

EVALUATION REPORT

BIASED-BASED POLICING
IN NASHVILLE:
*POLICE AND COMMUNITY
PERCEPTIONS*

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BIASED-BASED POLICING IN NASHVILLE: POLICE AND COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents an analysis of data gathered from 16 focus group discussions of residents of Nashville and 5 focus group discussions of officers employed by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. A total of 112 of individuals participated as focus group discussants in this project. Community participants were divided into homogenous groups by age, gender, and race, ethnicity or national origin; officers who participated were divided into homogenous groups by gender and race. The analysis yielded emergent themes and key issues related to public and police perceptions of racial profiling or bias based policing.

Emergent Themes

Five major themes emerged from the analysis of residents and officers' focus group discussions. These themes typically cut across all gender, age, and racial or national origin lines. However, some of these themes did not transcend the police - community divide, while others coalesced around professional, racial, and/or gender groupings. These themes include:

- Limited and often negative interactions between residents and officers.
- Disparate service delivery based on race, ethnicity, country of origin, socio-economic status, and neighborhood.

- Lack of police officer respect for certain segments of the Metropolitan Nashville public.
- Bias-based policing is a reality.
- Targeted recruitment, selection and additional training of officers are needed to better prepare the department for the changing demographics of Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County.

Key Emergent Issues

Several key issues also emerged from the analysis. These issues did not cut across all group lines, but in some instances were limited to a major theme emerging from one focus group discussion. Nonetheless, these issues are considered significant and should warrant future consideration. These key issues include:

- A need to review existing police practices, including the current structure of evaluating and measuring performance which is perceived by some officers and community residents as being based upon drug related “stats.”
- The role of the media in facilitating social conditioning and therefore fostering negative perceptions of police officers and racial, ethnic, and religious minorities.
- Not only officer training but community training is needed to cultivate and strengthen the partnership between the public and the police.

Recommendations

Based upon our analysis, we recommend several issues related to training of officers and residents to prevent the perception of bias based policing. These recommendations include:

- The need to cultivate new opportunities for positive resident-police collaborations.
 - Increased opportunities for Police Athletic League programs
 - Expanding Police ride-alongs/citizen police academy
 - Developing a “Kids Academy” program
 - Developing police/citizen academies

- The need for increased organizational relationship between police department and community groups or organizations.
 - Police officials (not just school resource officers or community officers) establish relationships with sustained community organizations.

- Additional training of pre-service and in-service officers. Specific curriculum items should include:
 - The philosophy and practice of Community Policing
 - Law Enforcement as a Public Trust
 - Cultural Competency.
 - Verbal Interactions with Community - More training is needed for officers to appropriately communicate verbally with community members - the overuse of aggressive or ‘command and control’ language needs to be tempered with civil interactions. Training about when appropriate use of aggressive verbal communication is needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, we would like to acknowledge the Community Advisory Board, working in collaboration with the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, for serving as the driving force for this research project. We are indebted to their direction, guidance and support. We also send out our sincere thanks for those community residents and officers who participated in the focus group discussions. Without their willingness to express their views and voices, this project would not have provided the insights that offer direction to the police as they consider ways to improve their practices and community relations.

Special gratitude goes to Chief Tyree Broomfield (Ret.) of Dayton (OH) Police Department, Chief Ed Brodt (Ret.) of Anchorage (KY) Police Department, and Asst. Chief Cindy Shain (Ret.) of the Louisville (KY) Police Department for lending their expertise in moderating and facilitating the officer focus group discussions. They added much to the success of this project. Last but not least, we thank the graduate students of Fisk University and Vanderbilt University, as well as those community members who served as focus group moderators.

INTRODUCTION

Bias based policing is the selection of individuals for enforcement intervention based solely on a common trait of a group. Often associated with the more popular phrase “racial profiling,” bias based policing transcends race and includes profiling of individuals as a result of their country of origin, immigrant status, religion, age, gender, etc. The Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, as a part of a larger project being funded by the National Institute of Justice, has partnered with researchers from Vanderbilt and Fisk Universities to explore both police and community perceptions regarding racial and ethnic bias by Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. In particular, this study sought to understand the extent and nature of any perceptions of bias by police, as well as any convergent or divergent patterns in these perceptions among community residents and police officers.

The research team, consisting of Dr. Brian N. Williams, Dr. Sheila Peters, and Dr. Paul W. Speer, followed the protocol developed by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Community Advisory Board and facilitated a series of community focus group discussions of both officers and residents of Metropolitan Nashville. Special emphasis was placed on gathering perceptions of those community residents in areas with high minority populations and other ethnic communities. Consequently, cohorts of African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, immigrants, and members of the Islamic community were solicited to participate in the data gathering phase of this project.

This report represents an analysis of data gathered from 21 focus group discussions, including 16 focus groups of residents of Nashville and 5 focus group discussions of officers employed by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. A total

of 112 of individuals participated as focus group discussants in this project. The following pages will elucidate the methodology used, describe the emergent themes and issues that resulted from the analysis and offer policy recommendations related to community training and police officer recruitment, selection and training to further decrease the likelihood of perceived biases on the parts of officers and residents.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for these biased-based focus groups was drawn largely from a community advisory board (CAB) established by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department as part of a larger grant on police training received from the National Institute of Justice. The police department established several advisory committees for different aspects of the grant. The EAC was established to help shape the data collection approach for this grant and to identify community members that could assist in the implementation of these focus groups.

The EAC was composed of approximately 25 active members drawn from a diverse set of organizations, including the police department, local service agencies, local chapters of national advocacy organizations, international service/support organizations, local church pastors, and local community organizations. The evaluation team was invited to meet with the CAB to understand the parameters and process for focus groups shaped by the CAB. Key elements to the design of the study included the characteristics of the focus groups and the structure of people leading the focus groups. The characteristics of the focus groups were broken into two broad categories: police and residents. Within both of these categories, focus groups were broken down by race/ethnicity and gender. Race/ethnicity groups were broken down by African-American, Latino and White. For the

community residents, an additional group included an ‘international’ cohort in an effort to attend to the perspectives of foreign born residents and non-English speaking residents in Nashville. The resident focus groups included two age groupings: ‘younger’ (age 18 to 25) and ‘older’ (25 and older). These age groupings were approximate - no focus group participant was asked their age - the age groupings were a strategy of the moderators in their recruitment efforts. Second, the CAB established a need for focus group leaders to draw from members of the particular focus group community - not solely academics. Each focus group was lead by an academic facilitator and a community moderator. In all focus groups, either the facilitator or moderator had characteristics matching that of the group (i.e., male vs. female, African-American or Latino, male or female, citizen or police).

POLICE

<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
African-American (5)	African-American (3)
Latino	
White (11) [2 grps]	White (3)

CITIZENS - ADULTS

<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
African-American (10) [2]	African-American (18) [3]
Latino (5)	Latino (10)
White	White (7)
International (6)	International (8)

CITIZENS - YOUNG PERSONS (18 - 25 YRS)

<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
African-American (10) [2]	African-American (5)
Latino	Latino
White	White (5)
International (5)	International (6)

Total Number of participants for 21 groups = 112

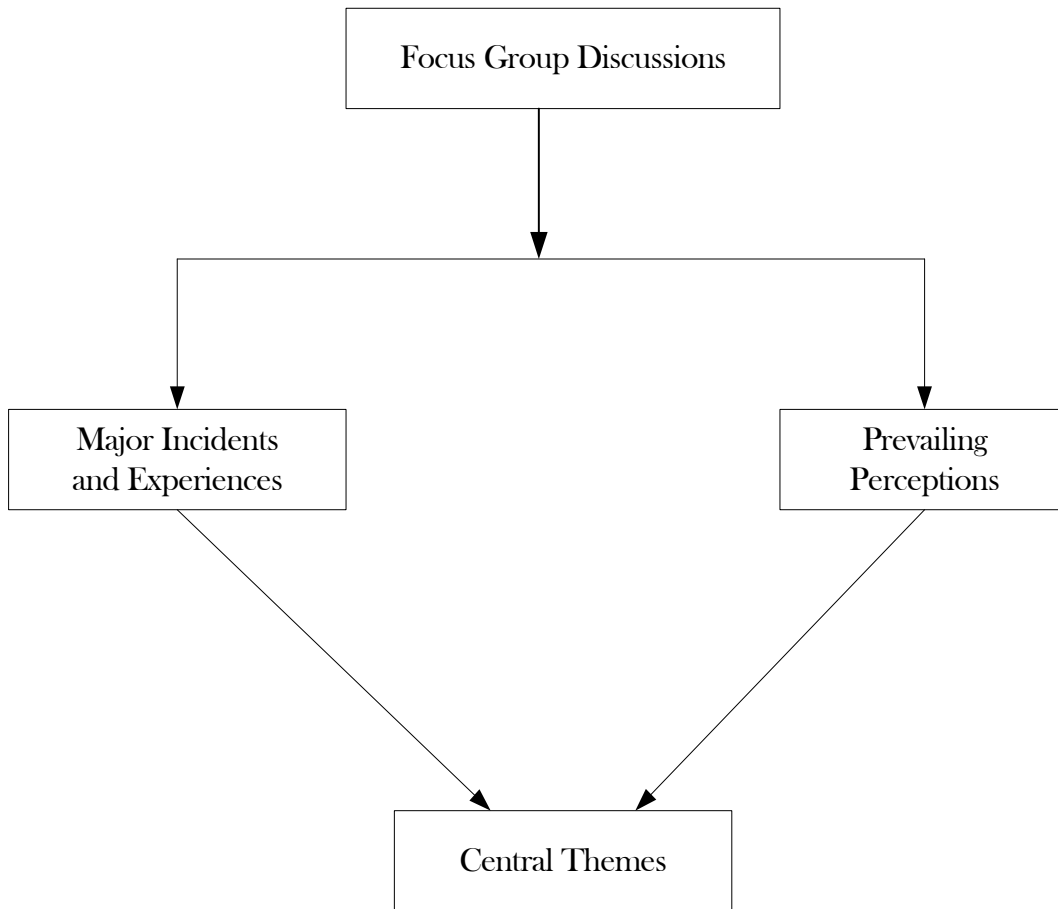
Recruitment of focus group participants was the responsibility of the moderator. Since the goal of the focus groups was to identify shared themes for different groups, sampling was not a concern. Convenience sampling - in the form of relational networks - served as the recruitment strategy rather than any systemic sampling approach. Focus groups were targeted for each categorical group identified, but there was not a focus group conducted for each targeted group. On the other hand, several categorical groups had more than one focus group conducted. Reasons for differences between focus groups sought and focus groups conducted varied. Most groups conducted depended on the interest and willingness of moderators to recruit participants, and in the case of police officers, the willingness of officers to participate in focus groups.

The process in conducting the focus groups was directed toward the concerns, needs, and feelings that underlie people's opinions and preferences. Such an approach has its roots in market research, but has been found to be effective in educational and social scientific research. The focus groups conducted utilized a nondirective interviewing method and began with a limited set of assumptions. We placed considerable emphasis on getting in tune with the reality of the groups and seeing the world through their eyes (Krueger, 1988).

Six fundamental assumptions provided the basis for the focus groups: (1) people are a valuable source of information; (2) people can report on and about themselves; (3) the facilitator can help people retrieve forgotten information; (4) people who share a common problem will be more willing to talk amid the security of other with the same problem; (5) group dynamics can generate genuine information rather than establish a

group think phenomenon; and (6) interviewing a group is better than interviewing an individual (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990; Krueger, 1988). Our approach utilized in-depth group interviews where participants were selected based on a purposeful, but not necessarily representative, sample of a specific population.

All group discussions were audio taped and transcribed. To get a more intimate feel for the data collected, a manual approach to capturing the content and context of group discussions was used instead of a computer assisted approach. Our manual approach followed the protocol for data breakdown advocated by Seidel and Clark (1984) and Knodel (1993). As a result, data breakdown was facilitated by employing a two-step process where each group discussion was divided into two categories (see Figure 1). These categories consisted of major incidents described by participants and their prevailing perceptions of biases. From these experiences, incidents, and perceptions, certain themes emerged and were identified.



FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

Figure 1: Analysis Approach

A combined ethnographic-content approach guided the analysis of emerging incidents, themes, and issues. This approach drew upon the strength of assertion analysis which couples designation analysis, or describing focus-group discussions by directly quoting participants with attribution analysis, or the counting and coding of the frequency of words, phrases and statements in the identification of group perceptions or themes (Webe, 1990; Krippendorf, 1980). Finally, a descriptive-interpretive approach was used to compare and contrast perceptions, attitudes, experiences, and opinions across the different

demographic groups of residents and officers. This aided in the identification of common, emergent themes and key issues.

RESULTS

The results of these focus groups are presented, as described in the methodology section, based on key themes from each focus group. Police groups are reported first, followed by resident groups. For both, identified themes are described and quotes from focus group transcripts are presented as illustrations of the identified themes.

POLICE

WHITE MALE POLICE OFFICERS

Theme: Accusations of ‘bias’ and an overblown concern for fairness regarding race or ethnicity issues has produced constraints on police and policing.

... that goes right back to what I said a while ago about tactics. And every time we come up with an effective tactic that is effective in arresting law violators, especially drug dealers, somebody challenges it and wins. And racial profiling is a perfect example of that. Profiling is a very successful tactic at police departments all over the country.

... We’re having to deal with lawyers and doctors and liability. And everything we look at now, the first thing that comes up is liability. This is a dangerous job. There’s going to be liability. But that has popped up more in the last few years than anything I can think of, is the liability of everything we do. Is there a liability to do that? How much liability is it going to cost us? Our legal department here in Metro right now, just from right now, would rather say ‘no you can’t do that’ than come up with a solution to go ahead and say, yes do what you need to, we’ll back you up.

... They put more and more restrictions on us. Every time we come up with a tactic that’s real effective, somebody will pop up and say, well you can’t do that. You know, they’re going to sue. Or the ACLU...[different respondent joins here] ...Or the news jumps on it. And the news media is a big morale problem in the police department because those guys have never been police officers, have never been on the street. All they are is ?? critic. They just critique it and try to look for every little thing they can find to...

... every time I go to in-service and you have law class and they always go over something like...which is like search and seizure and you read these different court opinions and these local judges and lawyers are making these...putting these restrictions on police officers. If the people in the public would just sit down and read this they would just shake their heads on what you have to do to search a box that's in a car.

... one thing where I think I used to have...I haven't been on but X years now...is discretion. I feel that that is slowly being taken away from me because of legalities and liabilities and state laws. And like XX said, every time you go to in-service something ridiculous is coming out of the courts that limits you on policing.

... They need to just let us police, let us do instinctive policing. We know what's right and wrong. This police department is educated. This is the most educated, intelligent, most professional police department we've ever had in Nashville right now.

Theme: Constraints on police are contributing to a reserved or less aggressive form of policing.

... There used to be things...now some of the older people...I've been here for XX years. You ride down the street and you used to jump out and get right into it. Now you ride...that doesn't look too bad to me'. It's not really all that bad.

... I've basically had officers tell me that a black one and a white one runs a red light...they'll pull over a white one than have to deal with the crap that goes along with the black one.

Theme: Training or continuing education for officers can be helpful, but it is not right that we have to learn some of the things we do about other cultures.

... We had a Hispanic awareness classes last time. It was very informative what the guy...I mean he made it interesting and it taught us some things

... You're going to run into very few in-your-face Hispanic militants. Those folks are here, most of them, illegally. They're trying to keep as low a profile as they can away from the police. That's why ??? a bunch of our hit and run accidents...you get there, well it was some brown-type guy. They know the police is coming, they're here illegally and they think they're going to be boxed up and shipped off, they're gone. Your militant type blacks, you know, they're just waiting for you to say something to them to get confrontational.

... why do I have to go along with something that I think is weird or just not right. Why do I have to do that? Why do we have to do that? I've been to probably XX different countries in this world and I don't go in there and force my culture on anybody. You go by what they go by. I've been to Muslim countries and I've been to countries whose religion and their government's all the same thing. And you go by that. You don't go by...I'm different. I'm an American. This is the way we're going to

do it and this is the way we're going to do it. You don't do that. You know, so why should I have to understand why somebody comes here and we're supposed to adapt to their culture? It just doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. They need to adapt to our culture.

Theme: There may be some racial profiling, but the bulk of evidence suggests that it doesn't really exist.

... there are certain groups of people in this country that don't want to face the facts of who the criminals are.

... They're just going to point fingers and say, you're bad because you're stopping black people. Well realistically we're helping black people by arresting black people because we're getting rid of the ones that are doing the problems. If you can get rid of the people that are committing crimes, you'll notice they'll be better off.

... There are...I will admit there are...working midnight shifts and stuff like that, there are certain individuals. You know, if you have a big group of people, as officers you're going to have a bad egg in the basket that's going to police like that. And it's going to take one incident...a racial profiling stop like you said where somebody gets shot or hurt, or for lack of probable cause or something let's say a guy dies. It's going to take one incident to make all of us look bad. And I could say that I probably stopped more white people working midnights than I did black people.

... and that's not saying that they don't have justification for some of it [claims of racial profiling]. You know, you can't just have that much going on and it not have a seed somewhere.

... the longer you've been on as an officer, realistically you're going to...rookies are gung-ho. Rookies want to run and gun, chase people down, do everything. Okay? When you first get this job it's cool. Okay? Well they primarily work in the projects. Well consequently you've got a whole bunch of rookie officers running and gunning, chasing everybody down. They'll arrest their mother, okay? As a young officer, you want to do that kind of thing. Consequently they work in primarily poor areas because people like me, I've got XX years on now...in fact, that's not great time, but I don't necessarily want to run and gun anymore. I'll do my job. I'll go to my calls. I'll answer my calls, write my tickets and I go home. My biggest concern is getting home. Their biggest concern...I mean they're looking forward to going to work the next day. So consequently you're going to have a bunch of rookie officers that are going to kind of tinge it towards profiling when realistically they're just running after people.

... I like to think we profile conduct. We don't profile people. If that conduct involves descriptions of people or statistics of who's doing what and where, well then so be it.

... What we go by every day is information we receive from somewhere else, whether it be from another police officer or another police division or unit or from the media or somewhere. We get information every day on suspects, who is doing these type crimes. What do they look like? What are they driving? What part of town are they operating in? That's how we function is by information we receive from somewhere else.

... 80% of the crimes done on black people is by black people. So if they're insulted by the fact that we're stopping black people, the only thing we're doing is helping them. If we're deterring black suspects from committing crimes, we're helping them. If they don't want us to do that, tell us. We'll let them run all over you and ultimately what would that serve? To me that's stupid that they're even saying, you're doing this. The same thing by white people. White people commit crimes on primarily white people. If you're going to say, we don't want enforcing laws against people...okay. Who's that going to hurt?

Theme: Racial profiling is less an issue about actual police practices than community and media perceptions.

... I think what's happening with a lot of leaders in the African-American community, they're remembering back to the old days and that probably racial profiling was...if you were black and you were somewhere where you wouldn't normally be then you'd be stopped and probably arrested on something, probably back in the 60s, 50s and back in there. And a lot of...I think some of the black leaders in the community are taking those old ways and continuing to use them today.

... Perception will never change as long as the media...[another respondent]...How do you change somebody else's perception on it?

... African-American people in this city, the good law-abiding citizens have received a bad wrap because of what some other African-Americans are doing and the image they project and the things that they do. That seems to be more pronounced, you know, when something happens in the inner city and on the news.

... Because there is so much crime in inner city and there's less out here. Blacks are screaming they need more protection because they've got more crime. We put more officers into that area, you get more arrests. So you've got a higher concentration of police arresting in the black area and less out in the white where there's less crime. So again the statistics...and what it proved, what I looked at from our perspective was we're not really doing...if you've got a 20% black population and you're stopping 23% of them...I mean 23% is the amount overall...that's not a bad statistic considering how many more officers are working the black community.

Theme: Issues of class may be more of an issue than race.

... I think it comes down sometimes more to the culture than it does to race. I can stop some blacks that may live out in the Rivergate area, treat them in a certain manner as far as a traffic stop with no problem. I can go in the inner city where the blacks live a different culture with different sets of values, make the exact same stop, treat them the exact same way, and you're ???...when they come out of the car, the only reason you stopped me is because I'm black. It's black, black, black.

Theme: Change is happening, but the process of change is slow.

... I think things are changing. I think perceptions are changing in slow, slow process. You know, my grandparents were more prejudiced probably than my parents. My parents were more prejudiced than I am. My son and my daughter are less prejudiced than I am. And I think it's a generational thing because, you know, when I grew up I grew up in a high school, an inner city high school here in Nashville. Never went to school with a black person. Never. And then, you know...my children, you know, went to XX High School, and it's a mixture of white people at XX. They grew up in a more diverse society than I did. I grew up in South Nashville near the fairgrounds, and there wasn't any black people that lived anywhere in the neighborhood there. But now it's a...if it's not mostly black it's quite a bit. It's a very diverse neighborhood. So it's a generational thing. Things are changing. People are changing. Attitudes are changing. It's just, it seems like the law enforcement it's a slower process for some reason.

Theme: Police are simply doing their job; there is no 'bias' in policing practices.

... I don't have time to care if you are black, white, yellow or purple. I'm just doing my job and you just need to buck up and take responsibility for the law you broke and take it instead of trying to get out.

Theme: Views of bias in police practices are based on incorrect community perceptions.

... its not that we are being biased. It's the perception, I guess, that people think we're being biased.

... I think there's people that perceive it as racial profiling because I think, number one...I think is that their intelligence probably isn't up there...

... They don't want to blame themselves. They've got to find something to blame it on.

Theme: The process of making a traffic stop is based on based on multiple factors, not the single factor of race.

... it's their perception that, hey this white officer shot this black kid, you know, and he didn't have a gun. That's all the community...they don't care if he was reaching in his pocket and he had just shot someone two blocks away and he was supposed to have put

the gun in his pocket and ran away, and it's at night and there are no street lights out because they've shot them all out. The community doesn't want to hear this. And they guy was reaching for something, and he had something...it turned out to be a cell phone that he was pulling out of his pocket to call his lawyer, whatever. And he pulled it out like that and the officer shot him. You know, they don't care about that. The only thing they care about is, oh he shot that black boy with a cell phone in his hand.

... when you see a white person in a predominantly black area you're not going to pull them over just because they're white. You may...I say follow them...you may...that perks up your little bell up here thinking, hey I need to maybe watch this guy. What is he doing down here? He may live down here. But...and on the other side you see a black person in a white neighborhood, predominantly white neighborhood, that you know it just kind of perks your interest. I wonder what they're doing over here. And you know, like I said, I don't think...I mean, there should be no reason for somebody, for an officer to stop a white or black person just based on their race.

Theme: The possibility of bias in policing.

... I think a lot of people they at one point in time they were probably stopped by the police for, hopefully, a legitimate reason ...

... I think there's a lot of grey area in there where as far as, I guess, racial profiling...you know, that's wrong and it shouldn't be done ...

... the units we use to do proactive policing in the rougher, I guess you could say, neighborhoods. They were sent there for a reason, and that reason is to, you know, reduce crime. Bottom line. So they do that by any little thing they can pick up - they're on it. So, and usually those areas are black. So that doesn't lend itself to what you want to hear, but that's reality.

... We get blamed for racial profiling, which I'm sure it probably does happen, but I think the majority of the time it does not happen ...

Theme: A lack of support from the institution of law enforcement, as well as the broader community, may be leading to less vigorous enforcement.

... Some might...that work in high crime areas such as housing developments... you know, I wouldn't assume, may come to the conclusion you know, hey I've stopped five black people tonight. I don't know if I should stop another one.

... I know how things are around here in the squad rooms and all, and those discussions do occur. And one of the concerns is that some do go into de-policing mode.

Theme: Social class interacts with issues of race in the practice of policing.

...like if I were to stop an average to upper income black person, I don't think...maybe they do, but I don't get the impression that they would think that I was profiling because they were black. Because I think they have the background, meaning maybe some education, a lot of education...

WHITE FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS

Theme: Police services in Nashville are very good

... I think we've got a pretty efficient police department. But all in all I think we've got pretty good call times, pretty good police. One officer gets there, he knows there's somebody going to be there soon if not sooner, whether they're a patrol officer or a detective who just happens to be in the area. Just like any department, we're short of people. But we provide the best services that we can.

Theme: There is no police bias in traffic stops because it is hard to distinguish ethnic profiles when an officer is behind another vehicle.

... again I would like to talk to the person one-on-one who's making these complaints. What did you get pulled over for? What did the officer tell you got pulled over for? And if you think it's the color of your skin, come and sit in the front of my police car with me in broad daylight. Let somebody sitting in their car, the headrest up, because you can see maybe this much of the head and you tell me if it's male or female, black or white or Asian. So yes I pulled you over for a reason. I don't know what your background is until I'm up at the window and I've already initiated the stop by then.

Theme: Officers police the areas that get the most calls

... If we have a lot of police officers in that community there's a reason why we're there. It's not because we want to...if that community needed 10 officers because of the gunshots, the shootings, the drug activity, whatever...on the corner and they're selling drugs...you're going to have 10 officers there. If you've got a community where you get I call a year you're not going to have...you have police cars go through.

Theme: Claims of bias in stops are common but unsubstantiated

... I think many people say, well you just pulled me over because I'm such-and-such. Well that's not the case. I always have a reason.

Theme: Too much attention is given to racial profiling claims

... This racial profiling [attention] that we started in our department three years ago...Closer to three, I believe...was supposed to last for 12 months. And now we're on into three or more years. Do the study and if it's happening correct the problem. If

not, okay, you've made this complaint. These are the numbers we've compiled. They either compare or they don't. If [the department] is racial profiling or if we're discriminating against you the numbers will show it.

Theme: The community does not consider or understand things from the police point of view

... We try to be sympathetic to the community and learn what they perceive as a problem. But then maybe take these same people and have them come as a police officer from our point of view and what we have to do. And meet somewhere in the middle.

Theme: Community members with complaints against the police don't distinguish between male and female officers

... I think if somebody's going to call themselves a victim, they're not going to care whether it's a male or a female. They're still being victimized by the police, not by a female police officer or a male police officer. By the police in general.

Theme: Police and community should make more of an effort to understand each other

... you get an understanding of our problems and what we're dealing with. Come and go through the Citizen's Police Academy. We'll come to your community, see what your problems are, and have a better understanding. And again that goes back to being sympathetic. For the community to have a better understanding of a police officer's job, it's a good solution.

Theme: Negative perceptions of police are fostered through the media

... The people in the community learn what they know about the police through the media. And it's always better ratings to bash the police. So let the media...let the media be...ie., the police do this, the police do that...you don't see that, hey the police saved a life...the police took a life.

Theme: Problems with police should be solved individually, not departmentally

... The solution is not to throw a blanket over everything. Just deal with that. You have a complaint; we'll come in. Let's sit down and talk about it. Bring the officer in, both people tell their side of the story and get it out and try to iron it out that way. But to blanket the whole department or the whole community is not the solution. You have a problem. Deal with a problem. And not a community dealing with a police department.

Theme: Effective policing involves some degree of profiling

... Well I think if you...if you want effective law enforcement there's got to be some of that. You look at them and you have to...you watch it. What's that car doing here? Why's it here? You go look at it. And if that car's doing something suspicious...you think...does he think, oh there's more to it than this.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE POLICE OFFICERS

Theme: Perception that racial profiling is a reality.

... if you look at it profiling has been done for a long time...It's not just only blacks that have been profiled...other cultures that have been profiled. And there are certain...certain points that may make profiling more susceptible to that particular culture or nationality...

...sometimes you have to do some degree of it [profiling] because that's one of the instincts that we have is that we pick up over the years if you stay in it enough. Profiling will come to you to a certain degree like anybody else.

...I know black and white officers that I work with genuinely got a care for the children. A lot of times you've got to profile in order to get in that car. Now, I'm not stopping him just because of the way he looks, but we want to try to get in that car some kind of way legally because he's bringing drugs in the community, everybody shooting each other. You've got kids on crack. You've got good officers who want to take care of the problem.

Theme: Perception that racial profiling happens within the department.

... I'll just use these individuals that come on in five years and get promoted, and they don't know jack knowledge about anything out here, but the knowledge that they do use they use it towards us. So as a whole, we're standing there going, I don't understand this. How does this happen? We talk about people that come in that didn't make it out of third grade. But yet still I say that because we get profiled every day. Everyday you're profiled is some king of way...are you saying the black officers? Yeah...I'm just making it clear...

Theme: Perception that racial profiling is not just a police problem, but more of a societal one.

...you go out in Belle Meade...if I'm not in uniform and I drive out there, I can just about guarantee you I'm going to get more looks than anything

... we know of an incident where a family was going to visit another student because they were classmates. And another family came over and held them at gunpoint until the police got there, and all they were doing was coming to visit. It was a black couple they held at gunpoint.

Theme: Perception that the federal government, coupled with a reward system which focuses on “stats,” have led to the problem of racial profiling.

...I think in a large sense that the federal government is responsible for a lot of profiling over the last few years. Simply the fact is they have put a lot of oney in the high crime areas and that's where they concentrate on...Now its unfortunate that when they put that money out there you're not going to just gebvlack officers or whatever. You're going to get every office on the department want to go out there and make some of that extra money....So I think in a large sense that federal money coming in here got a lot to do with what we're dealing with, what you call profiling because they put all that money right down in that area. And that's where you're working.

...you know, it's like stats is going to make you or break you.

...before I left the streets working...there was a housing projects and everything and there was a big deal about the stats, and I was watching all the other boys making them stats, but they were making them illegal stats. No probable cause, but there was mighty trumped up charges just to say, “Hey Sarge, I've got this paperwork over here.” And I remember one day at role call, I'd just had enough about the stats, and I confronted the Sarge in front of everybody. And I said, “Sarge, you know the reason these guys got these stats is because they're going around the corner getting them in the wrong kind of way. And I'm not going to go out of the way to get no stats.”...He took me to his office and said...“I'm trying to keep my guys motivated.” I said, “You're dog gone right you're trying to keep them motivated. Motivated to do the wrong things - Gestapo.

...They think they're doing out there doing what their supervisor wants them to do. They do stats. And if they produce those stats, then they may get to work again. If you don't produce stats, Sarge may say, I don't want you working out here...

Theme: Perception that profiling might be a good tool for law enforcement, but used in an inappropriate way.

... I think profiling is good, but I think where the problem comes in is where officers...they take advantage of the situation...But where I work, I profile. I work in the projects. We get a white person coming in...white female or male black and they have out of county tags, you know something's going down. They're getting ready to buy...probably buy some narcotics. But I just can't stop them because of that. I have to find a reason to stop them. But I think officers should use profiling as a tool but not to take advantage of people. And that's the sad part about it. They take advantage of people using a profile.

... profiling's been around for a long time, but the feds have used profiling...the Unibomber, her was profiled. A whole lot of people are profiled. But what happened was, it was kind of like a deadly virus, well contained and you know they always say if it gets out, it's going to do a lot of damage. And that's what has happened to profiling. It

gout of its protective barricades we start going to elements, teaching to elements that weren't prepared for it.

Theme: Perception that additional diversity training is needed to better prepare officers for the changing demographics of Nashville.

...we had a major black and white incident back there several years ago and we started diversity in the academy. And then they took it out. Biggest mistake. The city's growing, the county's growing more diverse, and what we do with diversity training?

...It's also an education thing also....if you don't really know, or if you're trying to find out things...sometimes it's just what you've been exposed to...if we get some officers on the department just come out of...who've been home with mom and dad, mostly white officers, because that's what the department mostly consist of, and they've never been exposed to anything, diverse things, that is...and they might have gone to college or they might have just worked at home or whatever, when they get out here, you know, they've probably been introduced to a lot of stereotypes that they indoctrinated into them and they go by them.

...the police department is not changing with the diversity of neighborhoods. We have Kurdish people, Pakistani, you know, more Mexicans. Just a whole lot more influx of people...but when we go to a call, we don't understand their culture, or we're ignorant to their culture. And that's where the problem...other problems begin.

AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS

Theme: Perception that racial profiling is a reality, especially for African American males.

...my mom had a nice vehicle ...I've only driven her vehicle probably a handful of times in Nashville, but I remember one incident. We were coming up to TSU for a parade...and for no apparent reason, we were pulled over. And of course when the officer came...I had to show him my badge...

...I don't know where the term came from, but I assume, based on the large number of African-Americans being stopped on traffic throughout the country for no apparent reason, it would give you the idea that, yes, something does exist out there, especially if you're an African American male and you're driving a high end vehicle, nice car, you know..

...I came to the scene and they had two cars stopped in the middle of the road and a wrecker loading this nice BMW on top of it...it was a black officer and a white officer...the white one said, "the dope business must be good." I said, "Oh, yeah?" He said, "Yeah...you see that car he's driving, you see how he looks..." And I said, "Oh yeah, is he a dope dealer?" He said, I don't know. I said, "Do you know him?" He said, "No." I said, "Well how do you know he's a dope dealer?"...and he just looked at me. I said, "Put the car down...you can't give me any reason why you're towing the

man's car. He might be a dope dealer. You don't know nothing about him. He doesn't have any record. You don't know his name...And then you've got him in the back of your car and handcuffed, but you don't know why...

Theme: Perception that profiling happens, but it can be avoided.

... I work in --- Nashville...there is a lot of obvious drug activity going on. So they may be profiled for a reason because you're hanging out and you're constantly riding the block...in that area

Theme: Perception that in addition to racial profiling, neighborhood, community, and socio-economic profiling occurs but this may be unwarranted.

...I know when we've worked over at Sam Levy on our bikes, every morning we get over there and after a while they knew we were going to be there...and after a while those people...well they really care. They'd start having us coffee and grits and eggs And you know, it made us feel like they really believed that we're working for them, which we were...

... a lot of my kids live in a trailer park...and I think a lot of them feel like because they live in the trailer park, that they're just a joke because nobody listens to them...So I think they just really want somebody to hear them, take them serious,..

...I think they really like the community-oriented policing concept. They like to know that the police have a little substation nearby where the community can come and converse with the police and discuss whatever problems or concerns

...they like to be able to speak with them, have a good rapport with them...They want the officers to just...instead of riding by to get out and talk to them. That's what they tell me.

Theme: Perception that profiling, be it racial, socio-economic, neighborhood, etc. is a social construction that even affects black officers.

...it {profiling} is not only white officers. It's black officers, too. Because you hear them say, well he must be doing something to drive that vehicle...

...And the assumption is there that we can't have African American males with affluent parents, whose car they're driving, or they can't be an entrepreneur or hard working person and actually own that vehicle or be purchasing that vehicle. It's like if you're driving this, then you must be involved in something illegal. And the unfortunate thing about it is it is not only the thoughts. Those thoughts don't only come from people other than African-Americans...people other than whites...black people think that about black people too. That's what really concerns me. I think we bought into the thought processes of other people about our own people...

...we kind of let society change our own views about us...like white people...

Theme: Perceptions of inadequate recruitment, selection, and training of police officers.

...I do think that recruitment goes out and tries to track the best possible candidate for the job. But what exactly are we looking for when we out recruiting?

...I've come to realize...that when they put this uniform on, whether they are black, white or whatever, they still bring the prejudices they've grown up with and that their parents have instilled in them...It's generally something that's been occurring all along in every field. So whether or not, they're still bringing their personal feelings and biases and everything, even though they are putting on this uniform

...we go out and get these people and we really don't think about their life experiences that these people have or the backgrounds that they come from. Although we allege to do a background investigation on them, I question that. I worked in a recruitment background before. I know what it takes to recruit people, and I also know what it takes to do a background investigation. And quite frankly, I find it difficult for them to be able to do that with the personnel that they have assigned...maybe recruitment does have something to do with it. Perhaps maybe the background checks aren't as adequate as they should be...We're more concerned with education...

...We've got an educated idiot out there. You know, we don't know anything about someone other than themselves. And half of them don't know anything about themselves. So perhaps maybe that {recruitment} does come into play. Yeah, perhaps maybe it does...

...I know one of my training officers when I first came out, she used the "N" word like it was nothing...I was shocked...I was just shocked that she said that to me, well not to me, but to this guy. I mean, I stopped...I'll never forget it. And when she said that word, I jut looked at her. And I think I was still in shock because he (suspect) pushed her, or they had words. Am I'm still like in a dream. Like, I can't believe she said that. Well after the sergeant came over and...I think they ended up letting the guy go. But all I remember is we went back to the station and I told them that I couldn't ride with her. And her thing was, "Well, I'm from --...I've never been around black people."

...they go out and get these people. Yeah, they have college or whatever, but they're not looking at the whole person. And somebody like with me where I work at, I mean, I come across kids from a trailer park, kids from the projects, kids from nice homes. And I think I treat all those kids fair not based on the thing they did...skin color or whatever. And I think that's what recruitment needs to look at. How do out who's kind of diverse? I don't know. But sometimes, just because you have a college education doesn't mean anything. You could still be ignorant in other areas...

RESIDENTS

WHITE OLDER FEMALE RESIDENTS

Theme: White people are profiled some times as well

... I have a friend who goes out in the projects in East Nashville. Don't like to go there in the night time, but there was an incident where I had to. And instead of me driving I chose to ride with somebody else and they did get pulled over just because we were white people in a black neighborhood. And I don't think that's right at all.

Theme: Profiling is neighborhood specific also

... Sometimes I don't think it's as much a particular race or creed. Sometimes I think it's areas of Nashville. And then as they get a call...oh no, I don't want to go there again. So sometimes it's biasness towards where the area is and where it's at. Sometimes they come with an attitude already of like, you're going to be trouble, so the cops mad at you.

Theme: Women are profiled

... Sometimes I think it's if you're a female. I had a guy pull me over once. I was almost late on my way to work so I just went ahead and pulled in to the driveway where I was at and stopped. He continued to pad my ticket with three different offenses, one of them saying I had failed to yield to an emergency vehicle, and I did not outrun this person. He had an attitude, I was female, and he just basically spoke down to me. And that was frustrating because here I am on my way to work and I have this individual figuring well, she's a target. Stopped me and gave me a ticket.

Theme: Officers are very condescending during traffic stops

... They come across arrogant, very arrogant. Like you don't have the common sense to know how to get out of your car or whatever. But some of them come across very arrogant. Like I had a situation...I got pulled over for a simple headlight out. And they guy was just...treated me...he basically treated me like I was like eight years old. And I was frustrating, but what could I do? I couldn't do a thing.

... Because the one time that I saw this kind of a teen, young adult, whatever. They pulled him over and the kid undoubtedly looked like he just didn't understand what was going on. He kind of did his hands up like...and this guy just grabbed him and shoved him down on the hood of the car. You know and I'm sitting there going, should I call somebody because this, to me, looked unnecessary. It didn't look like the child was going after him. It just looked like the kid was confused and didn't understand why you're pulling him over.

Theme: We understand that the police are understaffed

...There were zones. And out of those zones there was one police officer for those zones, and when you kind of took the map and looked where the zones were, I mean he's way outnumbered as to what he can handle and what he can do if he's only one police car in all of this area. I mean, they can't be everywhere and do everything. And they're very understaffed...

...But like I said, they're limited as to what they can do...

Theme: People need to call the police more often for disturbances

... So I think it's almost knowledge of the individual knowing what the police are to do in their area. Not a wrong perception, because I had a misconception about it until I found out they're not going to come unless you call because they're not going to know to come.

Theme: Police seem to police only the bad neighborhoods

...But young kids are thinking that's where they can get away with it because it's a good neighborhood. The police don't think anything's going to happen...

... just because there's a perception that this is a good neighborhood doesn't mean that we don't still deserve to have the police involved ?? at least a run through, at least once a day. I very rarely see a police officer...

Theme: The community should be involved with helping the police

... And if you talk to the police officers, which we had the opportunity. I talked to three of them. They're just as concerned as we are over how to do this, and they're very limited in what they can do. I mean, and they're wanting all of the neighborhood organizations to help them to help give a better job. So it's all going to take us all working together, no matter what it is...

... I think they have a lot of neighborhoods to cover and they have a limited staff. So its difficult to cover every single neighborhood. Maybe as much as we'd like for them to, but it's also...it does take neighbors working together to keep a safe neighborhood. And I think that overall the police department really tries to do good in our neighborhood...

Theme: Police need to be less confrontational

... The only thing I can think of is almost the way they approach a person. If they go to them like they're open to discuss with them what they perceive them to be doing

instead of, you know, yanking them out of the car and slamming them against the car. This has happened before...

... You know, instead of like, Hey you, or something more similar to, I need to speak with you, instead of like in a demanding voice. Some people might take that as a threat especially if there's a language barrier...

Theme: Police need more minority representation

... I would make sure that the police department reflected your community. So if you had a 10% Latino community, put 10% of your policemen or policewomen to be Latino. If you have, you know, 20...

Theme: Police should hold town hall meetings to hear community complaints

... Have more like a town hall meeting, you know like we used to, and have them more or less in different sections of the town. I mean, whether you're a part of the community watch but you're part of the town...

Theme: Police can do many things to get to know the community

... I think also encouraging officers to be a part of the police athletic league so they can get out with the young people. And in turn they're going to meet the parents. That's a fun activity. It has nothing to do with problems, but it's a way that they can know them as real people...

AFRICAN AMERICAN OLDER FEMALE RESIDENTS

Theme: Perception that police lack respect for residents in the Edgehill community.

...I mean look at their attitudes. Their attitudes say, "This is the projects. You've got to be drug dealers." It's not true. That's not true. You don't have to be a drug dealers...

...They have a way of talking nasty and that has a lot to do with bad attitudes.

...I mean, I don't care if you call 911. I don't care what time of day or night it is, it takes them an hour...forever...sometimes two hours before a car would show up

Theme: Perception of police lack of respect is evident in a form of "de-policing" during critical hours.

...You never see them (police) at night. You hear music...people cussing. This is like 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 in the morning. You don't see a police nowhere. I sit on my porch just to watch. I didn't see one policeman...

...They drive through in the mornings and everything when everybody's at school and everything is quiet. They ride all day long...when the drug dealers are sleep...(group laughter)...

Theme: Perception that police engage in racial profiling.

...My oldest son was coming home from work. They stopped him and told him to put his hands up and everything. And right at the back door...they searched him and everything and was going to put him in handcuffs until I came to the door and said, "He's a resident here. He don't sell drugs. He just came home from work. Can you not smell them hamburgers and onions." You know, he just had ketchup all over his shirt. He had a uniform on and they was just harassing him on the back porch...He's not a drug dealer...You know...a young black male coming through the backyard...they were roughing him up on the back porch, and I didn't like that too much. That was last year, He's 19 now. He goes to TSU...

Theme: Perception that police also profile visitors of the community.

...there's a guy, you know...who has a disability. He doesn't live here in the community, but he was raised here. And what he does is he goes to work, he goes and gets his bike and comes over her and he visits. Well, because they, for some reason thought he was suspicious looking and they gave him a citation...he had to go to court two different times...

...We had people coming through here living out of Madison, Bellevue, and everywhere else, coming to work on our corners...As a result of that, one of the pastors was stopped...the pastor was driving through in a car, what they call, now this is what a lot of residents will call driving a pimp car...acting suspicious...stopping on corners talking to people...(the pastor) came to one of the meetings because he was very upset. Said that we were giving them (the police) access...to much power and access to come in just to harass people.

Theme: Perception of lack of trust on the parts of residents and officers.

...We have to show ourselves trustworthy in order to be trusted. They have to show themselves trustworthy in order to be trusted. And it has to start somewhere. We all can't just say, "Well it is your fault." And they can't just say it is our fault. It's everybody fault.

Theme: Perception that police are biased because they receive inadequate training.

...I'm wondering if police are biased simply because of the way they're trained...well, I've actually went to their school and stuff and seen some of the stuff, and I, like, you know, they're trained to be...very aggressive...like Marines...They are trained to be distrustful

...it was way back when Janet Reno came here and they were really pushing community police. Now that the funds have kind of dried up...it's like people have done a complete flip flop. "We are not getting paid to do this, so we're not doing it

Theme: Perception that there is a fear of the police by residents.

...but the trust was being built up...children would run up to the policemen and talk to them and they'd have conversations, play with the children...

...But now, today, the children are scared of the police. They're actually afraid of them. And to tell you the truth, I am too. And really, I am...

AFRICAN AMERICAN OLDER MALE RESIDENTS

Theme: Perception that racial profiling is a reality, even though they had no direct experience.

...I have lived in Nashville since 1983. During that time, I have not been on the side of where I would distinctly say that because of racial profiling that I was either stopped or accosted by any of our police...I guess in my time here, either I've lived a very sheltered life or I've just been blessed by the Lord...

...I have to echo a couple of things that --- spoke of...I've been fortunate enough that I have not had the unfortunate instances of running in the MNPd...but I am concerned about the profiling...

Theme: Racial profiling as a way to interdict drug trafficking.

...I think profiling is an undercurrent of the traffic citations (stops)...when you rolled by, when you went by, they looked in your car, saw who you were and immediately they start to watch...they watch for the normal habits...you're going to make a left turn without putting on your signal light one of those times during the day...I have watched it in the media and I have one particular place that I know of here in Davidson County is on Interstate 40 to coming into Nashville...that's where they are. That's where they watch. That's where you'll see the majority of the large drug busts and things of the nature...but how many of those do they go through before they get that drug bust?...where do you finally kind of tip over their line...

Theme: Racial profiling is more likely to occur if more than 1 black male is in vehicle.

...I think there is a heightened awareness by the police officers if there's more than one African-American male is in the car at the same time...if he has a wife or a woman and some children in the back seat, I think he's not as heightened...

Theme: Social conditioning and media black and brown facing crime may lead to racial profiling.

...I think there's a learned behavior that comes along with {suspiciously viewing} more than one African American in the car...

...I am concerned about profiling...I do know that when I look at the news and in the news I see: black male from the age of 25-35, 6 ft. tall, medium build, brown skin...I mean, I fit into that category. And even though I'm not frightened by the profile that I see, I know that I can easily be tossed into that category just because of what I saw on television... simply because I'm 6ft. and I'm African American male, and I've got a short hair cut and I've got brown eyes, that don't mean I just robbed the 7-Eleven down the street...

...because of the way many of those individuals (black) are portrayed in movies and TV programs, often they're portrayed as that's the gangster attire...

...many times, unfortunately, when we see individuals that have the so-to-speak "gold grill," we tend to subjectively associate those individuals with the drug environment or the gangster environment.

...I saw a pamphlet that...had something to do with gangs...when I opened that up, I saw things like wear baggy pants, have skull caps with their favorite team logos on their skull cap. I saw terminology that they use amongst each other, you know, some slang and that sort of stuff...when I read it, I thought, wow, man, that could be 40-50% of African American males in the city.

... Some of them (young black males) scare me, man...I encounter kids that now are enrolled in college...some of them that I see, they really, when you look at them your first inclination is, "Do you really belong here? Are you out of place"...but then you kind of have to bring yourself back to, you know, who am I to really tell you how to dress, what to wear, how to look?

...when you look at stuff on TV and most of the folks that are stopped, you know a lot of times on the news, a lot of blacks are being stopped...they look at that and all of a sudden you look at the news and it gives you that profile, those police

Theme: Perception that racial profiling, in terms of traffic stops, may be a by-product of the promotion system and mandate to fill quotas for traffic tickets.

...in terms of profiling...their system is set up, from what I understand, in terms of promotion. "If I ain't making any arrests, I ain't getting promoted."

...here's an officer that know that "I've got to produce, because I cannot just sit here and not {produce}...how much of it becomes under mandate...

Theme: Profiling in an objective way could be a positive thing.

...I want to believe that there's a need for a profile because I want law enforcement to be intuitive in the way they handle their business...I want them to be able to anticipate because I want to believe that it is my safety, my family's safety that is in their interest...The statement was not real sure that a profile isn't a bad thing to have...but it still goes back to we need an objective eye, not a subjective eye.

...I think you've made a very good point and you said a profile. We didn't say a racial profile. So the profile does not mean to have any racial characteristics too. ... I think a white person dealing drugs is just as dangerous to our family as a black person...

Theme: Racial, and at times, gender profiling occurs on both sides of the divide - officers and citizens.

...If I am stopped by a white male, I know he's looking for a reason for that day. He's looking for a reason...If I'm stopped by an African-American male, I'm more likely to be amenable to him because I believe he's going through the same thing inside the force that I go through every day in life...

...when I see a white male coming up, I just got to let it...I may have a little edge to me because I don't think he's looking out for my best interest...

...if I were stopped by a Caucasian policeman, let's say he's male and Caucasian. My first thought would most likely be, is he really going to give me a fair shot?...

...I would feel that I would have less likely have an opportunity of being allowed to be let go probably by a female Caucasian policeman. Because now I'm thinking, well she's got something she's wanting to prove anyway....conversely if I'm stopped by an African American female, I'm going to put her in the profile with the Caucasian female...maybe that's a kind of awkward thinking, but just as he's looking at me, or he or she is looking at me under some profile, I'm looking at him/her in the same way...

Theme: Perception that more training is needed to prepare officers for interacting with a diverse population

...our police force could have training regimens that, if nothing more, keep them abreast of current trends in clothing attire. I think that when they see an individual that has the Starter jacket and baggy jeans and the braids and the gold, their minds most likely doesn't post, go to, well that individual is a B student...he's a B student that simply likes to wear the latest hip-hop clothing. And if he wanted to he could wear Brooks Brothers and saddle oxfords, but he chose to wear Nike, Starter and Fubu jeans...

...I think as far as training, maybe that whole hip-hop culture, that information needs to be disseminated as to the trends in the culture, even other ways of, I guess, sifting through whether or not this kid is really out for bad or if he's just a kid that just happens to like that clothing...

..I also would ask that in the training process of “uneducating” or “unlearning” those officers that we have to be really cautious in how we try to unlearn that behavior. Some of the behavior is directly related to some of the things, some of the crime elements in our city...

...if you’re going to change the perception, you’ve got to develop relationships. Because I think Chief Turner can put together all these wonderful plans and want programs for the public...but if it’s not known and there’s no relationships involved, then I think he continues to be on the peripheral...

AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUNGER MALE RESIDENTS

Theme: Perception of geographic/neighborhood/racial profiling.

...it’s bad, it’s real bad. Especially in the projects you’re treated totally different. And if you was in the suburb or living somewhere...it’s totally different.

... You know when you’re in the projects and you’re being stopped or whatever, you’re doing something wrong. This is just their thinking. Especially if you are a black man.

... From day one, you’re getting harassed...like you might have been coming to visit someone. Before you get out of your car, them folk probably will snatch you up walking to someone’s house. Now, you’re up stretched out just by visiting a person because they live in the projects...

...Brentwood, Bellevue, Antioch...you wouldn’t get harassed as you are in housing...even if you got stopped out there, it would be a more respect thing than if you got stopped in these projects...They’re going to talk to you more about it. ‘Sir, I stopped you for so and so, such and such. So you know, could I see your license, your insurance...but if you get stopped in this community over here, a whole lot more things is going to go on. And it ain’t going to be no “Sir, let me see your license” {but} ‘Get out of that car!!...get out of that car!!...Put your hands behind your back. Spread your legs!!...”

Theme: Lack of respect on the parts of the police for black residents and visitors of this community.

...the other day I seen them stop a car and everybody on the ground. I’m trying to understand...you can’t just put folks on this dirty ground like, you know, they don’t have no rights at all. Just lay me on the ground and make be able to take my shoes off. It’s cold outside...but you’re being treated like you’re nothing even though you haven’t done nothing.

... I've been stopped by the police just for walking down the street. I used to have a girlfriend down the street. I used to walk down and see her every day at the same time. The police would stop me at the same time every single day...

...I come to get my son every day off from work. I was getting stopped every day. And I told...the first time you stopped me, I said, I'll be out here every day at this time officer. You don't have to write anymore. Everyday I have a son, and I have to come and get him. And everyday I was being harassed...almost every day.

...you come to these projects...you're automatic doing something wrong. Like me and you getting in my car right now...we go up through there and get stopped or something, me and you are going to be stretched out.. Right now, if we leave and get in my try and me and you take off just riding, minding our business...What's the cause for that type of enforcement, to bring those SWAT teams or a Hummer or all that type of backup or all that type of firepower? What's the cause for all that? I can see if there was something going on like a riot or gunfire...what's the cause of bringing all of that over in this community where you have young kids running around playing, enjoying themselves...

... Treat a man, woman, just like you'd want them to treat you if you were being stopped.

...Man, I just want to be respected...some children in the back seat, I think he's not as heightened...

... It's their job to protect and serve. It isn't their job to haze, to jump down our throats...

Theme: Lack of respect for residents of public housing by all entities of government.

...Everybody who lives here got to suffer. Everybody suffers because really they're getting to the point, if you live in Metro housing you really don't have no rights...they can just walk in your house like you don't even live here. They've got more power than you in your house than you do...just because I'm living in the projects, it's still my home.

... The community is really becoming an inner-city jail, really. That's what it's coming down to around here...because as you can see, they're putting bars up everywhere...How an you lock a person up in their own house? They really ain't got too many rights around here because it's becoming that bad you're almost locked up in you own house. After a while, you will have a curfew that you have to be in your house at a certain time just to live in here...it's becoming a jail. This is a jail, almost...

... They are labeling this as a drug community, high crime area, however they want to put it. That is why it is becoming a jail.

... Ever since the football stadium came, they really want the blacks to move back out and let the white folks come back in like it was. Because, as we know, white folks used to live here first...we got too close to downtown...That's the plan they've got. 'So if we can go and get to moving folks out we might get the other folks back in here.

Theme: Perception that officers who work in the community profile based upon the appearance of residents or community visitors.

...I asked an officer once...I said, "if I was visiting a family over here, because I was working with this child, would I get stopped or questioned by you?" He looked at me, he said, no you won't. I said, "why not?" He said, "you are clean cut, educated and professional."...but I would be the type that could get away with harming a child...

...they judge you by your appearance...

... Treat me as an equal. Don't judge me by my outside, because of the way I look. Because my appearance. You can't just judge me like that. Treat me in a way you'd want to be treated...

Theme: Lack of respect, to a certain degree, by residents for police officers because of previous negative encounters or interactions.

...How can we respect the police when they don't respect us, when they don't respect me...like...oh there have been some white officers, you know what I mean, to come off and be like, 'What you doing, boy?' Boy? I actually don't even like my momma calling me tha.. I really don't like my grandmamma call me that...

...Sometimes you want to kind of feel sorry for the police, but then again you don't...Yes, it's [police job] dangerous. I can understand about them want to protect themselves. But it still gives you no right to keep violating other people's right just because you're an officer.

...You [police officer] could have had a bad day. You're human just like I am....and I'm the one you got to take it out on.

... You're a police officer. What makes you better than anybody else? And that's how they treat you.

Theme: Perception of inadequate officer recruitment, selection and training.

...like I was saying, you're being judged off the top around in this community. The police already programmed in their head a certain way. If you're over in the projects, you're doing something wrong. If you're driving a nice vehicle, you're doing something wrong. It already programmed in them.

They'll hire anybody [that] go down there and put in an application...Now, here you are hiring these kind of people, no experience. All they now is to go out and get by any means. Let me get them. If he's doing something wrong, beat him down. And this is the mentality these officers have now. I swear, they're putting their gloves on. They're riding up the street with their doors open about four deep in a car. They've got their doors open...

...Tell them to take their badges off. Tell them to come to the community and take their badges off. Why don't they come and get to know us as people? ..get to know us as folks.

LATINA OLDER FEMALE RESIDENTS

Theme: In cases of car accidents involving Latinos and Caucasians, the officers do not seem to care at all about the Latinos.

... Now she remembers she has her own experience and she parked her car at her sister's house and she parked it in the grass so it was like on a hill. And there was somebody in a car that came like really, really fast and then crashed the car through the mailbox, her car and did some other damage... she said the accident happened at about 9 and the police officers showed up at about 10:30. And then...and he wouldn't give the other person a ticket and she he didn't arrested. And he told her to shut up. She said, aren't you going to give them a ticket? And he said to shut up because his shift ended at 11 and he had to go. He didn't have time for that...

Theme: In such cases, the police are more likely to take the word of the Caucasian party and write the report accordingly, disregarding the Latinos.

... They just automatically hear what the American has said and write it all down. And then when it comes time for the gentleman or woman or whatever to get the police report, everything in there is either incorrect or falsely put in there...

... somebody had broken all their windows. And then the police came and they only took two reports of the two people that could speak English. So she's saying that they discriminate just because you don't speak the language...

Theme: Police do not seem to bother with troubled areas that are predominantly Latino.

... She's saying that somebody that the police are acting with indifference because somebody told her that there is an area on Murfreesboro Road where like crimes are being committed and people are stabbing each other or something is happening and the police, they don't even stop. That's what she says...

... And if it involves two Hispanics the police are like, okay let them kill each other. You know, they don't care; they're not going to stop. Half the time they don't even show up when you call them...

Theme: Police do not seem interested in solving crimes committed against Latinos.

... Her husband's brother was killed on Harding Place about four years ago... They said that they never did anything and they never found who killed her brother-in-law... but if it's a little white girl that's been killed or abducted they send out police from every state to find out where that girl is and who killed her or who abducted her. But it it's a Latino or a Latino child or a Latino woman, like who cares?

Theme: Latinos, in general, perceive the police as a threat.

... In general, like they might see the police and then they take off because they assume that they would be arrested even if they haven't done anything... And they leave the scene of the accident not to run from the accident, but just to run from the treatment that they receive from the police officers...

Theme: Police officers have no interest in trying to translate for Latinos who don't speak English.

... I think the police officers need to understand that that they're under federal law. I mean you're under federal Title 6... They are obligated to provide interpreters. It's not whether they have time or not to provide an interpreter. They're obligated by federal law because they receive federal money to bring an interpreter in there and have their documents translated...

Theme: Police officers would be perceived a lot less threateningly by Latinos if they learned to preface conversations with a few Spanish phrases.

... If the officers are willing, they could take a few steps to make this better and learn a few words to make it easier, make a breech with these individuals and say a few words. You know, hello...hola...coma esta...Buenos dias. Just Buenos dias, good morning, would do just fine. Or Buenos nochas, just break the ice and things could get better...

... People react to sweetness if they treat the other person with a little bit of politeness, and without fear the other person might react in a positive way even if they don't speak the language. If they talk to them with a few words...

Theme: Police should make the effort to recruit more Latinos for the force.

... I think another thing that the police department should do is recruit. I mean, there are plenty of cities that have high populations of Latinos that are legal, that are going through law school, that are going through police academies...

Theme: Police should show more of an interest in Latino neighborhoods.

... instead of just running away from it, just to have more officers and make sure that it gets patrolled and controlled. You know, their presence is important in those areas, instead of them just ignoring it...

Theme: Latinos are perceived by the police as being “lower class.”

... I think there's a class distinction, too. There's a class because they think they're upper class and that these Hispanics that come here are lower class or, you know, your blue collar. And they're supposedly...you know they think they must be white collar or something. But I think it's a class distinction, and that just happens everywhere...

Theme: Police could change their image by participating in the community more.

... And if these police officers build friendships with these kids, like you said, these kids could say, but Mommy he's a nice police officer...

INTERNATIONAL YOUNG FEMALE RESIDENTS

Theme: Many citizens with international backgrounds/heritage are cultured to fear police because the police in their respective countries are very corrupt

... I know many people from other countries they might feel respect or fear from the police officers. Especially from third world countries I think it's more fear because some of these governments can be corrupted...

Theme: Police need to take the time to try to understand the cultural nuances of other cultures

... I wonder if maybe we should have some kind of message that we want them to know about different communities...cultural differences...different in a different country how they view police or just every day in their actions. Like in some countries you don't look in the eye of the person you're talking to maybe. To other people that might be offensive or the police might think that they're hiding something...

Theme: In automobile accidents, police officers don't seem to care about the minority person involved

... But my sister had an experience where she got into a minor accident. And the girl hit her and it was the other girl's fault. And the police officer got to the scene and my sister called me because she wasn't sure about her English. She had this really heavy accent. And she just wanted somebody to be there just to make sure that everything was explained correctly. And the police officer basically...I guess he treated, just because it was a minor accident he didn't really do much. He was just there to fill out his paper work. I think my sister was expecting more of him because what happened was this girl, she was driving a rental car and she was from another state. I guess she just came to Nashville to visit and she was driving a rental car. And it was her

fault. And we never...at the end we never obtained insurance information from her somehow. I don't know what happened. She just kind of wiggled out of it. By the time I went to her car the police officer was still there. I don't know what he was doing. I mean he clearly said it was her fault, but... Yeah, he didn't really do much. Yeah, he didn't care. And we just wanted him to care enough to make the girl give us information or whatever. I think my sister really did feel because this girl was American...she felt that way. I don't know. I wasn't...I was just a bystander. But she felt that it was really because she was from another country. And she tried to explain everything to him and just because she was from another country ?? he didn't really care...

... I think it's also because a lot of Americans perceive that foreigners don't know, they don't know the law, they don't understand the law. And if you just forget about it then they won't know anything. That happened to me this year. I had an accident. This guy hit me from behind. He was African-American, he hit me from behind. He had been drinking and he was on drugs. And the cop even told me that...and like was just kind of out of it. I was in a daze and my neck was just hurting. All I knew was my neck was hurting. I needed to go to the doctor. And the police officer didn't even get an ambulance or anything for me. I called my dad. I was just like, Dad you've got to come get me because I don't know what's going on. I just had an accident and some guy hit me from behind. I don't know if I should call 911. The police came but he won't get me an ambulance. And so the guy...the police officer told...as soon as my dad got there the police officer told us to just go ahead and leave the scene. He was going to take care of everything. And so we left and supposedly...I mean before we left the police officer had got his Breathalyzer test and all that stuff, but he did not write it down on the report. And so when we got the report like the next day or whenever the police had filed it none of that stuff was on there. He just said that this guy hit us. And so basically he just got charged with hitting us. He didn't have anything on his record that said alcohol...

Theme: Police are very responsive to calls

... Well they come out when you call them. Yeah, they come out when you call them...

... There's been some good experience with [the police]. There was one time when I was alone in the house and I just kept hearing weird things. At one point when I was by myself the door...like one of the doors in the room slammed shut. I don't know if it was a window or what. But I just...I mean, I got my stuff, just went in the car, called the police...And they were all really nice. They walked through the house and said, no there's no ghosts in the house...

Theme: Tone of voice an officer uses is important in how he/she is perceived by the individual

... I think the tone of voice when they're speaking to you maybe. I think a lot of times...I mean, just tell me nicely, you know. Tell me in a respectful manner. I understand. I can hear you very well. So maybe sometime they can have this very...or maybe they're just used to that, the command voice. Maybe they're trained that way. I don't know. But I think a lot of times is the tone of voice that they use...

Theme: Police seem to assume guilt with young minorities

... I was in the car with him and some other friends and he was driving, driving fine. And a cop had pulled him over. We were following another group of friends. There were like four or five cars in front of us and we were going out for that night. And the cop pulled us over and the guy that was driving was Asian. And they told him to get out of the car. They were just really like didn't even say anything. You know, like we didn't even know what he was pulling us over. It's like, get out of the car. And he didn't even ask for his license or registration. And so my friend got out of the car and the guy was just like...I couldn't hear anything but you could just tell. I mean, he already had him up against the door trying to handcuff him. So I'm getting out of the car...what's going on? He was like, well this guy was driving reckless and I think he's been drinking. I was like, what? He's the designated driver. We're the ones that have been drinking...

Theme: When police take an active interest in the international community, the citizens feel more comfortable with them

... There was a couple of police officers that tried to get in touch with the international communities and they came to the meetings and stuff. And that was really nice. We felt really comfortable with him coming. And I think he started gaining a really deep understanding of different cultures. But then after a while he was gone so I don't know what happened. I think more of that...I think that would be good. Just to try to understand other communities as well, not just the mainstream...

Theme: The Latino community seems to be profiled heavily by the police

... Because there was one family that was calling asking for legal advice and what they could do about this one set of cops who kept coming to their house looking for this one guy supposedly that was illegal...

Theme: If the police hired more international applicants, the community would trust them more

... We need some...like you know how trying to get ??? more money, more cops on the force, if he can have people like that where they do have ?? who do join the force and they have some Kurdish or some ?? or some Somalians who can join the force where they can be there and they can really learn like a lot. And then I guess pass it on to community leaders. Because really the community leaders...I know the Kurdish community, gosh, they have like picnics in the park like every other weekend.

They have all their information at their social gatherings and that's where all the information spreads really. If people can actually get into that feeling, get into the Police Department, they will know. And ??? more trustworthy coming from your own people...

Theme: Police-community partnerships would create trust within the international communities

... I'm thinking it would be up to the international communities, too, to reach out to the Police Department. Have some kind of partnership and ?? educational ?? anything. I just think creates an awareness and understanding...

... Well like I said we have the huge task force, refugee task force. The police officers used to come to our meetings and they would find out about concerns, and we could voice it to them. Not anymore. But they used to. And they would have demonstrations to us to what kind of new equipment they have ??? I think that was great really. But they don't come anymore to those meetings... Yes I think it was great. I think everybody felt comfortable. And we felt like we had a contact there. People just felt more comfortable and they could take it to there, because most people that come to these task force meetings are the leaders in the community. And then they go back to their communities and spread the word I guess. I think that was really great. I think we should do it again...

INTERNATIONAL YOUNG MALE RESIDENTS

Theme: Feel like those from different cultures have fewer rights than 'Americanized' citizens

...And sometimes you know, they will discriminate. For instance, if the immigrant or the refugees caused the accident then we get the ticket. But if an accident will be in between an American and [an immigrant] they will not give the ticket to the other side. This is what many [immigrants] have been reported.

...I think in this country the police make a difference between black people or white people or international people. They make a difference.

...Even within our community, with a car accident involved with Americans, natural born Americans. Police do not pay attention to the other members. Everything was taken from the American man. Basically the police report was based upon what that person said.

...I think when there is something to be investigated it is not Anglo-American. If it's from immigrant community, they make such an issue out of it to make an example. We had an accident a couple of years ago with a family. I'm not in any way defending what the family did. [It was] way beyond what they were supposed to do. They put \$100,000 bond and they took the whole family and put them in jail. If it wasn't an

example, why would they do that? And I still believe if they weren't immigrants the police wouldn't have been so tough, so inflexible towards them. But they did. And we had a hard time to come up with this money and put the bond to let them come home. I think there...I don't know. But sometimes the way we look at it there might be a different law applies to immigrant persons, the law that applies to other Americans.

...And we are all in the international community...we are all paying taxes, even if you are not a citizen. And we have the minimum benefit besides the tax...if you compare the benefits we are getting...if you compare to the amount of tax we are paying. My family, we have five ????. All five is working. All five paying tax. Meanwhile all the services that you are getting, is maybe just using street or the...that's all because we have no one in the public school. We are not getting any public services. So this is just a simple example.

Theme: If immigrants were on the police force, the police would be able to develop better relationships with the community

...They should open their doors and invite other qualified...I don't say just anybody...qualified immigrants to join the police forces so the police force reflect the real society. And this way I think we can minimize this misunderstanding or misconception about each other.

...How can you improve police community relations if you have no voice with the department? Who would listen to you? Its been several months since I asked the department to come out and to coordinate our efforts, our organizations' effort with them to go out and talk to Kurdish youth in high schools, to talk to them about drugs and other illegal activities with the hope that it would make impression on them to prevent them from going out and get in trouble. We are still waiting for the replies. Four months to wait...that tells you how serious they are in helping the community.

...We don't think that police trying to get to know the immigrant communities. Although some initiatives are being taken like the Miranda and other police ?? translated from English to Kurdish, from English to Arabic and others. We were involved with that. But I really don't think that solved the problem. We don't see that connection with the police forces. I think in order to be...for police to be part of the community, community part of the police forces, we have to have a better relationship. We have to have a better understanding. We have to reflect each other. And I don't see that in the police forces.

...All in all, I think with more representatives of immigrant community in the police department we will have a stronger relationship.

Theme: Police are reacting, rather than preventing

...Another thing that I want to talk about...when I was teaching at high school, one time I was threatened by a student, and I filed a report. A warrant was issued by a

commission. And when I asked police officer if they were going to go after him before he did something, he was very impolite in his reply and said, when I go out it better be for murder. So that gave me an impression that he's going to wait until I'm murdered. Then he's going to come to investigate. I thought that was unprofessional, and unethical. You were put in this uniform to protect people from before they get...before they are harmed. You wait for them to...until they are in trouble, they get in trouble, they are harmed, they are affected by somebody else's actions and then you go to investigate. I think it's too late. And even if you do anything, it will be too late. So I still, when I remember this it really changed my perception about police as a whole because of the way he said he would wait and when he goes out it better be for murder. What kind of police officer are you? You wait until citizens get murdered and then you go to investigate who did it? That was something that I wasn't anticipating to hear from the police officer.

...Generally speaking, the police in Nashville - they are friendly. But I don't know whether its because too many crimes are happening every day. They are tired or they don't enough personnel to cover everything, but they pay less attention to some sort of problem than the other. This is something needs to be followed. Other than that, I personally don't...so they're friendly. All my life here I just ...one time I was confronted by a young, inexperienced police officer who was rude. But I didn't say anything. I didn't say anything. Just let the thing go. Other times, you know it's pretty much traffic ??? and stuff. Never had a problem. And when I was stopped they were very polite.

CONCLUSION

While the primary purpose of focus groups is to examine the range of perceptions, experiences and insights on given topics rather than to reach consensus, through the focus group process key themes emerge which are relevant and meaningful to many in the focus group. Analysis of these focus groups sought to identify key themes on a group-by-group basis. What follows are the key themes surfaced in the bias-based policing focus groups:

KEY THEMES ON A GROUP-BY-GROUP BASIS

P O L I C E

AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS

Racial profiling is a reality, especially for African American males.

Profiling is avoidable.

In addition to racial profiling, neighborhood, community, and socio-economic profiling occurs but this may be unwarranted.

Profiling, be it racial, socio-economic, neighborhood, etc. is a social construction that even affects black officers.

Inadequate recruitment, selection, and training of police officers.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE POLICE OFFICERS

Racial profiling is a reality.

Racial profiling happens within the department.

Racial profiling is not just a police problem, but more of a societal one.

The federal government, coupled with a reward system which focuses on “stats,” have led to the problem of racial profiling.

Profiling might be a good tool for law enforcement, but used in an inappropriate way.

Additional diversity training is needed to better prepare officers for the changing demographics of Nashville.

WHITE FEMALE OFFICER THEMES

Police services in Nashville are very good

There is no police bias in traffic stops because it is hard to distinguish ethnic profiles when an officer is behind another vehicle.

Officers police the areas that get the most calls

Claims of bias in stops are common but unsubstantiated

Too much attention is given to racial profiling claims

The community does not consider or understand things from the police point of view
Community members with complaints against the police don't distinguish between male and female officers

Police and community should make more of an effort to understand each other

Negative perceptions of police are fostered through the media

Problems with police should be solved individually, not departmentally

Effective policing involves some degree of profiling

WHITE MALE POLICE OFFICERS - GROUP A

Accusations of 'bias' and an overblown concern for fairness regarding race or ethnicity issues has produced constraints on police and policing.

Constraints on police are contributing to a reserved or less aggressive form of policing.

Training or continuing education for officers can be helpful, but it is not right that we have to learn some of the things we do about other cultures.

There may be some racial profiling, but the bulk of evidence suggests that it doesn't really exist.

Racial profiling is less an issue about actual police practices than community and media perceptions.

Issues of class may be more of an issue than race.

Change is happening, but the process of change is slow.

WHITE MALE POLICE OFFICERS - GROUP B

Police are simply doing their job; there is no 'bias' in policing practices.

Views of bias in police practices are based on incorrect community perceptions.

The process of making a traffic stop is based on based on multiple factors, not the single factor of race.

There is a possibility of bias in policing.

A lack of support from the institution of law enforcement, as well as the broader community, may be leading to less vigorous enforcement.

Social class interacts with issues of race in the practice of policing.

R E S I D E N T S

AFRICAN AMERICAN OLDER FEMALE RESIDENTS (Group 1)

Police lack respect for residents in the Edgehill community.

Police lack of respect is evident in a form of “de-policing” during critical hours.

Police engage in racial profiling.

Police also profile visitors of the community.

Lack of trust on the parts of residents and officers.

Police are biased because they receive inadequate training.

Fear of the police by residents.

AFRICAN AMERICAN OLDER FEMALE RESIDENTS (Group 2)

Limited, yet positive interactions with MNPD officers.

Racial profiling is not an issue, but sexual harassment by officers is.

AFRICAN AMERICAN OLDER MALE RESIDENTS

Racial profiling is a reality, even though they had no direct experience.

Racial profiling as a way to interdict drug trafficking.

Racial profiling is more likely to occur if more than 1 black male is in vehicle.

Social conditioning and media black and brown facing crime may lead to racial profiling.

Racial profiling, in terms of traffic stops, may be a by-product of the promotion system and mandate to fill quotas for traffic tickets.

Profiling in an objective way could be a positive thing.

Racial, and at times, gender profiling occurs on both sides of the divide - officers and citizens.

Perception that more training is needed to prepare officers for interacting with a diverse population

AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUNGER MALE RESIDENTS (bnw)

Perception of geographic/neighborhood and racial profiling.

Lack of respect on the parts of the police for black residents and visitors of this particular community.

Lack of respect for residents of public housing by all entities of government.

Officers who work in the community profile based upon the appearance of residents or community visitors.

Lack of respect, to a certain degree, by residents for police officers because of previous negative encounters or interactions.

Inadequate recruitment, selection and training of police officers.

YOUNG INTERNATIONAL WOMEN RESIDENTS

Many citizens with international backgrounds/heritage are cultured to fear police because the police in their respective countries are very corrupt

Police need to take the time to try to understand the cultural nuances of other cultures

In automobile accidents, police officers don't seem to care about the minority person involved

Police are very responsive to calls

Tone of voice an officer uses is important in how he/she is perceived by the individual

Police seem to assume guilt with young minorities

When police take an active interest in the international community, the citizens feel more comfortable with them

The Latino community seems to be profiled heavily by the police

If the police hired more international applicants, the community would trust them more

Police-community partnerships would create trust within the international communities

LATINA OLDER FEMALE RESIDENTS

In cases of car accidents involving Latinos and Caucasians, the officers do not seem to care at all about the Latinos.

In such cases, the police are more likely to take the word of the Caucasian party and write the report accordingly, disregarding the Latinos.

Police do not seem to bother with troubled areas that are predominantly Latino.

Police do not seem interested in solving crimes committed against Latinos.

Latinos, in general, perceive the police as a threat.

Police officers have no interest in trying to translate for Latinos who don't speak English.

Police officers would be perceived a lot less threateningly by Latinos if they learned to preface conversations with a few Spanish phrases.

Police should make the effort to recruit more Latinos for the force.

Police should show more of an interest in Latino neighborhoods.

Latinos are perceived by the police as being "lower class."

Police could change their image by participating in the community more.

WHITE OLDER FEMALE RESIDENTS

White people are profiled some times as well

Profiling is neighborhood specific also

Women are profiled

Officers are very condescending during traffic stops

We understand that the police are understaffed

People need to call the police more often for disturbances

Police seem to police only the bad neighborhoods

The community should be involved with helping the police

Police need to be less confrontational

Police need more minority representation

Police should hold town hall meetings to hear community complaints

Police can do many things to get to know the community

WHITE YOUNGER FEMALE RESIDENTS

Bias-based policing exists, but usually in high crime neighborhoods.

A lot of people of color commit crimes.

Some people don't understand that police are human.

EMERGENT THEMES ACROSS ALL GROUPS

Drawing on the key themes surfaced in the group-by-group analysis, the second phase of the focus group analysis sought to identify emergent themes that cut across the different focus groups conducted (Morgan, 1988). This analysis sought to identify common patterns as well as points of contention across the groups.

In this study of bias-based policing, five major themes emerged from the focus group discussions of officers and residents. These themes include:

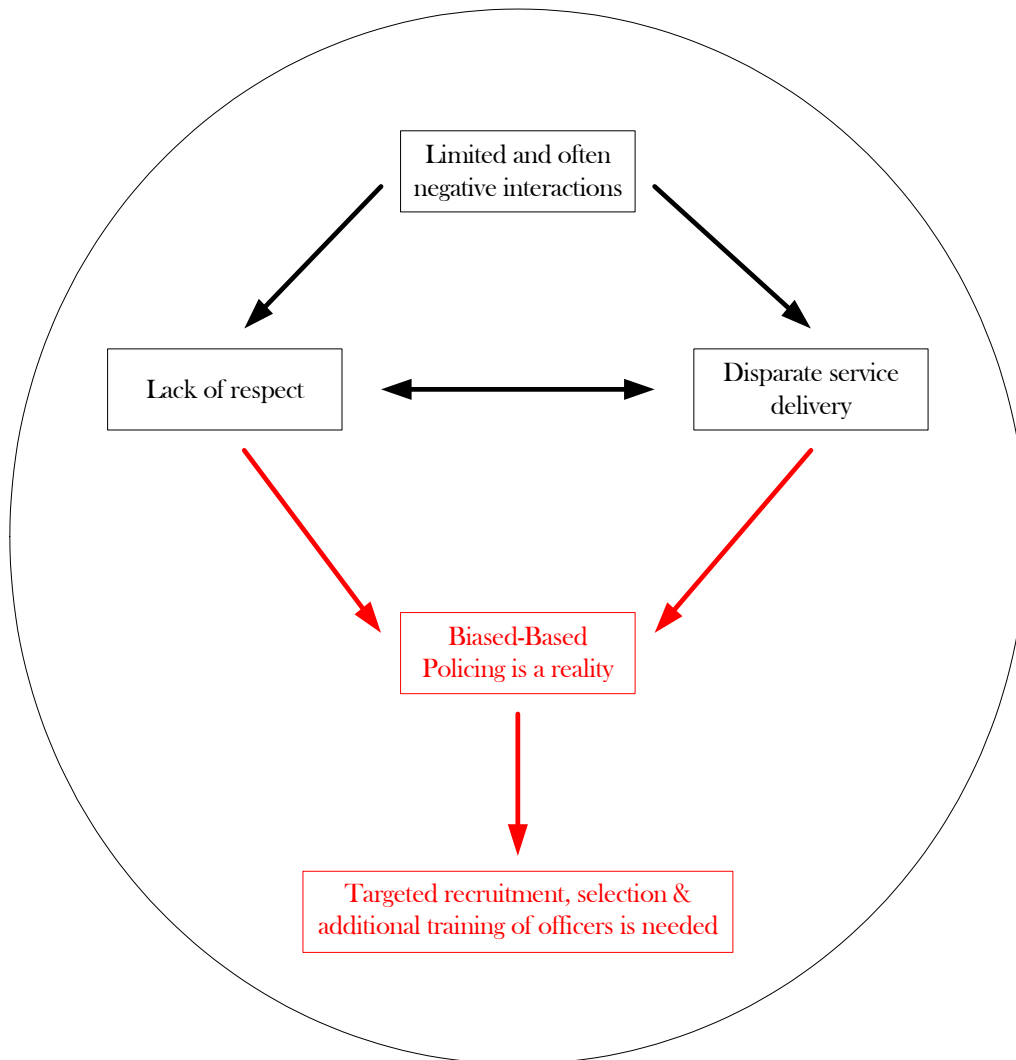
1. Limited and often negative interactions between residents and officers.
2. Disparate service delivery based on race, ethnicity, country of origin, socio-economic status, and neighborhood.
3. Lack of police officer respect for certain segments of the Metropolitan Nashville public.
4. Bias based policing is a reality.
5. Targeted recruitment, selection and additional training of officers are needed to better prepare the department for the changing demographics of Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County.

In the following paragraphs, these themes will be highlighted and described in more detail.

In the diagram below, a structure to these emergent themes is presented. As represented in this diagram, there is a strong interrelationship between the themes of limited/negative

interactions, lack of respect and disparate service delivery. Our interpretation (in red) is that these issues create or cause the perception and experience of biased based policing and the call, by focus group participants, for better recruitment and training of officers.

EMERGENT THEMES



AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH FACILITATES LACK OF PUBLIC TRUST AND
FOSTERS PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF BIAS-BASED POLICING

Limited and Negative Interactions or Experiences with the Police

Limited, infrequent, and negative interactions or experiences with the police by community participants, their family members or friends emerged as one of the predominate themes of the focus group discussions. Concerns over these negative interactions resounded louder in Group 1 of the African-American Older Female Residents group, the African-American Younger Male Residents group, the International Younger Female group and the Latina Older Female Residents group.

The negative interactions or experiences typically took the form of police-initiated traffic and/or pedestrian stops. In those instances where stops were citizen-initiated (e.g. traffic accidents) residents still voiced their concern and frustration with officers' cavalier or nonchalant attitudes. This was most pronounced for females, particularly in the International Younger Female Residents, the Latina Older Female Residents, and the White Older Female Residents groups.

In terms of frequency, participants in Group 1 of the African-American Older Female Residents group, the African-American Younger Male Residents group, and the Latina Older Female Residents group voiced more negative interactions and experiences with police. Participants within these groups happened to reside in or near public housing and were more likely to directly or indirectly (via relatives, neighbors, and/or friends) experience these negative police initiated encounters near the vicinity of their residence.

Even though these negative police-resident encounters seemed to coalesce near lower socioeconomic, minority, or ethnic communities and neighborhoods, the concerns regarding negative police-resident encounters transcended all residential groups, with the exception of the African-American Older Female Residents group. This group (TC)

consisted of 3 women who acknowledged limited, yet positive interactions with officers of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. Prior to moving to Nashville, all participants of this group resided in cities in the North and Northeast. When comparing MNPD officers with the police in cities where they had previously lived, these women felt that officers in Nashville were less antagonistic and less likely to harass community members that were not involved in illegal activities.

Disparate Service Delivery

The analysis of focus group data revealed a perception of disparate service delivery by the local police department. In particular, this view of disparate treatment took one of two forms: neighborhood or socioeconomic-based and race or national origin-based police service delivery.

The perception of neighborhood or socioeconomic-based police service delivery was more pronounced in the Latina Older Female, African-American Older Female and African-American Younger Male resident groups. Members of these groups shared their direct and indirect experiences, from interactions with officers within the confines of their immediate community to those interactions with officers or calls for service in the more economically stable sections of the Metropolitan area, which helped shaped their views of socioeconomic-based police service delivery. As noted earlier, both groups consisted of participants who live in or nearby major public housing developments. Interestingly, members of the White Older Female resident group also perceived a concentrated effort of order maintenance by the police in the “bad” or lower socioeconomic neighborhoods of Metropolitan Nashville.

Similarly, the perception of race or national origin-based police service delivery was shared by the aforementioned groups of residents (excluding White Older Female residents) as well as clearly articulated by members of the International Younger Female, Latina Older Female, and the African-American Older Male resident groups. These groups perceived manifestations of this disparate treatment in terms of police unresponsiveness in calls for service, the hostile and aggressive actions or tone of voice that officers used in traffic/pedestrian stops and other police-citizen interactions, and the indifferent attitudes and perceived disregard for explanations or characterizations of traffic accidents by racial and ethnic minorities, especially when involving white and non-white drivers. Members of the African-American Younger and Older Male, as well as African-American Younger Female groups even recounted stories of unwarranted physical confrontations and brief periods of unexplained and uncalled-for detention that seem to solidify their views of race-based police treatment.

These perceptions of neighborhood or socioeconomic-based and race or national origin-based police service delivery also seemed to foster a perception of “de-policing” on the parts of some groups of residents. This perception was articulated in the focus group discussions with Latina Older Female and the African American Older Female (Group 1) residents. The African-American Younger Male Residents group also perceived and expressed a form of “de-policing.” In particular, they noted that some calls for service (e.g. drugs) receive more attention than others (e.g. assault, robbery, etc.).

The perception of “de-policing” seems to be shared by at least one group of police officers. Participants in Group A of White Male Police Officers expressed similar sentiments. In particular, they noted that the allegations of racial profiling and subsequent

media attention have resulted in constraints that are now being placed on police officers. These constraints may contribute to a more reserved and less aggressive form of policing.

Lack of Respect

Disparate service delivery, in the forms of neighborhood or socioeconomic-based police service delivery and race or national origin-based police service delivery, seemed to advance and support the third emergent theme - lack of respect for the rights of certain residents and communities of Metropolitan Nashville. This theme resonated across most resident focus group lines.

The theme lack of respect was accentuated and most visible in the African-American Younger Male Resident group and Group 1 of African-American Older Female residents - two focus groups consisting of individuals who live in or near public housing. Members within both groups shared anecdotes that seem to embody their perceptions. These vignettes described officers as being oppressive, needlessly harassing and at times humiliating, themselves, their family members and/or friends. In some instances, physical confrontations, initiated by an officer or officers, were described; in most, focus group participants recalled officers being verbally abusive to those individuals who looked a certain way or lived or visited certain neighborhoods.

Vignettes that further described police lack of respect also emerged from other resident focus group discussions. In particular, International Younger Female, Latina Older Female, and White Older Female resident groups also shared accounts that reinforced their perceptions of lack of respect by the police for certain populations and/or neighborhoods. Interestingly, the African-American Older Male Residents group did not express strong views on police lack of respect. What may account for this is not clear.

However, these participants self-described themselves as “middle-class” and resided in the suburban areas of Metropolitan Nashville.

Members of the African-American Male and Female Police Officers groups also shared similar perceptions. In particular, in each group discussion officers described incidents where selective enforcement and treatment seem to take place. Their examples symbolized the groups’ perception of lack of respect for certain individuals within Metropolitan Nashville, in particular, young African-American males who may look a certain way, drive certain types of vehicles, or drive in certain neighborhoods where they may not look like the majority of residents.

Even though the perception of lack of respect was clearly pronounced by most focus groups of community participants, an overarching, negative generalization or stereotype of the men and women in blue was not forthcoming. Even in those groups who shared the strongest views on police lack of respect for the rights of certain groups of people and communities, participants did articulate examples of positive regard for those officers that they knew on a personal basis. This personal knowledge on the parts of the officer(s) and community resident seemed to have a positive effect on police-resident interactions and bridge the perceptual gap regarding lack of respect for the rights of certain individuals and communities.

Bias-Based Policing is a Reality

The three previously mentioned themes seemed to forge the perception that bias-based policing is a reality in Metropolitan Nashville. Like the perception of disparate service delivery, bias-based policing took different forms. In particular, residents and

officers described bias-based policing as racial profiling, socioeconomic/neighborhood profiling, gender profiling, and/or national origin profiling.

Bias-based policing in terms of racial profiling was more pronounced in the focus group discussions of African-Americans, both residents and officers. Groups 1 and 3 of African-American Older Female Residents, Groups 1 and 2 of the African-American Younger Male Residents, and the African-American Younger Female Residents focus group were most vocal and adamant in expressing the perception that police officers within the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department engage in racial profiling. Members within these groups recalled incidents occurring within and beyond the confines of the communities and neighborhoods where either they or a close family member had been racially profiled by both black and white officers. This view overlaps with the perceptions of members of Group 3 of the African-American Older Females and Group 2 of the African-American Younger Males residents. Participants within these groups perceived officers as targeting or “profiling” African-American males. These incidents occurred within and beyond the confines of their communities or neighborhoods. These views diverge from the perception of the White Older Female residents. Participants within that discussion conceded profiling was occurring, but whites were profiled as well, especially when they traveled in communities that were predominately black.

African-American Female Police and African-American Male Police Officers also expressed sentiments that bias-based policing in the form of racial profiling is a reality within the law enforcement community, inclusive of the police department, and the larger community, especially for African-American males. Their sentiments coincided with the perceptions of members of the African-American Older Male residents group who

perceived racial profiling as a tool that law enforcement uses to interdict illegal drugs. However, the members of this particular group had no direct experience with racial profiling in Metropolitan Nashville.

The views expressed by Group 2 of African American Older Female Residents and the White Younger Female Residents differed from those expressed by the previous groups of residents and officers. Members within these groups expressed that racial profiling was not an issue in Metropolitan Nashville. These views were shared by most members of the White Male and Female Police Officers focus groups. Participants within these groups saw allegations about the practice of racial profiling were overblown, more of a by-product of media influenced perceptions and less of an issue about actual police practices.

Bias-based policing also manifested itself in terms of socioeconomic or neighborhood profiling. The perception of socioeconomic/neighborhood profiling on the parts of police officers traversed most focus group boundaries. Consequently, various racial, ethnic, gender, and/or age specific groups shared this perception. Group 1 of African-American Older Female, Group 1 of the African-American Younger Male, and Latina Older Female residents groups had more marked views about this form of bias-based policing. This may be related to residents participating in these discussions living in or near public housing and other lower socioeconomic status neighborhoods. However, other residential groups, including White Older Female and African-American Older Male residents, groups identified as being more middle-class, shared this perception, but in a less pronounced way. Interestingly, the group of African-American Female Police Officers noted that socioeconomic and/or neighborhood profiling was a reality, but unwarranted on

the parts of local police. Members of this group had worked in lower socioeconomic housing development areas, befriended, and interacted with residents of those communities.

Gender and national origin profiling also represented perceptual manifestations of bias-based policing. The most dominant gender profile that emerged was one that included race - the profile of the African-American male as a criminal. The sentiments of members within the African American-Female Police Officers, African-American Male Police Officers, Groups 1 and 2 of African-American Younger Male Residents and Group 3 of African-American Older Female residents group echoed the perception that the police perceive and subsequently profile African-American males. The African-American Older Male group expressed similar views, but with one variation. They perceived officers as targeting vehicles with more than one African-American male passenger. White Male and Female Police Officer groups did not express views similar to these, but disputed the claims of bias in stops as being media influenced and unsubstantiated.

Members within the White Older Female Residents group expressed a divergent perception than the dominant gender profile that traversed focus group discussion - that officers profile or target women for traffic offenses. This view was not shared by other officer or residents focus groups.

Profiling based on one's national origin also emerged from a limited number of focus group discussions. This perception was shared by members of the International Younger Female Residents and Latina Older Female Residents groups. Members within these groups expressed their perception that police officers perceive Latinos as being

“lower class,” and in traffic accidents, police officers are less likely to trust and care about those individuals from who aren’t natives of the United States.

Targeted Recruitment, Selection & Additional Training of Police Officers

Targeted recruitment, selection, and additional training of police officers emerged as the final theme from the focus group data. This theme, aggregate in nature, had sub-themes related to officer recruitment, selection and training that was supported by officer and community focus groups.

The sub-themes targeted recruitment and selection of officers was voiced by members of the African-American Female Police Officers, Group 1 of African-American Young Male Residents, White Older Female Residents, International Younger Female Residents, and the Latina Older Female Residents focus groups. Members within these groups saw this as a viable, initial option to decrease the likelihood of bias-based policing. In particular, these sub-themes compliment one another and issue a clarion call to attract and select officers who were more sensitive and knowledgeable to the cultural nuances of the “new” Nashville. Like members of the African-American Male Officers group, these groups acknowledged the need for culturally competent officers to better serve the more culturally diverse jurisdiction of Nashville-Davidson County.

The final sub-theme, additional training, was one that echoed throughout all focus groups, including those discussions of White Male and Female Police Officers. Additional training took different forms, but generally was associated with “diversity” or “sensitivity” training. Even though the need for sensitivity training was not as well received in Group A of White Male Police Officers, African-American Male and Female Officers, African-American Older Male Residents, and Group 1 of African-American Younger Male

Residents focus participants explicitly called for more diversity training. The International Younger Female Residents and Latina Older Female Residents focus groups expressed similar sentiments and called for officers to have a basic understanding of the language, culture, and unique, historical realities that many citizens with international backgrounds or heritages have in terms of being acculturated to fear the police. Even though this relates more to the police within their native countries, the impact of this process seems to be lasting and quite transferable to police officers and agencies within the United States.

Emergent Issues

Several key issues also emerged from the analysis. These issues did not cut across all group lines, but in some instances were limited to a major theme emerging from one focus group discussion. Nonetheless, these issues are considered significant and should warrant future consideration. These key issues included a need to review the structure and existing practices of the police, the role of the media in influencing public perceptions, and the need for community training on the realities that officers face.

A need to review existing police practices, including the current structure of evaluating and measuring performance was expressed by members of the African-American Male Police Officers. In particular, members within this group shared their perceptions of how the department, as well as the federal government, encourages the generation of drug related “stats” or collars. They noted how this stats-driven focus helped to facilitate the police practice and public perception of bias-based policing. This view was shared by members of the African-American Older Male Residents group and Group 1 of African-American Young Male Residents, who saw racial profiling in terms of traffic and

pedestrian stops as being a potential by product of the police promotion system and mandate to fill quotes for traffic tickets and drug arrests.

The role of the media in facilitating the social conditioning and therefore fostering negative perceptions of police officers and racial, ethnic, and religious minorities also emerged as a key issue. The White Male and Female Officers group voiced their concerns regarding how the media helped to shape the public perceptions regarding racial profiling, while members of the African-American Older Male Residents group voiced concerns regarding how the media influences racial profiling by “black” and “brown” facing crime and drugs.

A final issue that emerged was the need for additional community training to offset, as noted by members of the African-American Older Male Residents group, the profiling of officers by local residents. Similarly, members of the White Female Police Officers group noted that the community does not consider or understand the realities of policing, therefore extra efforts should be made to better acquaint residents to the realities that officers face. These efforts speak to the need for community training.

CONCLUSION

The focus group methodology used highlighted the perceptions of various cohorts of officers and residents of Metropolitan Nashville on police services on bias-based policing. Strikingly, this approach yielded a fair amount of consensus across age, gender, racial, and national origin lines. Even in some instances, the span that divides officers from residents was traversed.

Based upon the perceptions of individuals who participated in focus group discussions and their five emergent themes, this research effort speaks to one general

conclusion: the present police-community environment is one that facilitates a lack of public trust and fosters public perceptions of bias-based policing (See Figure 2). Consequently, we offer the following training related recommendations to assist the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department in getting in touch with the pulse of the community, gaining the community's trust, and cultivating a more meaningful and rewarding partnership between residents of Metro Nashville and the police officers who serve in this jurisdiction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The need to cultivate new opportunities for positive resident-police collaborations.
 - Increased opportunities for Police Athletic League programs
 - Expanding Police ride-alongs/citizen police academy
 - Developing a “Kids Academy” program
 - Developing police/citizen academies

- The need for increased organizational relationship between police department and community groups or organizations.
 - Police officials (not just school resource officers or community officers) establish relationships with sustained community organizations.

- Additional training of pre-service and in-service officers. Specific curriculum items should include:
 - The philosophy and practice of Community Policing
 - Law Enforcement as a Public Trust
 - Cultural Competency.
 - Verbal Interactions with Community - More training is needed for officers to appropriately communicate verbally with community members - the overuse of aggressive or 'command and control' language needs to be tempered with civil interactions. Training about when appropriate use of aggressive verbal communication is needed.

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