

Metro outsources contracts related to the criminal legal system, including jail operations and drug and alcohol testing. Metro should carefully examine the current structures, benefits, and challenges of existing contracts for outsourced services and determine opportunities to reduce burdens those contracts place on individuals who have been incarcerated or are currently incarcerated.

Action Recommendations

The following “Action Recommendations” were selected to be emphasized in this report as they can be implemented immediately:

¹⁰ <https://www.tennessean.com/story/money/2018/06/03/nashville-affordable-housing-formerly-incarcerated-conviction-history/459999002/>

¹¹ <https://50statespublicsafety.us/part-2/strategy-4/action-item-4/#ftn-3>

1. **Fines and Fees:** Draft and pass a Metro Council resolution requiring Metro to complete and release the criminal justice fines and fees study.
2. **Music City Community Court:** Support, expand, and promote the Music City Community Court to connect residents with records expungement, voting rights restoration, driver's license reinstatement, and access to jobs, housing, and other key supportive services.
3. **State Policy on Voting Rights Restoration:** Work with the Tennessee General Assembly to pass legislation to immediately restore voting rights of individuals convicted of felonies once they've served their sentences.

Prevention

Metro should support efforts to prevent involvement in the criminal legal system by addressing the root causes of poverty, violence, and incarceration. Prevention efforts should range from transforming the criminal legal system – especially policing practices and accountability measures – to investing in resources critical to the quality of life and economic mobility of the community, such as affordable housing, education, and career pathways. In this, we first and foremost acknowledge that safety is predicated on access to resources.

1. **Policing:** Transform policing practices to increase public safety, reduce racial disparities in the criminal justice system, and prevent involvement in the criminal legal system.

In October 2016, Gideon's Army released *Driving While Black*, a report capturing the data and stories of racial profiling and the resulting discriminatory impacts of MNPD traffic stops.¹² Last year, following the release of the Driving While Black Report, Metro released recommendations from NYU's Policing Project. Recommendations focused on modernizing Nashville's policing practices, focusing on reducing racial disparities in traffic stops and reducing the social costs related to traffic stops.¹³ These recommendations should be implemented.

- a. **Traffic Stops:** Eliminate racial disparities in traffic stops for non-moving violations. The Mayor's Office, Metro Council, and the community should continue conversations with MNPD about implementing strategies to reduce traffic stops, reduce racial disparities in traffic stops, and set transparent measures of accountability related to traffic stops.

¹² <https://drivingwhileblacknashville.wordpress.com/the-report-6/>

¹³ <https://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/MayorsOffice/docs/reports/policing-project-nashville-report.pdf>

- b. Non-Punitive Community Safety Solutions:** Implement non-police mental health first responders and other non-punitive, community-based interventions as part of Nashville’s public safety infrastructure. Other non-punitive, non-surveillance-based forms of police engagement with community members should also be explored.
- c. Strategic Plan for Public Safety and Criminal Justice:** Create a strategic vision and plan for the entire criminal legal system, centered around racial equity, 21st century policing practices (including neighborhood policing), transparency and accountability, and restorative justice. Metro should bring the community together to think holistically about what public safety should look like in Nashville, and what prioritized steps relevant Metro departments should take to enact that vision. This strategic plan could build on the work of the Mayor’s Criminal Justice Steering Committee and the Criminal Justice Planning Advisory Board.¹⁴ The Mayor’s Office should ensure that these groups are meeting regularly and engaging community input to develop that strategic plan.

Metro should clearly, officially, and publicly recognize the ways in which policing practices have imposed harm on communities of color. Previous plans and reports have pointed out, repeatedly, that Nashville’s policing practices have been racist and that this has been a detriment to communities of color. Metro needs to formally recognize this.

2. Accountability: Increase transparency and accountability around policing.

Transparency and accountability around policing are critical to creating safer communities and stronger outcomes for the city. Metro should appropriate adequate resources to ensure transparency and accountability are integral to policing practices.

- a. Community Oversight Board:** Support the work of the Community Oversight Board (COB). Metro should provide adequate staffing resources for the COB, including a clear point of contact in the Mayor’s Office. The Mayor’s Office should ensure COB appointments are made in a timely manner. Finally, Metro should work diligently to carry out the Memorandum of Understanding between the COB and MNPD.

3. Trauma-Informed Practices: Embed trauma-informed practices into the criminal legal system, Metro Nashville Public Schools, other Metro departments, and in the broader community.

ACE Nashville (All Children Excel) has developed a strong coalition of organizations working to promote resilience and reduce the effects of childhood trauma.¹⁵ 37208 has

¹⁴ <https://www.nashville.gov/Criminal-Justice-Planning/Organization.aspx>

¹⁵ <https://www.acesconnection.com/g/ACE-nashville>

experienced heightened levels of trauma, on individual, family, and community levels, creating toxic stress. The lack of resources for families in 37208 and racist cycles of poverty and incarceration have led to this trauma. Metro should continue working with ACE Nashville to expand trauma-informed practices and mitigate the lifelong impacts of childhood adversity. Trauma-Informed Care should be embedded in the criminal legal system, Metro Nashville Public Schools, other Metro departments, and in the broader community.

4. **Youth Development:** Increase opportunities for and significantly increase investments in positive youth development.

Positive youth development is critical to public safety and economic mobility. Everywhere a young person in 37208 turns, they should see access to opportunity: a high quality education, a strong social support system, mentoring, a good paying job, and a career pathway. Metro should continue to invest and increase financial support for transformational youth programming.

- a. **Opportunity NOW:** Metro should continue to support Opportunity NOW, Metro's summer youth employment program, to provide paid work opportunities and supports for young people.
 - b. **Opportunity Youth Collaborative:** Metro should support and expand the work of the Opportunity Youth Collaborative. The Opportunity Youth Collaborative, led by the Nashville Career Advancement Center, seeks to connect out-of-school, out-of-work youth to positive youth development, education, and career-pathways. The Opportunity Youth Collaborative should create strong relationships with grassroots organizations in 37208.
 - c. **Non-profit Youth Programming:** Metro should increase investments in small non-profit organizations serving youth in 37208. If smaller organizations face barriers to accessing funding from Metro, Metro should support those organizations with opportunities for capacity building. Metro should examine its grant processes across the Community Partnership Fund, Direct Appropriations, and Metro Departments to ensure that all funding opportunities are accessible and equitable.
 - d. **Nashville After School Zone Alliance:** Metro should continue to support the Nashville After School Zone Alliance (NAZA) to increase equitable access to afterschool and summer programming for youth. This should include support for Hadley Park Community Center, Hartmen Park Community Center, and J. Alexander Looby Community Center.
5. **Economic Mobility:** Invest in programs and policies that increase economic mobility for families in 37208.

Metro should support families in 37208 with a cradle-to-career model, ensuring access to equitable opportunity and quality of life for the entire lifespan of each resident.

- a. Affordable, High-Quality Childcare and Pre-K:** Increase access to affordable childcare and high-quality Pre-K.¹⁶ Explore using available DHS funds to offer monetary incentives and resources to current and future childcare providers servicing 37208, particularly those that offer services during non-traditional hours.
- b. Family Coaching and Parenting Classes:** Increase access to parenting classes and family coaching.
- c. Financial Assistance and Access to Services:** Increase access to and improve service navigation for emergency financial assistance with wrap-around supportive services. Many service providers and government agencies offer financial assistance, case management, and counseling supports. However, those resources may not be available in the neighborhood. Difficult service navigation and limited transportation access create additional barriers. Metro should convene all of the service providers and emergency financial assistance providers to address these issues.
- d. Financial Counseling:** Expand financial empowerment and financial literacy programming. The Nashville Financial Empowerment Center has provided free, one-on-one financial counseling to residents since 2013. This program should be expanded, especially in 37208.
- e. Career Pathways and Jobs:** Create easily-accessible on-ramps to clearly articulated career pathways, boosting education and workforce development outcomes. Metro should partner with 37208 schools, local community colleges and technical schools, job training programs, and employers to connect residents to better jobs - and not just jobs, but career pathways where economic mobility and wealth-building is most likely to occur.
- f. Predatory Lending:** Reduce predatory business practices, such as predatory lending, in 37208, and work with financial institutions to provide safer, alternative small-dollar loan options.

¹⁶ Nashville's *Blueprint for Early Childhood Success* outlined a comprehensive set of recommendations focusing on increasing literacy through a strong early childhood education system. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57752cbed1758e541bdeef6b/t/5aa96f38e4966b90348bedd4/1521053514961/Full-Report.pdf>

- g. Housing:** Access to safe and affordable housing is a key component of economic mobility and wealth building. See Recommendation 5 under “Reentry” above for recommended actions related to significantly increasing affordable housing.
- h. Healthcare:** Increase access to affordable healthcare. Expanding Medicaid in Tennessee would drastically improve access to care in 37208.
- i. Transit and Infrastructure:** Increase access to transportation and infrastructure in 37208, especially expanded bus service, sidewalks, and bikeways. Metro should accelerate investments identified in nMotion and WalkNBike in 37208.¹⁷

Action Recommendations

The following “Action Recommendations” were selected to be emphasized in this report as they can be implemented immediately:

- 1. McGruder Family Resource Center:** Increase capital and operational funds, and partnerships, to enhance the McGruder Family Resource Center. In 2018, \$2.2 million was allocated in Metro’s Capital Spending Plan to renovate the McGruder Center. Metro should complete this first phase of renovation and increase future capital and operational support, partnering with United Way of Metro Nashville, Catholic Charities, and Metro Nashville Public Schools.
- 2. Strategic Plan for Public Safety:** Draft and pass a Metro Council resolution requiring Metro to complete and release a strategic plan for public safety.
- 3. Coordinated Resource Allocation through the Nashville Promise Zone:** Metro should oversee coordinated allocation of resources in 37208, leveraging the infrastructure of the Nashville Promise Zone to secure federal grants and conduct community engagement. Resources to be coordinated include Metro investments (Community Partnership Fund allocations, Direct Appropriations, Capital Spending Plan and infrastructure allocations, and other grants or contracts), state and federal funding, and private funding. Metro should ensure appropriate staffing.

Community Engagement

The Committee recognized that given the limited time frame it was given to develop recommendations, additional community engagement is needed to continue the work of the committee, carry out the implementation of these recommendations, and ensure transparency

¹⁷ <https://www.nashville.gov/Public-Works/WalknBike.aspx>; <https://www.nmotion.info/>

and accountability moving forward. Metro must also strengthen its community engagement practices more broadly to include the community early in the design of projects and decisions - not after the fact when decisions have already been made.

The Committee recommends the following community engagement initiatives in 37208:

1. **37208 Advisory Committee:** Create a 37208 Advisory Committee with representation of residents and those with lived experience of the criminal legal system.
2. **Town Halls:** Conduct town-hall engagement sessions to gain community feedback on the 37208 Committee's recommendations.
3. **Voter Registration:** Hold voter registration events frequently, with access to voting rights restoration and expungement resources.
4. **Proactive Community Engagement:** Ensure the Metro conducts proactive community engagement in 37208, engaging the community as projects are designed and decisions are made - not after the fact!
5. **Advocacy and Civic Engagement:** Create stronger pipelines for advocacy and civic engagement with advocacy organizations, neighborhood groups, and Community Development Corporations. Where there is a need for additional Community Development Corporation capacity, Metro should invest in that.
6. **Build Civic Responsibility:** Encourage Nashville and Davidson County-based corporations and entities to dedicate social responsibility hours towards 37208 organizations and causes. Direct those who choose to participate in offering pro-bono support, office space, grant-writing assistance, service hours, etc. towards organizations working within the zip code.
7. **Benchmarks and Outcomes:** Create community-driven benchmarks and outcomes for 37208.
8. **Community Storytelling:** Transform the narrative for 37208, highlighting and celebrating community.
9. **37208 Community Foundation Fund:** Create a fund within the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee for private donors to contribute to a grant program for organizations operating on the ground in 37208 to receive financial and organizational support.

Appendix

Beyond the Zip Code

37208 is not a zip-code existing in a silo. With rising housing costs, new development, and gentrification and displacement, residents from 37208 are moving to other zip-codes in and around Davidson County. While Metro should increase efforts to promote social and economic mobility for 37208 residents – preventing displacement of families and businesses – Metro should target support to residents affected by incarceration who no longer live in 37208.

Data to Obtain & Analyze

The 37208 Committee recommends obtaining and analyzing data relevant to 37208. Metro needs to paint a picture of the flow of resources, policing intervention, and the outcomes.

Some data to obtain and analyze include:

- Crimes by category and specific offense over the last decade
 - Analysis: percentages of property crimes, assaults, drug, etc., in relation to household income, etc.
- Comparison across zip codes/districts
 - Household income
 - Metro funds invested (detailed, over the last decade)
 - Rental vs. homeowner (compared with other areas)
- Via surveys, town halls, and canvassing (qualitative):
 - Identifying primary under-resourced areas of people's lives
 - Identifying beliefs about why violence/crime happens, and what would stop it in the long-term
 - Identifying what budget investments people think would improve their lives

The 37208 Committee recommends using Raj Chetty's Opportunity Atlas to map and obtain data about intergenerational mobility, education, income, incarceration, and other community outcomes in 37208.¹⁸

Glossary

Criminal Legal System: "Criminal legal system" is used throughout this report instead of "criminal justice system" to remove the assumption that the criminal justice system inherently delivers justice, when in reality it includes harsh, unjust, and racist practices.

Economic Mobility: "Economic Mobility" refers to an individual's ability to improve their economic status, measured by income.

Redlining: The Federal Reserve Bank defines "redlining" as "the practice of denying a creditworthy applicant a loan for housing in a certain neighborhood even though the applicant

¹⁸ <https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>

may otherwise be eligible for the loan.¹⁹ In Nashville, 37208 was considered by the federal government's Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) as "hazardous," receiving the lowest grade "D" for "mortgage security" and colored red on HOLC's maps.²⁰

Reentry: "Reentry" refers to the process of returning from incarceration. Reentry services often include housing navigation, employment navigation, and other resources needed for individuals to successfully return to the community and reduce recidivism.

Reparations: The United Nations, as described by the *Reparations Now Toolkit*, outlines five conditions for what constitutes "reparations": 1) Cessation, assurances and guarantees of non-repetition - ending harmful acts and ensuring they are not repeated; 2) Restitution and repatriation - restoring the situation to conditions before the harmful acts; 3) Compensation for financial damage, if damage was addressed through restitution; 4) Satisfaction - addressing emotional injury, mental suffering, and damage to reputation when cessation, restitution, and compensation do not fully repair; and 5) Rehabilitation - including access to legal, psychological, and medical care and services.²¹

Social and Civil Death: Social death refers to the loss of community, relationships, and social acceptance after incarceration. Civil death refers to the loss of civil rights due to incarceration.

Transcribed Data from #Liberate208 Community Dialogue on Effects of Incarceration in Zip Code 37208 (January 25, 2020)

On January 25th, 2020, community members, business owners, elected officials, and other interested parties were invited to participate in a Community Listening Session and Dialogue at McGruder Family Resource Center in North Nashville. The dialogue was facilitated by Dr. Phyllis Hildreth of American Baptist College via a process designed by American Baptist College SEAL and Lipscomb University Institute for Conflict Management. The notes below were transcribed by members of the Lipscomb University graduate school class, and are presented directly as transcribed from attendees seated at tables, each spotlighting a different central issue (i.e. Education, Economic Development). The intention is to preserve these words and demand accountability from those who read them. Future listening sessions and community dialogues will be likewise transcribed and preserved.

Q1: "How has incarceration affected your life, family, and/or work in the 37208 community?"

¹⁹ https://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/supmanual/cch/fair_lend_fhact.pdf

²⁰ <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/36.157/-86.884&city=nashville-tn;>
<https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=intro>

²¹ <https://policy.m4bl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Reparations-Now-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf>

Answers from attendees, presented directly as transcribed:

TABLE 1

- Affects her job
- Sad
- Start believing it's normal
- Systemic - a place where this will erupt
- Done socially - in South Africa - talk but problem is STILL here. This is good BUT?
- Kids getting *[unintelligible]* because of suspension
- Recreate in-school *[unintelligible]*
- When it was decided we would have underclass support prison *[unintelligible]*
- Community Court Judge - passionately *[unintelligible]*
- Restorative - break cycle
- Housed incarcerated for 25 yrs
- Saw vulnerability
- Bigger than work development
- Reparation
- 4:13 strong - part of oppression
- Passion about Debt
- Financial Literacy
- Must be intentional changes - do it well - not just doing it
- Battle Fatigue
- Holding leadership accountable by how many people are here
- Proof. Fired up
- Jobs - Job Fairs
- Report Done but don't let that be the end
- Good ideas go to die
- Suggest we go to those who were incarcerated - need more people with direct experience
- Take our power back
- Be prepared to disrupt unjust process
- Can happen fast - COB changed immediately
- Show up & show out
- Our current definition of community
- What does community look like?
- How can we pull ourselves together if we don't know each other
- How do we access information we heard about -

TABLE 2

- Early childhood educator. Can obviously see the correlation between students whose parents/family members are incarcerated in reaching their goals
- There are not enough preschools or strong enough schools.
- Moved here for a strong African American community. We need to remember that "just because we're poor doesn't mean we have a poor disposition"

- We have to see people in the community bettering the community as a community.
- Incarceration is by design.
- They don't want us in their school rooms, board rooms, bed rooms, only in the courtrooms.
- There are many in the cycle of trying to "find their happy"
- Drug use & incarceration is what has kept this community down.
- The opportunities is limited for our community.
- We have to acknowledge the barriers that exist after incarceration.
- These barriers often result in a loss of hope in a person or community.
- How do these things happen when we are ½ the size of Chicago?
- This is a deliberate/systematic attack on people/African American people in the South.
- What happens to a community when hope has been lost?
- The dichotomy of gentrification is being done rather than bringing up the community that already exists.
- Public transportation issue: If you can't drive you can't get there.
- The city only cares when they are in the fault/wrong
- This is more battles on race, finances, and mentality than a community can withstand.
- We are having our rights & dignity stripped.
- Once you have done your time to society you should be able to have a life.
- → Rehabilitation ←
- This is an abuse of control and power.
- The fabric of who we are is being destroyed.
- When you destroy the family the foundation of who we are can not stand.
- We are @ the same level of poverty we were 50 yrs. ago.

TABLE 3 - Economic Development

- A nephew is incarcerated. Difficulty readjusting. (1) Barber (2) Check the box. No jobs. Hard to readjust.
- Police harassment. Under police supervision. Son has been affected.
- Community's negative reaction towards police. Fake charges because he had a gun [unintelligible]
- Police presence: felt like a marshal law. You walk to barbershop and police will stop you and arrest you.
- Licensed carry and got pulled over and charged
- Lots of people get pulled over.
- Lack of opportunity.
- Gun battles 3 to 4 times a week. 7am - 3am.
- Home vandalized, burglarized
- Stole diapers and food. No basic needs. ← maybe outcome of incarceration

TABLE 4

- Prisons = justice center poverty
- Issue follow young individual who could not get job b/c of system
- Proof - self-correction

- Costs more than just the victim
- Affect on the family
- Ripple affect on the children

TABLE 5

- Work impacts - church
- Neighborhood yough impacted
- Direct family impact
- Families broken apart by incarceration
- Events that lead to incarceration (shootings) are what impact families directly
- Kids affected by absence of parents
- Children to come who are at risk of incarceration (the unborn)

TABLE 6 - Education

- Labeling students based on previous incarceration stats
- Poor communication with students affected by incarceration
- Labeling because of incarceration
- Less opportunity after incarceration
- Kids raising themselves having to think about if you want to raise a family in the neighborhood
- How do I make sure citizens aren't punished for life
- Difference between rural and city incarceration
- Perceptions affecting availability of resources for students

TABLE 7 - Policing

- Trying to affect other people - not affected me in this community, my son pulled in Belle Meade court - ticket dropped. No reason to be pulled over
- I've been arrested. His community 1000 people bailed (provided bail). Stigmas brought into policing (how you look). Systemic racism, Have to look a certain way. Incarceration rate & function
- Sucked up in the systemic racism. Collective effort needed to be truth tellers. More money allocated to policing in poor communities
- It's affected our area. Defines us as African Americans. Effect home owners mentality. State of mind - what could and could not happen
- Taught sociology & a criminologist. Worked with prisoners. I got away with things because I am white. Benefited from my whiteness - didn't get caught because of that
- Researcher - how it affects him. Lives in the neighborhood and experienced bullets.
- Been in neighborhood always poor. Remember when businesses were in good shape. Don't have now. Is the criminal element why?
- We are products of our environment. We have to find how to change our environments to make them safe.
- What other information do we need?
- Our news system is biased - attributes to 37208 when was E. Nashville

- See more community events, know what's happening. How to get others to pay att. & care about it. Don't know how to do that
- Vote our convictions. Disrupt the process.
- Juv. crime to 50%. We don't know that.
- This area is a major intersection. A hub. Support police to *[unintelligible]* their mindset
- Solutions: community oriented policing is a buzz word. Social respons. Violence interrupters. Alternate institutions.
- Not going to *[unintelligible]* police
- Investment - city fund
- Take pride in community but afraid to action
- Implement solution - lower police presence, *[unintelligible]*
- Engage w/ each other

[Above notes re-transcribed for clarity]

- My son was pulled over in Belle Meade for no reason. Charges dropped.
- I've been arrested. Now I'm part of a committee who bails out poor people.
- Systemic racism causes us to have to look a certain way. I can't be myself.
- Incarceration rates affect our neighborhoods, perceptions of our neighborhood. We've lost the monetary value of much of our land.
- Our news system is biased.
- Decrease police presence
- It has not affected me. I know that's because I'm white.
- We need to be truth-tellers.

Q2: "What three key systemic, institutional, or policy changes do you need to see to prevent or restore the harm caused by incarceration in this community?"

RECIDIVISM

1. Resources
 - vocational training
 - health care – mental health
 - more funding programs like "Project Return"
2. Changes – intentionality
 - therapy – restorative justice
 - community police/court
 - less punitive practices in school
3. People
 - community and decision makers

General notes:

- impact on children

- emotional drain
- financial drain
- had family inc
- intentional in our programs
- financial literacy
- reparation (free ed, free housing)
- how to put back what was taken (childhood, childhood trauma)
- more resources for youth (community centers)
- use grassroots
- prevent/restore community justice for non-violent
- decriminalize marijuana
- more education and resources funding
- use restorative justice across court and schools
- additional funding for comm. police
- support org. like Project Return
- funding and support
- less punitive for school children
- in-school suspension
- housing
- vocational training (not a poverty problem, it's the amount)
- workforce development
- mental health – addiction

POLICING

1. Reform Policing: respect community and decriminalize
 - change philosophy and presence
 - new institutions – social response
2. Parent participation in schools and education system
3. How to address/change intergenerational harm done by incarceration

General notes:

- police need to respect the neighborhood they serve
- parents need to participate in schools
- decriminalize some
- reform policing strategies
- housing
- educational systems

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Change: Get rid of “check the box”
2. Partner: Grassroots orgs / people doing the work (list of people with respect so youth know & go to)
3. Resources: Bring the jobs to community (job fairs inside 37208) ; bring news and employment opportunity pamphlets to people

General notes:

- find ways to help people reintegrate to society
- the box check
- make the resources available
- not many people know about available resources
- fellowship – to get jobs with let’s say Amazon, Project Return
- secure funding for orgs
- lack of trust and people are afraid to talk, esp. Metro
- transitional plan and follow up when released
- harassment after released (parole officer)
- people should be trained for good jobs
- more funding for grassroots orgs.
- no bank account and no minimum \$25 to open one
- not many jobs on the bus line

EDUCATION

1. EQUITY!!!
 - resources
 - funding
2. Getting the right people to the table
 - youth
3. Collaboration between resources
 - non-profits

General notes:

- fairness in distribution of resources for students; support available for students; unequal systems (give schools what they need)
- equitable funding – equity!!!
- restore voting rights; collab w/ non-profits

- student budgeting low – inequitable!!
- PTO has more money than school has budgeted
- recruiting quality teachers from this area
- address literacy – literacy affecting incarceration
- access to resources

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. Employment opportunities
 - incarcerated
 - kids in summer
2. Ill-equipped school systems
3. Using equal spending on prosecution and defense

General notes:

- cost of incarceration? Employment opportunities (jobs for kids “summertime”)
- equal spending on defense and prosecution
- ill-equipped school systems
- scarce resources
- using human resources to connect and provide
- inform people on the “system” ← define, unwind
- 1st hand testimony
- prepare the community “data”
- not working for the incarcerated
- short term change unlikely
- policing

HEALTHCARE

1. Education in health and rehabilitation
2. A change in the policing. Social services before policing
3. Mental health education and rehabilitation
4. Using our resources

General notes:

- mental health help for children
- adverse childhood experiences (ACES)

- educating the community on how to make change
- transparency in the community
- factual data and numbers (compared to what?)
- teach people about the data and how to use it to fight the fight
- who are the ones working on our behalf and how do we support them
- the children
- healthy food, be in a community that supports them
- criminal justice system
- mental health with rehabilitation
- social services in the community
- policing
- restorative justice
- social services before policing (addressing system)
- justice for those with mental health
- supporting those who are reintegrating into the community
- policy reform on livable wages
- healthcare education

FAMILY, YOUTH, PARENTING

1. Re-entry programs for previously incarcerated persons that work w/ employers
2. mentorship programs that pair retirees or volunteers with youth or incarcerated persons
3. Better outreach on resources that currently exist

General notes:

1. Resources:
 - organizations (Men of Valor)
 - re-entry programs or parenting classes
 - better outreach for resources
 - retirees as volunteers (mentorship)
 - restorative justice through employment programs w/i incarceration facilities
2. Who?
 - elders
 - retirees
 - organizations (w/i community)
 - families
 - employers
 - community members
 - correctional facility higher-ups