

**TOWN OF NORMAL: RACE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT: SUGGESTIONS AND GUIDANCE
FROM TOWN OF NORMAL 2040 VISION SUB-GROUP**

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CONTENTS

Overview	2
Town of Normal 2040 Vision	2
2017 Sub-Group Process	2
Stakeholders to Support Implementation of Community-Engagement Process	3
Priorities to Balance	3
Expansion of Social Equity Core Value	4
Sub-Group Vision Statements	4
Sub-Group Findings and Recommendations	5
I. Public Process	5
II. Data Re: How Police and Community Interact	6
III. Community Culture Change Re: Policing and Law Enforcement	6
IV. NPD Continuous Improvement and Policy-Level Changes	7
V. For Further Study: Type of Board Reflective of Community Policing	8
Appendix	10
Characteristics of a public process that we recommend:	10
More About Community Policing	10
Suggested Data	11
Recommended Resources	12

OVERVIEW

Town of Normal 2040 Vision

We have a place for you in our vibrant, prosperous, and connected community. We aspire to go above and beyond Normal in: Social Equity. Ours is a compassionate community that strives for social consciousness, responsiveness, and justice.

This Vision Statement and Social Equity Core Value description were the centerpieces to our sub-group's reflection on race and law enforcement.

Town of Normal's work in articulating a process for exploring race and law enforcement comes right out of its own vision for the future, a future in which quality of place, cooperation, and community involvement from diverse stakeholders are normal—Radically Normal, a term coined in the *2040 Vision Report*.

2017 Sub-Group Process

The Race and Law Enforcement discussion group was formed in January 2017 as a follow-up to the year-long 2040 Vision planning process that concluded November 2016. This in itself was not unexpected. The 2040 Vision Plan was intended to underpin the Town's Comprehensive Plan, and several members of the original 2040 Vision group have participated in working groups that commenced earlier this year.

During the visioning process, our Vision Team discussed social equity at a time when communities across the nation were grappling with violent incidents involving law enforcement and communities of color. To ensure this discussion continued, we inserted into the *2040 Vision* a "Gaps to Close" section, which highlights the specific need for a public dialogue and acknowledgment of injustice, discrimination, and racism.

A subset of the 2040 Vision Team has met monthly with the City Manager and Police Chief for the past seven months to discuss ways to effectively address challenges involving race and law enforcement in our community as a *systems issue*. We were not called to address a specific incident or take a particular side (*for* these people or *against* those people). Individuals participating in the discussion represent diverse points of view and bring a variety of personal and professional experiences to the table.

This local conversation continues in the context of the national conversation on the same topic. Unlike other communities that are blaming actions and actors, this sub-group recognizes issues related to race and law enforcement as systemic and cultural. So, instead of one single or small set of "fixes," we prefer a broader approach, one that engages as many stakeholders as possible to participate in the conversation and articulate solutions.

Our strategy has been to dive deeply into this complex topic. Time has been spent with compelling information, a combination of:

- Our personal stories,
- Data collected locally and nationally, and
- Benchmarked practices from other communities across the country.

Our goal has been to bring key areas of concern into focus and to identify potential actionable items before a more public process is started, and our presumption is that this issue will need to be continuously re-evaluated into the future. **[See Appendix and Recommended Resources]**

Stakeholders to Support Implementation of Community-Engagement Process

To address a vision for social equity, generally, as well as injustice, discrimination, and racism, specifically, is a community-wide endeavor. The following list includes organizations that our sub-group knows to call upon as change leaders; we trust they will continue to be intentional in how they partner.

- Town of Normal
 - Mayor and Town Council
 - Town of Normal Management Team
 - Police Department
 - Human Relations Committee
 - Staff/departments
- Community
 - Members, with diversity in mind (i.e. race, ethnicity, language, gender, socio-economic, age, ability, sexual orientation, citizenship status)
 - Organizations, including but not limited to: Black Lives Matter, Boys and Girls Club, Conexiones Latinas, Immigration Project, Mid Central Community Action (MCAA), Minority and Police Partnership (MAPP), NAACP, Not in Our Town (NIOT), Prairie Pride Coalition, Project Oz, YWCA
 - Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal and other faith-based organizations
- Illinois State University and ISU Police Department
- Normal Public Library
- U5 and D87 School Districts

Priorities to Balance

With our eye on a more public process in the near future, we ask that anyone affiliated with this work going forward balance multiple priorities—things we must get right in order to be effective and to get closer to social equity.

1. **Acknowledge racism exists.** Accept that implicit bias exists in our institutions, including law enforcement. Use information to complement our personal experiences in order to learn how implicit bias presents itself in such institutions as law enforcement.
2. **Affirm Normal Police Department (NPD).** The NPD is committed to a culture of excellence, continuous improvement, and continuous learning—reflected in both policy and practice. We are proud of our highly professional and eight-time CALEA-accredited police department. We affirm NPD as one of sixteen Gold-Standard departments recognized by CALEA, which is an incredible accomplishment that few departments even attempt, let alone earn. NPD is a partner positioned just right to effect the changes we seek in our community.
3. **Maintain culture change as our goal.** As indicated earlier in this report, we are not seeking to eliminate individual bad actors or actions. Instead, we want to link individual efforts to a unifying big picture, one that unites NPD Core Values with Town of Normal Vision and Radically Normal.
4. **Reach as wide and diverse an audience as possible.** Doing so will demonstrate race and law enforcement as an issue belonging to the community, all the while creating meeting spaces conducive to the kind of active listening, candid feedback, and effective communication that build trust, relationships, and consensus.

EXPANSION OF SOCIAL EQUITY CORE VALUE

Sub-Group Vision Statements

We offer the following to complement the *2040 Vision Report*.

1. **Connect to pride in place.** This was a big piece of our vision work. In Normal, we come together to voice opinions. We create spaces where ideas are discussed and affirm public design of space. We work to connect community relationship building to events that feel more welcoming to more people by being intentional about the kind of art, culture, vendors, and events that we invite into our public spaces.
2. **Consider and reflect upon our own racism every day,** the institutional and unintentional nature of racism as embedded within society, the systems that compose it, as well as our conscious and unconscious attitudes.
3. **Recognize that imbalances of power work against our ability to discuss (and disagree) as equals.** Dialogue and interactions alone cannot fix today's dynamic.
4. **Expect continued change in the role of policing, away from reactively addressing crime, toward proactively addressing factors that lead to crime.** Enhance existing policies and practices that are already underway within the police department that lead to more positive engagements between police and residents, as well as other community stakeholders. Bring everyone together, including police. Address risk factors that could lead to crime, which, in turn, would reduce crime and associated calls to the police.
5. **Acknowledge the positives that are part of this process, as well as those that will result from this process, while acknowledging they are not necessarily easy to achieve.** Community members in Normal, including internal stars within NPD, will undoubtedly benefit from driving our change process. Valuable benchmarking is available through our neighbors in Central Illinois and the Midwest. Support for Normal's community policing will result in initiatives that influence trust and promote positive interactions. Intentional relationships with police and community members will influence our quality of life and social equity.

SUB-GROUP FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

African Americans are disproportionately stopped, arrested, and incarcerated. That is a fact in America today. In looking at our data, we see that here, too. We must engage around, recognize, and address the disproportionate stopping, arresting, and incarceration of people of color. [See Appendix and Recommended Reading.]

We do not accept being part of the national trend. We urge Town of Normal to demonstrate a likewise recognition.

Based on our community's current strengths, available resources, and commitment to community-wide continuous improvement, this is not a ground-up task. Instead, it is an up-our-game task. We have strengths in our community to call upon, available resources and stakeholders to activate, and experience from past community-focused improvements to draw upon.

Please read the following recommendations as options to consider. We have organized our recommendations into the following categories, with corresponding specific actions to follow:

- I. Public Process: Recommendations about how to engage the public
- II. Data Regarding How the Police and Community Interact: Emphasizes how to position data as part of this continuous-improvement effort and as a key component to any future public process
- III. Community Culture Change Regarding Police and Law Enforcement: Recommendations for building a shared understanding about the evolution of policing and law enforcement as a community resource
- IV. NPP Continuous Improvement and Policy Level Change: Recommendations about what NPD can do to advance today's community-policing approach and deepen relationships with community members
- V. For Further Study—Boards to Consider: Options for traditional Community Review Board (CRB) and original idea suggested by sub-group, a Community Policing Culture Board (CPCB)

Know that the following recommendations have been informed by sub-group discussion, data analysis, and benchmarking.

I. Public Process

We recommend planning, implementing, and learning from a public process that is characterized by diverse stakeholder engagement, dialogue, trust building, and action planning. As sub-group member Karen Stipp has said, "This is the starting point, not the finish line."

We think that the following types of public-process events would benefit community members.

- A. **Round-table discussions:** Seek round-table discussions that allow individuals to connect with one another, to the issue of racism in our institutions, including law enforcement, and to the commitment of building a better community. The sub-group's process for the first half of 2017 in determining recommendations turned out to be a *pilot*—community members, NPD representation, and ToN management and Town Council representation *is the key* to moving forward with integrity and sensitivity.
- B. **Listening sessions:** Public-listening/sharing opportunities to acknowledge bias, even implicit bias, and brainstorm strategies to mitigate bias at individual up to systemic levels.

- C. **Community education:** Informational lectures, panel discussions, informational or demonstration videos online (via NPD website, perhaps), or (other) informational sessions to be held free of charge. Numerous terms, trends, data points, and socio-economic/demographic truths need to be available to the public. Individual experience alone will not be enough to help build the awareness and willingness to change because each of us is limited to what we have personally experienced—and that will not be enough of the “whole picture” to truly prepare us for informed decision-making and accountability-holding.

Community education may also include activities that build awareness of diversity, racial bias, etc. In addition, community education to include a re-introduction of Normal Police Department (NPD) mission and services within the community with emphasis on minority and under-served communities. The re-introduction to NPD could also include sharing information related to what police work looks like today, including walk-through of duties, regulations and mandates, as well as risks and pay-offs. Through these kinds of learning events, community members may better understand when they should call the police for assistance.

- D. **Social gatherings, use of public-meeting spaces, such as Uptown Circle:** Uptown Circle events can be used to promote cultural diversity, social justice, support of law enforcement, etc. Use our “heart” of Normal to reinforce the work being done to improve the relationship of community members with one another and with authority-holders, such as Police, elected officials, and Town of Normal staff. Reinforce the connectedness and even some of the “fun” of gathering together in Uptown that we have come to expect/rely upon/enjoy through shared use of this public space to entertain, educate, make visible, and grow community. Other public venues could include: Police neighborhood meetings; standing communication loops and networks among Town of Normal and NPD stakeholders, and community influencers/leaders.

II. Data Re: How Police and Community Interact

Our recommended public process must combine personal experience with data and information. We recommend that data is generated, published, and analyzed that accurately captures the full picture of people’s interactions with the police.

- A. **Share data tracked by NPD**, and publish it in reader-friendly ways, such as:
- Time of day when police-resident interactions occur
 - Pedestrian data (demographics of pedestrians stopped)
 - Traffic stop data (by race)
 - Aggregate and publish greater and more targeted data. Identify missing and incomplete data, as well as identify data systems and process limitations.
 - Problem solve and forecast system and process needs and budget impacts
- B. **Move beyond conventional data collection** to something that better reflects and captures the community—who we are and how we interact with our police department. This type of data, we think, will reflect purpose-driven policing (not just reactive data associated with stops and arrests).

III. Community Culture Change Re: Policing and Law Enforcement

The traditional culture of policing needs to shift, as indicated in both national trends and locally available information, such as the recent Stevenson Center Report entitled “Select Disparities in the Criminal Justice System in McLean County.”

As indicated previously in this sub-group report, we need not characterize the opportunity to change as strictly reactive but, instead, as an opportunity to embrace needed improvement.

We think that the following will be important indicators of a significant shift in how policing and law enforcement function and how they are perceived by community members.

- A. **Advance community policing approaches that are in use today.** “Community policing” is a term that is commonly defined as a holistic, integrated philosophy and organizational strategy to transform the way law enforcement and the community interact, share power, and work to improve the quality of life throughout the community. It seeks to proactively address the conditions that give rise to such public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. [See Appendix.]
- B. **Develop and monitor a Community Policing Master Plan.** Allow the public process described in Recommendation #1 to inform the plan.
- C. **Monitor key-performance indicators (KPIs)** associated with the culture change we seek, which, in this case, is the nature and extent of community partnerships. For example:
 - What exists?
 - Who participates? How?
 - What demographics do participants represent? How representative is that of our population?
 - What impact are those partnerships having on leading and lagging indicators of crime, safety, quality-of-life, etc.?
- D. **Continue pursuing 2040 Vision Core Values.**

IV. NPD Continuous Improvement and Policy-Level Changes

As stated in the *President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, Final Report*: “Law Enforcement cannot build community trust if it is seen as an occupying force coming in from outside to rule and control the community.” This quote aligns with what was shared by Chief Rick Bleichner as part of our sub-group. The Town of Normal Police Department wants to be perceived positively, to enjoy trusting and working relationships with all members of the community, including within communities that are currently under-served—all of which ensures NPD lives its Mission Statement every day.

In some cases, the following suggestions coincide with what NPD is already underway with in terms of continuous-improvement target areas and prospective policy-level changes.

- A. Continuous improvement target areas include:
 - Increased transparency, including transparency of mission and mission-focused efforts
 - Training and professional development, such as recognizing bias/racism, de-escalation, and skills associated with relationship-building
 - Incorporation of community members to ensure training reflects Town of Normal residents’ contexts and needs, such as through:
 - Small-group discussion or scenarios in which NPD officers practice what they learned
 - Determining what training to get based on benchmarking and listening to community member needs (ex. LGTBQIA)
 - Modeling what is meant by “community policing,” so our community understands it as a combination of relationship and action, not just a concept

- B. Suggested indicators of improved community-police relationships include :
- Foot and bike patrols; business and vacation checks (non-enforcement)
 - Establishment and communication of alternative response and reduced use of force
 - Demonstration of how use of data is informing priorities and practices. For example, related to use of force, if rates are looked at in which enforcement is used (per demographic group/age), then that information can be used to understand where reductions of force may be most needed in order to achieve greater consistency in rates
 - Engage youth, as well as minority and under-served communities
- C. Information sharing that shows NPD taking things head-on, such as:
- Update Town of Normal Police Department website with relevant policies made more transparent to residents (note: not *all* NPD policies)
 - Create and publish Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) through documents and demonstration videos, through website and social media
 - Link to Comprehensive Plan
- D. Support career development within policing and police-department initiatives, including but not limited to:
- Connecting police officers to other leaders in the community to learn about leadership and managing change
 - Creating a positive-reinforcement approach that focuses on high performers within NPD

V. For Further Study: Type of Board Reflective of Community Policing

1. Community Relations Board

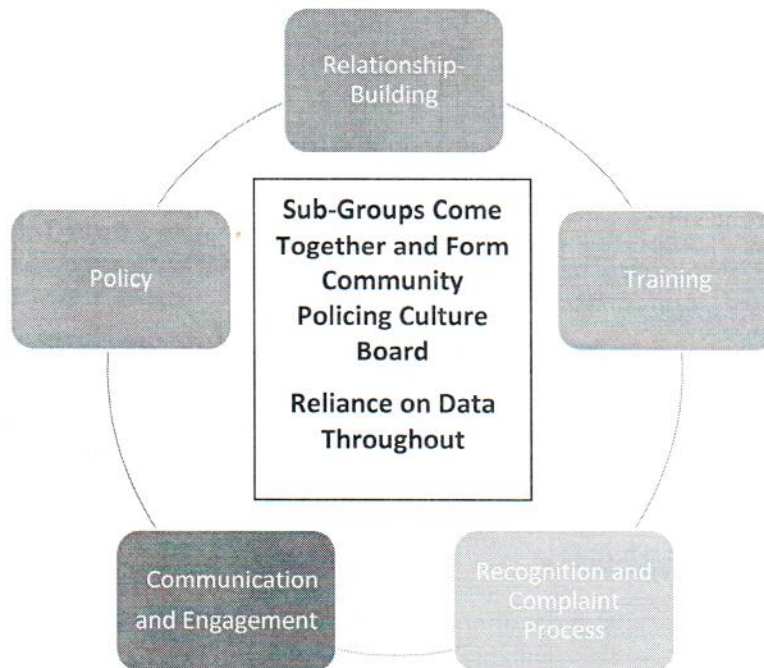
A Community Relations Board (CRB) is worthy of further consideration. If, after further study it is determined that a CRB is, indeed, appropriate and beneficial, such could then be created by the Town Council through the passage of an ordinance establishing the board. Additional efforts to define roles and responsibilities would follow.

2. Community Policing Culture Board (CPCB)

As an original idea proposed by the sub-group, we would like Town of Normal to please consider the creation of something less reactive and more holistic than the traditional CRB as the type of board to put into place that formalizes community policing as the approach of choice.

- A. Establish a CPCB. A graphic of what we have in mind for that structure appears on the next page.
- B. Rely on the CPCB as an ongoing, formal, and public structure for ensuring that the changes we seek become not just adopted in individual-community-member habits but *institutionalized* as our Radically Normal culture.
- C. Pilot this approach using current ad hoc group participants to start such recommended actions as: Listening sessions, police officer neighborhood meetings, CRB discussion, youth/police outreach meetings with community groups (i.e. YWCA, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, church youth groups).

Suggested Community Policing Culture Board (CPCB)



Some important notes about this type of board to consider:

- The primary purpose of the CPCB would be to focus on culture-change initiatives associated with the 2040 Vision Social Equity Core Value, with an emphasis on race and law enforcement through community partnership and engagement.
- Implementation of this structure requires additional input about how it could best function through listening sessions. Incremental and well planned public sessions are essential for establishing trust in the community and for demonstrating that listening is really occurring while maintaining the integrity of everyone involved.
- Further, we would recommend testing for a period of time before recommending it as a permanent Board within the Town of Normal.
- Eventually, we see this as a standing board with committees that will work in parallel on deeper dives with recommendations on topics listed above, which contribute to holistic community policing.
- One additional note: "Community policing" may not be the term we end up with if community members want to go beyond connotations associated with it today.

APPENDIX

Characteristics of a public process that we recommend:

- **Candor.** Direct conversations between community members and NPD stakeholders toward, “What will we do?”
- **Emotion.** We fully expect some of our interactions with one another to be emotionally difficult. Emphasize the value of honesty, as well as the restoration and healing that comes from sharing one another’s stories and viewpoints.
- **Active listening and learning.** Listen, learn, exchange. These are the suggested rules of engagement for small- and large-group conversations and events.
- **Pushing through pain and anger toward recommended solutions and decision-making.** In order to inform outcomes in which we all share a stake, it is important that we help one another work through our emotions, such as anger, pain, sense of injustice, etc. Grounding suggestions and decisions in constructive cooperation will be essential to take shared ownership of the outcomes for our community that we all want to see succeed.

More About Community Policing

A useful reference for learning about community policing is the Community Oriented Policing Services “Community Policing Defined” guide available through the U.S. Department of Justice:
<https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/vets-to-cops/e030917193-CP-Defined.pdf>

In that guide, the three key components to community policing are described as:

- **Community Partnership.** Collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police. Stakeholders identified include law enforcement, other government agencies, community members/groups, non-profits and service providers, as well as private businesses and media.
- **Organizational Transformation.** The alignment of organizational management, structure, personnel, and information systems to support community partnerships and proactive problem solving.
- **Problem solving.** The process of engaging in the proactive and systematic examination of identified problems to develop and evaluate effective responses. A model for problem solving is offered through the acronym SARA: Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment.

Additionally, through benchmarking information gathered by the YWCA, our sub-group learned about some of the defining features of community policing, which will likely be of equal interest to the Town Council, including:

- **Redefines who is considered an expert.** Recognizes and respects community members as experts in their own lives, on the needs of their own communities—and necessarily—as experts who have valuable input into how police should work with them.
- **Empowers community members to participate in decision-making.** Civilian community members are empowered to make changes to policing to better serve the needs of their community. This model willingly engages community members in the process of developing and evaluating departmental policies and procedures.
- **Transforms the role of police towards a more proactive, community-centered, solution-focused role.** Community policing proposes that resources are best used when law enforcement officers act as community liaisons who proactively address local issues and root causes of crime, build relationships, and work to improve community health and overall quality of life for all.

Suggested Data

Some of the data that we reviewed indicates that, although tied to our 2040 Vision big-picture effort, improvements to our police department and within the law-enforcement system is more than a proactive exercise. There is a clear need to improve based on the level of implicit bias that exists today at both policy and practice levels, as well as at the cultural level.

Data that our sub-group found compelling includes the percentage of stops among people of color, which is disproportionate with their overall percentage within our population. The disproportionate impact on non-white populations evident in today's law enforcement system has our attention.

We recommend that readers of this report also engage with available data to learn more, including the Stevenson Center Report, which was covered by WGLT in August.

<http://wgl.t.org/post/report-finds-widespread-racial-economic-disparities-bloomington-normal#stream/0>

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*.

Shapiro, Tomas. *Black Wealth, White Wealth*.

<http://www.calea.org/>

"Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: A Review of the Strengths and Weaknesses of Various Models," Joseph De Angelis, Richard Rosenthal, Brian Buchner. OJP Diagnostic Center.

Community Policing Defined, The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014.

<https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/vets-to-cops/e030917193-CP-Defined.pdf>

Duncan, Ryan, et al. Select Disparities in the Criminal Justice System in McLean County. 2017, *Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development*.

NPR's Radiolab "Shots Fired"—1st part (episode 2850): [Shots Fired: Part 1](#).

Madison Police Department website: <http://www.cityofmadison.com/police/>

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/police/community/>

PBS News Hour: <http://to.pbs.org/2sBQTZj>

"Prohibition of Bias Enforcement/Racial Profiling," Normal Police Department. January 2017.

"Proposed Solutions and Best Practices," YWCA. March 2017.

"Race & the Criminal Justice System," YWCA. March 2017.

"Racism in the U.S.," YWCA. March 2017.

"Recommendations for Reform: Restoring Trust Between the Chicago Police and the Communities They Serve," Police Accountability Task Force (Chicago). April 2016. <https://chicagopatf.org>

Kozol, Jonathan. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*.

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*.

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*.

This American Life. "School to Prison Pipeline"

"Traffic Stop Data Collection: 2016 Traffic Stop Overview," Town of Normal Police Department. February 27, 2017.

13th (film)

Valente, Judith. "Report Finds Widespread Racial, Economic Disparities In Bloomington-Normal." WGLT, 9 May 2017, wgl.org/post/report-finds-widespread-racial-economic-disparities-bloomington-normal.

YW Mission movies <http://www.ywcamclean.org/site/c.bsIMI3NHKfK4F/b.8085667/k.CA29/Events.htm>