MINNESOTA JUSTICE
RESEARCH CENTER

Community Engagement:

Shaping a Consent Decree in Minneapolis

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Table of Contents

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Executive Summary

For more than a half century, communities of color in Minneapolis have faced police brutality and discriminatory practices. Following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) conducted an in-depth investigation into the practices of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) and the City of Minneapolis (the City) and concluded what many Minneapolis community members have known and experienced for decades: the City and MPD engage in a "pattern or practice" of race discrimination. These findings led MDHR to launch the next phase of their work: the process of negotiating a consent decree, a court-enforceable agreement, with the City in an effort to enact meaningful change.

Project Overview

Learning from past efforts and experts across the country, MDHR immediately made clear that a consent decree would need to be **shaped by the needs and experiences of the community**, especially community members who are most impacted by race-based policing. During the summer of 2022, the Minnesota Justice Research Center (MNJRC) worked with MDHR to intentionally engage with community members in Minneapolis to collect critical input needed to design a consent decree.

We prioritized our outreach to people of color, especially Black and Indigenous community members, and those with direct criminal legal system experience. We also opened the opportunity up to the wider Minneapolis community; all residents are negatively affected by race-based policing.

MNJRC staff and volunteers conducted 15 community engagement sessions, with hundreds of Minneapolis residents, nearly half of whom were people of color and Indigenous community members. The sessions were mindfully designed and executed to leverage the collective wisdom in community. Data collection was detailed. Because of the timeline of this project, data analysis took two forms: at a high-level, MNJRC research staff processed insights following every session to connect community input in real-time with the team at MDHR to use in their ongoing consent decree negotiations. In addition, the research team scrutinized the data, categorized the input using codes, and explored the content of those categories.

Recommendations to Address Race-Based Policing

By listening to community, we identified these recommendations for the consent decree.

1) Community Wants MPD to Change its Practices to Shift Away from a Culture of Violence

- Community wants MPD to have clear protocols and limits to guide its practice.
- Community wants MPD to prioritize de-escalation.
- Community wants the City to be more creative and expansive with public safety approaches.

2) Community Wants MPD to Prioritize Reciprocal Relationships

Community Wants to Understand How the System of Policing Works by:
- Seeing what is happening within MPD
- Having educational opportunities to better understand the system of policing and how to transform public safety

Community Wants MPD to Better Understand Them by Officers:
- Knowing the history of policing and of Minneapolis communities
- Better understanding their circumstances
- Better understanding existing power dynamics
- Connecting with them in positive and productive ways outside of enforcing the law

3) Community Wants More and Better Accountability

- Community wants quality accountability systems
- Community wants a community-focused, skilled, and diverse monitoring team

At the time this report was written, MDHR and the City were deep in the process of negotiating the terms of the consent decree.

Throughout negotiations, MNJRC shared recommendations from community members with MDHR so that the court enforceable agreement would contain ideas directly from community members.

Introduction

On May 25, 2020, Black Minneapolis resident George Floyd was murdered by an officer in the Minneapolis Police Department, and demands to meaningfully change the policing profession reverberated across the world. So begins the vast majority of writing and research on policing since Mr. Floyd was murdered. But in Minneapolis, discriminatory policing didn't start or end with George Floyd.

For more than a half century, communities of color in Minneapolis have faced police brutality and discriminatory practices. Historian Dr. Michael Lansing explains how in the 1960s, Minneapolis Mayor Arthur Naftalin admitted to "tensions" between Black community members and the police. Yet Naftalin also claimed, "there is no serious problem of racial discrimination in the police department." In fact, he argued, "there is a tendency to indict our police department unfairly" (Minneapolis Morning Tribune, June 19, 1963 as cited in Lansing, 2021). Communities of color knew better. Black leaders even prophesized that someday "the City of Minneapolis will reap the consequences" of racist policing (Lansing, 2021).

Dr. Yohuru Williams (pictured above) shared a brief history of policing in Minneapolis at the community engagement sessions.

# Investigation into the City and the Minneapolis Police Department

Despite this history, or perhaps because of it, something about the murder of George Floyd set off powerful community calls for change. Among other agencies and entities pushing forward change, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) heard the calls loud and clear from community members and community leaders.

On June 1, 2020, MDHR launched a "10-year pattern or practice" investigation into the City of Minneapolis (the City) and the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). That is, MDHR conducted a 10-year look-back into the policies and practices of MPD and the City to explore evidence of patterns of discrimination.

In April, 2022, following their comprehensive investigation, MDHR released their detailed and rigorous findings to the public. Their findings concluded (with a mass of in-depth qualitative and statistically rigorous quantitative data) what many Minneapolis community members, especially Black community members, have known and experienced for decades: the City and MPD engage in a "pattern or practice" of race discrimination.

These practices are in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act, the state's civil rights law.

MDHR reported that without fundamental and organizational culture change, reforming MPD's policies, procedures, and trainings will be meaningless.
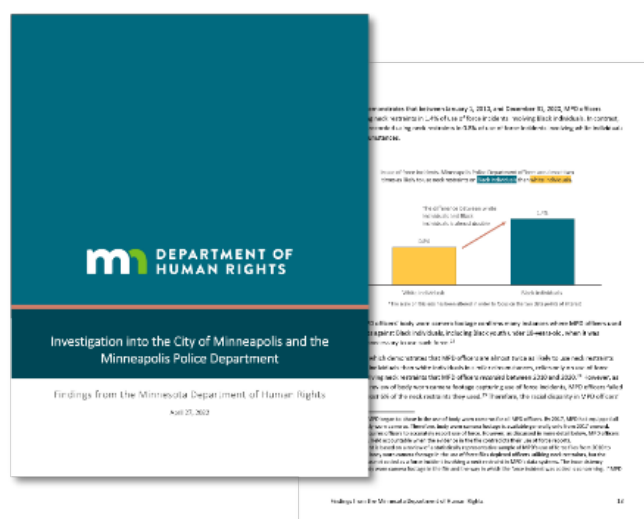
A Consent Decree

These findings led MDHR to launch the next phase of their work: the process of negotiating a consent decree with the City of Minneapolis to enact meaningful change. MDHR stressed the importance of community experience, especially of community members who are most impacted by race-based policing, in the consent decree phase of its work.

A consent decree is a court-enforceable settlement agreement with specific changes to be made by the party that enters into the decree. These changes must follow a clear timeline. To ensure sustained and coordinated work continues, a consent decree lives past election cycles.

Participants watched this video during the engagement sessions to learn about the findings and how a consent decree can make meaningful change.

Consent decrees can be powerful tools for change. Historically in the United States, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has entered into consent decrees with cities throughout the country (from Baltimore to Seattle) to shift police practice and policy. Their design is critical.

The Project

During the spring and summer of 2022, the Minnesota Justice Research Center worked with MDHR to intentionally engage with community members in Minneapolis to collect critical input needed to design a consent decree for the City of Minneapolis and MPD to enact real change.

> **Despite the history that told Minneapolis residents otherwise, community members showed up and expressed a remarkable sense of hope that a consent decree could be one powerful tool (of the many tools) needed for change.**

Overall, much of the input from community members centered around personal experiences, frustrations, and hope for change.

To shift policing culture, community members shared input on:

| Changes in practice and tools to de-center a culture of violence | Importance of reciprocal relationships | Need for more and better accountability |

In addition, the engagement sessions served in the moment as a space to highlight and potentially even foster a sense of hope and gratitude. The sessions were an opportunity for community members to wrestle with complex ideas and recognize the importance of a collective journey forward.

Project Overview

The Team

This project was launched by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) and led by the Minnesota Justice Research Center (MNJRC). MDHR and MNJRC teams worked in close partnership with each other following the release of the investigation findings and throughout the duration of the project. In addition, the MNJRC had a multidisciplinary team of folks supporting outreach and data collection efforts including other nonprofit organizations, coalitions, elected officials, and many dedicated community volunteers.

Minnesota Department of Human Rights

The [Minnesota Department of Human Rights](#) (MDHR) is the state's civil rights enforcement agency. Charged with enforcing the Minnesota Human Rights Act, one of the strongest civil rights laws in the country, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights envisions a world where everyone can lead lives full of dignity and joy, free from discrimination.

Minnesota Justice Research Center

The [Minnesota Justice Research Center](#) (MNJRC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to driving meaningful change to Minnesota's criminal legal system through rigorous and community-centered research, education, and policy development. The MNJRC centers our work around exploring values, like humane and fair treatment for all, safety, wellbeing, and trust, and provides our community and policymakers with information and tools needed to create a criminal legal system that truly delivers justice.

At the MNJRC, we aim to produce rigorous and balanced research that is rooted in the needs of the communities experiencing the problems we aim to understand and address. Too often, organizations and government agencies present ideas to community members and seek to bring them on board. We work *with* community members to conduct useful research steeped in the lived experiences of people. This approach was a critical component of this project as MDHR sought meaningful community input on race-based policing to be included in a consent decree.

Partners

In addition to working closely with MDHR staff, the team at the MNJRC partnered directly with several community-based partners and volunteers to broaden our reach and impact. We were deeply grateful for the partnership of Lucy Dougherty and Malaika Eban, staff at the Legal Rights Center (a community-driven nonprofit law firm) in their support with outreach and event planning. In addition, the MNJRC recruited around 20 volunteers with diverse backgrounds and expertise including graduate students, policy experts, and folks working at local non-profits, foundations, and corporations to support facilitation, data collection, and data analysis.

Timeline

June 1, 2020	June 1, 2020 – April 27, 2022	April 27, 2022	April 27, 2022	July - August 2022	Fall 2022
MDHR launches investigation	**Community experiences are core to the investigation**	**MDHR announces findings of racial discrimination**	**MDHR immediately meets with community**	**Community Engagement Sessions**	**Community Input in Consent Decree**
"Community leaders have been asking for structural changes for decades. They have fought for this, and it is essential that we acknowledge the work and commitment of those who have paved the path to make today's announcement possible." – Commissioner Lucero	MDHR: • Interviewed and reviewed statements from **2,200+ community members** • Conducted **15 listening sessions** with neighborhood groups • Met with **18 community organizations** • Participated in **Time of Reckoning**	"Race-based policing is unlawful and harms everyone, especially people of color and Indigenous community members – sometimes costing community members their lives. I look forward to the work ahead to improve public safety by reversing unlawful policing practices." – Commissioner Lucero	MDHR, in partnership with MNJRC, **immediately met with community leaders**, community members, and organizations. This included Black faith leaders, families who lost loved ones to police and their attorneys, and Black legacy organizations.	MNJRC holds Community Engagement Sessions: • 5 city-wide **events for the general public** • 10 strategic **events with individuals most directly affected** by race-based policing	MNJRC **immediately shares community input with MDHR** so it can be incorporated into consent decree negotiations with the City.

Research Questions

The overall aim of this project was to **connect with Minneapolis community members, especially those most directly affected by race-based policing, to gather their input to be incorporated into a consent decree designed to address race-based policing in Minneapolis**.

Additionally, we sought to create a space for participants to connect with the process and with each other in addition to sharing their input and insights.

As a research-driven organization, we framed our project around two main research questions:

1   What do Minneapolis community members want to see in a consent decree to address race-based policing?

2   What was the experience of sharing input in the community engagement session like for community members?

Using these questions as a frame to guide our engagement, we created opportunities for community members to both share and connect and collected data on both the content of the input community members shared and the experience of engaging in the process.

Methodology

To answer our research questions, we sought to prioritize gathering input from community members of color, especially Black and Indigenous community members.

In addition, we wanted to prioritize community members with direct criminal legal system experience (e.g., formerly incarcerated individuals, survivors/victims of crimes, and families who have lost loved ones to police violence).

Finally, we wanted to open the opportunity up to the wider Minneapolis community to ensure that many perspectives were included to help address race-based policing; all residents are negatively affected by race-based policing.

Each of these efforts listed below aligned directly with our project goals to create space for community input from a broad range of participants with a critical focus on Black and Indigenous community members.

Our Approach Focused On:

Outreach

Community Engagement

Data Collection and Analysis

Outreach

We employed a qualitative purposeful sampling strategy with a critical sampling approach (Creswell, 2013). Our research design targeted a local demographically representative sample, oversampling for race. In plain terms, we sought to connect with a wide population of Minneapolis residents that represent the city demographics, while also targeting our outreach to participants who are most impacted by race-based policing.

Therefore, we employed a two-pronged approach to recruitment, seeking to allow open public access to participation as well as creating explicit space for our critical participants to share their input. We sought to include geographic diversity in our sample, which is why we held five public sessions across Minneapolis: one north, one northeast, one central, one south, and one southwest, all in accessible[1] locations.

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[1] Our central session was located at Westminster Presbyterian Church in downtown Minneapolis, a large building with several entrances. The session took place in the evening, after all of the street entrances were locked, and thus we had to monitor several doors but heard from participants that the session was difficult to access.

We met community members where they are.

Map of In-person Community Sessions

Session 1*
Session 2
Session 3*
Session 4*
Session 5
Session 6
Session 7*
Session 8
Session 9
Session 10
Session 11*

* Sessions advertised and open to the public
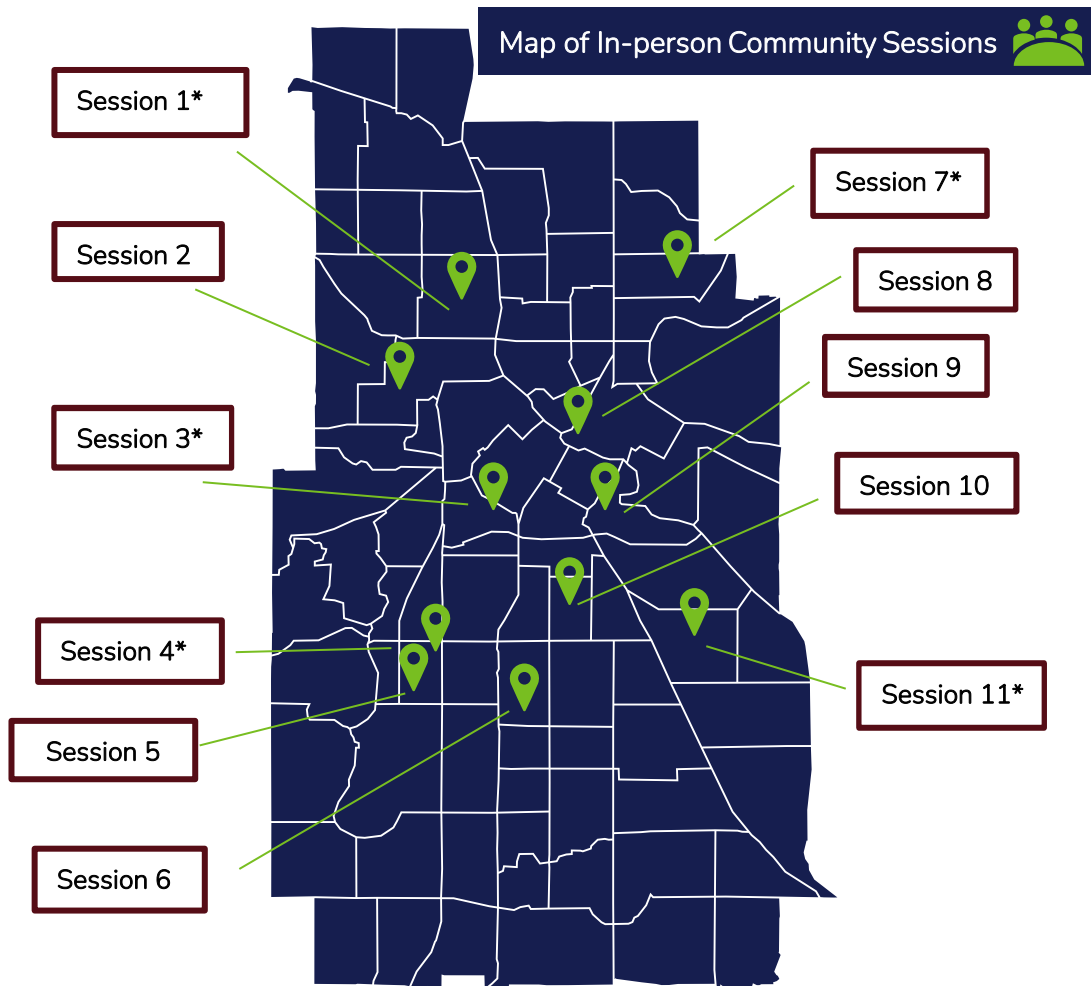
List of All Community Sessions	
Session	**Location**
1.	North side event at North Regional Library
2.	Minneapolis Urban League
3.	City-wide event at Westminster Presbyterian Church
4.	Southwest event at Bryant Square Park
5.	First Universalist Church
6.	Sabathani Community Center
7.	Northeast event at Windom NE Rec Center
8.	Youth event at Minneapolis Event Center
9.	Brian Coyle Neighborhood Center
10.	Little Earth of United Tribes
11.	South event at Longfellow Park Recreation Center
12.	Virtual with MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault
13.	Virtual with Twin Cities Diversity in Practice
14.	Virtual with Twin Cities Diversity in Practice (Pt. 2)
15.	Virtual with Minneapolis Quakers

The nature of our community engagement sessions relied on a foundation of trust from which we could move toward useful feedback.

To engage Black and Indigenous residents, we partnered directly with several organizations across the city who serve these populations. In addition, we sought to connect with individuals with direct experience with the criminal legal system. This critical participant recruitment strategy relied on relationships with community members and community organizations.

Using our critical sampling approach, we ensured that:

1) Input came from communities most impacted by race-based policing in Minneapolis.

2) We met community members "where they are," in spaces created by leaders and organizations where individuals felt safe sharing input and being both vulnerable and creative in the process.

In ethnographic research and community engagement work, community leaders and other interested parties play an important "gate keeping" role ([Liamputtong, 2011](#)).

Mapping Our Outreach

Specifically, our outreach began with a group of formerly incarcerated individuals, organized by the Re-enfranchisement Coalition. At the same time, we connected with Minneapolis representatives from the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA).

The team at MDHR worked directly with family members of those impacted by police violence. Our hope was to connect with system-impacted individuals beyond the binaries of victim and offender but instead any individual who may have caused harm and/or been harmed within the criminal legal system in Minneapolis (and thus had direct and sometimes frequent interactions with the Minneapolis Police Department).

In addition to our outreach with those who are system-impacted, we recruited participants from Black and Indigenous communities more broadly. For example, we partnered with community leaders at Little Earth of United Tribes.

We also held sessions with several Black legacy organizations including the NAACP, the Urban League, the African American Leadership Forum, and others, and young people, lawyers and legal advocates for racial justice, members of the Minneapolis East African community, and more.

For a full list of community organizations who hosted a community listening session, see below and for descriptions of those organizations, see Appendix A.

African American Leadership Forum Twin Cities
@AALFTwinCities

Thank you to all who attended last night's engagement session! Discussions focused on centering the voices of Black Minneapolis residents in the shaping of a consent decree in response to MPD being found culpable of racial discrimination in their policing.

1:52 PM · Jul 27, 2022 · Twitter Web App

Community Partners

The Re-Enfranchisement Coalition

Little Earth of United Tribes

The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA)

Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) - Twin Cities

East African Community at the Brian Coyle Center

Twin Cities Diversity in Practice - Wanton Injustice Legal Detail (TCDIP-WILD) - General and BIPOC members (2 Sessions)

Black Legacy Organizations:

- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- The Urban League (UL)
- The African American Leadership Forum (AALF)
- The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH)
- (Northside Residents Redevelopment Council) NRRC

Youth Activists from Youthprise and The Link

Minneapolis Quakers

Taken together, our outreach strategy opened the opportunity for input to all Minneapolis community members while dedicating most of our efforts to ensure participation from those most directly affected by race-based policing in Minneapolis.

Participant Population

Using our outreach strategy, we connected with hundreds of Minneapolis residents. Community members brought a diversity of life experiences and backgrounds to the conversation. During the sessions, residents signed in and self-identified with their demographic information.

Highlights:

- We achieved an overrepresentation of people of color and Indigenous community members based on the population demographics of Minneapolis.[2]

- 43% of the community members were people of color or Indigenous. Of those, 74% were Black[3]

- 47% were white (and 10% of participants did not identify).

- Most (83%) participants were Minneapolis residents, and the rest had a clear connection to the city.[4]

- Residents as young as 12 and as old as 78 engaged in the sessions.

- Approximately half (49%) participants who joined open public sessions and half (51%) participants who joined strategic organization-led sessions.

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[2] U.S. Census data reports that 63% of Minneapolis residents identify as white.

[3] When collecting race data from participants, we offered the categories of Black/African American/ADOS and African/African Immigrant. In addition to these categories, community members self-described their race using abbreviations (e.g., "Blk" or "Af. Am.") and other terms (e.g., "Middle Eastern"). To the best of our ability, we combined these identities for the purpose of analysis and use the label "Black" to capture the variation.

[4] When participants selected "Non-resident," we inquired about their connection to Minneapolis. The majority of non-residents work in Minneapolis. Others noted family members, physical proximity (e.g., living in a first-ring suburb or St. Paul), or past residency as connections to the city.

Community Engagement Sessions

"Conversations are enthusiastic as people eat, catch up, and talk about everything from sports, relationships, work, past memories, [and those] who couldn't make it..."

Dialogue surrounding policing is often polarizing, perpetuating narratives that can create distance between communities. In each community engagement session, community members gathered around tables chatting, hungry and eager to start, unsure about what this space would provide. Name tags, colored-markers, one-pagers, post-its, and flip chart paper lined tables spread out in large spaces, across our city.

Using our outreach strategy detailed above, we conducted a total of 15 community engagement sessions in July of 2022 (one session was held in early August of 2022. These community engagement sessions were structured utilizing group theory and group stage process principles, along with a framework informed by facilitation best practice discourse (Tuckman, 1965; Schuman, 2012). In plain terms, we used research on how to design and execute group work. All engagement sessions had a distinctive, "beginning," "middle," and "end" marked with specific goals and transitions allowing for community members to build rapport quickly, norm around collective goals, and have enough context to provide relevant feedback to session prompts.

Structure of the Community Engagement Sessions

Beginning

In the beginning, community members:

- Shared a meal
- Briefly learned about the history of policing in Minneapolis and MNJRC
- Learned about the consent decree process

Middle

In the middle, community members:

- Got an overview of the activity
- Set group norms
- Engaged in small group, facilitated conversations for about an hour

End

At the end, community members:

- Came back as a large group to debrief and share key themes
- Learned about next steps and other opportunities

See [Appendix B](#) for a more detailed description of the session structure.

Facilitation Strategy

To guide the facilitation strategy described above, the team at the MNJRC designed and developed a toolkit to support volunteers and other individuals and groups in hosting sessions with a consistent framework to collect community input. The toolkit established 1) goals for engagement, 2) an agenda and overview of the session, 3) prep work to guide both large and small group facilitators, 4) planning checklists, 5) a framework for group work, and much more. The contents of the toolkit were evidence-based and grounded in group work theory. Contact MNJRC for a copy of the toolkit.
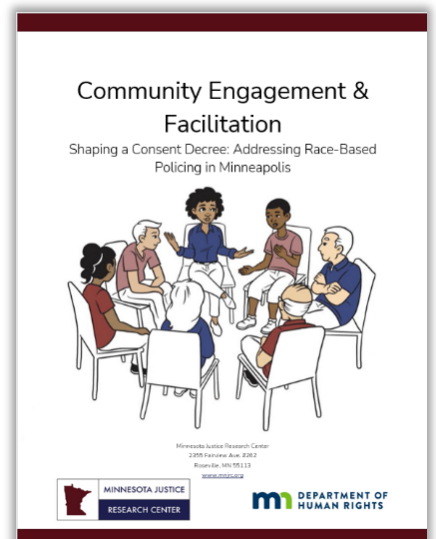
While the facilitation strategy and session framework were consistent in each engagement session, the sessions differed in location, size of group, participant demographic make-up, and energy. A session in one part of the city had all of the makings of a family reunion, participants stopping mid-sentence to get up and hug a newly arrived participant - a familiar face, a holder of space and time. Other sessions carried a sense of quiet curiosity, community members gathered around tables, slowly at first wondering, *Do I know anyone at this table?* Eyes were busy, scanning the room while doodling with research materials. Yet in each session, plates overflowed with food and the rooms echoed with laughter, passion, frustration, sadness, and ultimately hope.

Data Collection

Data collection during the community engagement sessions was made possible by a team of trained staff and volunteers with various backgrounds and topical expertise in order to staff each community engagement session while being mindful of racial demographics, cultural norms, and language.

Each volunteer data collector attended a training session in which the MNJRC research team described the project background, established shared meaning and context, reviewed best practices in taking field notes ([Kirner and Mills, 2019](#)), and engaged in a positionality exercise ([de Vries, 2015](#) and [Singh & Hays, 2011](#)). Each data collector had access to a "Data Collection Guide" created by the research staff at the MNJRC to support their efforts for each session.

During each session, MNJRC staff and volunteers collected attendance and demographic data through a sign-in form. When the session began, one or two data collectors circulated among the small groups and typed up detailed field notes, focusing on capturing descriptions (the "who, what, when" that was audible and visible and adding interpretations (feelings and emotions, both personal and perceived, reactions in the moment, etc.) of the conversations and input.

Small group facilitators and data collectors were trained to collect *everything*. That is, there was no litmus for good or bad, plausible or impossible ideas. Sessions were designed to leverage the collective wisdom that exists within community and in the end, the MNJRC team left sessions carrying stacks of flip chart paper, piles of post-it notes, and word documents filled with session details.

The data collectors then digitized all written manipulatives, chart paper, post-in notes, note cards, etc., to capture what stood out to facilitators while engaging in small group conversations. Finally, data collectors engaged in a reflection activity following the session in which they added any details about the overall experience and session context. The full corpus of data, around 300 pages of notes, was combined and cleaned for analysis following the completion of all 15 sessions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis took two forms: one high-level and iterative and the other in-depth and detailed. At a high-level, MNJRC research staff summarized and processed insights following every session to connect community input in real-time with the team at MDHR to use in their ongoing consent decree negotiations. In addition, in-depth and detailed data analysis commenced once data was collected from all 15 sessions.

MNJRC research staff used a qualitative ethnographic approach to process and analyze the data, combining inductive and deductive codebook development, expansive and triangulated coding and jottings, and thematic analysis to identify unique input alongside patterns. Put

plainly, the research team scrutinized the data, categorized the input using codes, and explored the content of those categories. All data was blind-coded by two or more coders to avoid bias. For more detail on the codebook development, see Appendix C.

Our group of six coders spent three weeks and around 10-15 hours each reading and re-reading the data and coding community input. The research team was moved by the process, expressing a "roller coaster of emotions" with enjoyment and curiosity alongside sadness and anger reading through feedback and experiences of community members. The technical process was challenging, but the process of coding large chunks of data, in an overlapping fashion, fostered increased consistency and confidence - a "process of flow" - in identifying themes and patterns. Overall, through the process of coding, our research team developed deeper empathy for community members experiencing race-based policing and a sense of hope in the process and possibility for change.

Once all the data was coded, the MNJRC research staff examined each coded category to identify patterns across the sessions and unique themes. We present the findings below.

Findings

Data analysis revealed innovative, creative, and surprising input alongside expected and common ideas from community members.

We frame our findings in two parts:

- Recommendations: What Community Wants in a Consent Decree
- Session Experience

Recall that the overall aim of this project was to *connect with Minneapolis community members, especially those most directly affected by race-based policing, to gather input to be incorporated into a consent decree designed to address race-based policing in Minneapolis.*

The first section answers our first research question: *What do Minneapolis community members want to see in a consent decree to address race-based policing?*

Here we highlight three main recommendations:

- Community wants MPD to change its practices to shift away from a culture of violence
- The importance of prioritizing reciprocal relationships
- The need for more and better accountability

In each section, we describe examples of community ideas.

The second section addresses our second research question: *What was the experience of sharing in the engagement sessions like for community members?*

Here we demonstrate that the process of community engagement resulted in powerful outcomes beyond ideas to shape a consent decree.

Overview: Recommendations for What Community Wants in a Consent Decree

In this section, we explore the community input and insights that emerged from the data collected during the community engagement sessions. Our goal here is to share what we heard from community members with fidelity. We recognize that some of these ideas are not new and that some may be logistically impossible to include in a consent decree. However, we show that all the input we collected points to a broader finding: **that community members *must* be included in a meaningful way in the process of change at all levels.**

Overall, much of the input from community members centered around personal experiences, frustrations, and hope for change. We break the recommendations down into three main themes based on our analysis, and throughout we connect all three themes to the deep desire for a shift in policing culture.

Recommendation 1: Community Wants MPD to Change its Practices to Shift Away from a Culture of Violence

"Do they have actual non-violent de-escalation practices?"

1.1 Community Wants MPD to Have Clear Protocols and Limits to Guide Its Practice

1.2 Community Wants the MPD to Prioritize De-Escalation

1.3 Community Wants the City to be More Creative and Expansive with Public Safety Approaches

Recommendation 1: Community Wants MPD to Change its Practices to Shift Away from a Culture of Violence

In analyzing the data collected from community members, one category of input stood out as both most frequently discussed and co-occurring (that is to say, very often connected to other discrete ideas): the need to change tools and practices to de-center a culture of violence.

Small group facilitators guided community members to think about and give input on culture change and the majority of conversations centered around the current practices of MPD and highlighting pathways forward through changes in practice.

> **"Thinking about changing culture feels so big and unwieldy but starting with practice feels do-able. They can change the way they do things. Not sure about hearts and minds… but we'll see."**

In order to shift practice to de-center violence, community members suggested that a consent decree include aspects related to protocols and limits in police practice, prioritizing de-escalation, and more creative and expansive approaches to public safety.

1.1 Community Wants MPD to Have Clear Protocols and Limits to Guide Its Practice

The subjective experience, perception, and discernment of individual officers often drives decision-making when interacting with community members. In analyzing community input on use of practices and tools to de-center violence in MPD culture, the concept of creating clearer limits or delineating thresholds that define an officer's response occurred across engagement sessions. Research shows, and community reflected, that even where protocols for officer practice exist, they rely heavily on "reason" and thus officers filter interactions with community members through their own sense of what is appropriate ([Remington Cunningham & Robertson, 2022](#)).

Yet community members expressed a belief that MPD could shift their perceptions and improve their discernment through the use of more detailed protocols regarding issuing citations and engagement methods especially related to use of force, report writing, and information sharing.

As an example, the power of establishing and overseeing more detailed protocols with clear limits around the use of force echoed across engagement sessions. Most consistently, community members expressed sentiments about the relevance of force as an important tool in only very specific, and most likely a limited number, of circumstances. Drawing on personal experiences, community members clearly expressed the belief that MPD officers use force far more frequently than necessary and in situations where danger is not imminent. Community members identified a need for a consent decree to add clearer and more restrictive limits on when and how force might be used.

> Community members identified a need for a consent decree to add clearer and more restrictive limits on when and how force might be used.

"Force is so excessive and too often for someone just being disrespectful."

Relatedly, many participants discussed ideas for how a consent decree might serve to ban particular practices. For example, some community members expressed hope that certain compliance maneuvers and chokeholds could be fully banned in a consent decree.[5] Others suggested chemical irritants be banned entirely. Some community members expressed a desire to reduce traffic stops, others to get rid of them completely. Others focused on banning certain types of training including "military-style" or "warrior" training.

> Some community members expressed hope that chokeholds could be fully banned in a consent decree.

In addition, community expressed a need for clarity and consistency around what gets reported, to whom, and when. For example, community members gave input on how "use of force against minors should also be an immediate investigation" suggesting that different populations might require different approaches and different kinds of reporting after the fact. In addition, community members hoped a consent decree might include reporting requirements (with consequences and follow-up) for even low-level uses of force to explore patterns across officers.

In relation to information sharing, community members across sessions highlighted what they viewed as an apparent lack of clear protocols around what types of incidents required incident report writing and supervisory follow-up.

"Steps need to be standardized to get permission for all things policing, from when to use covert social media surveillance to when to use a taser."

In addition, community members outlined the necessity of a clear and "written objective" when officers respond to or engage with community members accompanied by a supervision process with a paper trail containing supervisory review and approvals.

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[5] On June 5, 2020, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights requested a temporary court order from Hennepin County District Court to immediately implement public safety changes including the implementation of a complete ban, without exception, on the use of chokeholds and neck restraints (MDHR, 2022).

1.2 Community Wants the MPD to Prioritize De-escalation

> Community member participants across sessions emphasized consistently the importance of de-centering violence in MPD culture.

Community members hoped a consent decree could create expectations and policies that would require MPD officers to shift their practices and use better tools to prioritize de-escalation. Community member participants across sessions emphasized consistently the importance of de-centering violence in MPD culture through developing professional pride in the ability to de-escalate crises. Participants described how relationships between community members and officers are characterized by deeply unequal power dynamics which serve to reinforce extractive interactions between officers and residents, creating fear. A way to address this may be to use that power as de-escalators rather than enforcers.

"Maybe the end goal shouldn't be compliance, it should be safety."

Community members shared their hope that a consent decree would mandate more and better de-escalation training.

"Why not have a guardianship mentality… instead of [a] warrior [mentality]?" one participant wondered. Community members felt that training might be a way to change practice to improve de-escalation practices.

In addition, community members shared their hope that a consent decree would recognize the complexity of de-escalation approaches. "There are so many different methods," one participant noted, "and really officers need to know, you're a human just like I'm a human… don't be this intimidating force that walks me into more trouble." Many participants shared stories about personal experiences or witnessing officers escalating situations and officers acting like "they are in some kind of war."

In sum, community members expressed the hope that more and better de-escalation approaches would be included in a consent decree.

> "…officers need to know, you're a human just like I'm a human… don't be this intimidating force that walks me into more trouble."

1.3 Community Wants the City to be More Creative and Expansive with Public Safety Approaches

Community members across sessions voiced concerns about the wide scope of work of police officers. These concerns led to input about the importance of a consent decree requiring the City and MPD to be more creative and expansive in addressing issues of public safety.

Specifically, community members suggested included more differentiation in roles for officers both within the department (e.g., police who do traffic calls versus domestic calls) and outside of MPD through alternative professionals (e.g., mental health professionals). Community members also suggested a consent decree might require a differentiation of tools to be used by police officers based on their role and the specific context to which they respond.

For example, community members highlighted how in their experience, police officers often respond to an incident with the same set of options for intervention, rather than attempting to meet the individual needs of the community or resolve incidents with a more specific set of tools.

"Traffic stops for minor infractions should not require lethal tools—either disarm traffic police or have an automated system send out notification of a citation or, fix-it reminders."

Along this line, many community members articulated a desire for traffic stops to be more focused on wellness checks and community engagement instead of just compliance, especially for stops involving equipment violations. Role differentiation was often connected to a hope for more innovative approaches or better use of technology. One community member wondered if officers could take an approach like, "How can I help? Here's a coupon to go to the gas station and get your taillight fixed. The idea is that when you have something wrong with your car instead of the officer giving you a ticket you get some sort of coupon or direction on how to get your car fixed." While we are aware that efforts like this exist in Minnesota and across the country - see for example the Light's On! program – community members are not aware of or feeling the impact of the City's Light's On! Program and suggested MPD make a shift in approach.

> Community members are not aware of or feeling the impact of the City's Light's On! Program and suggested MPD make a shift in approach.

Other community members hoped the consent decree could require the MPD to explore technology or other alternatives to enforce traffic laws while concentrating police roles on more acute community needs.

"We need to be creative about how we monitor traffic and this approach isn't working. People are afraid."

Participants shared input on how equipping officers with different tools based on their different role might allow MPD to de-center violence in their culture by compelling officers to depend on non-lethal tools to engage the community.

"Community members should be able to rely on police to be professional in heated moments and to be a place where we can get help, not get hurt."

"A gun will change you," noted another participant. "I had a gun pulled out on me from a cop when I was in my car… and then [they] tell me I didn't stop fully at the stop sign." Community members made connections between targeted tools related to officer role and community need.

In addition to using different tools and clearly creating different roles within the department, community members shared input on how a consent decree might establish clear instances where police need *not* respond and triage responses with alternative professionals. Community members described seeking help from MPD for myriad reasons and participants noted that often police officers are expected to be experts in subjects that they seem to have minimal experience or training.

One participant highlighted this sentiment, noting, "There are certain things that the police should not be doing. We can get the police out of doing all calls for help. Community groups can take the place of some actions."

Community members highlighted the complexity of needs related to housing inadequacy, coping behaviors that pose public health risks, and acute mental health needs that create scenarios requiring the attention of trained mental health professionals. Participants hoped a consent decree might outline how responses to mental health crises, welfare checks, and crimes of livability or of nuisance, might be better addressed by social workers, community advocates or crisis response teams outside of law enforcement.

> "Police can't be trained to handle every situation that arises...police need to be partnered with social workers or community advocates that know the people and understand the context of what life is like in the neighborhood. Some of them [officers] may call this place hell, I call it home."

There was disagreement around whether and how these outside professionals should partner with law enforcement. Some participants wondered whether engaging alternative professionals in communities in *collaboration* with officers may also help by expose officers to professionals who conceptualize interactions with the community as problem-solving opportunities, resulting in a shift in police culture from a focus on control to a focus on addressing problems.

> "[How can we] create that culture where alternative problem solving is a point of pride?"

Finally, ideas around the power of shifting practice are often connected to training. Many participants hoped a consent decree might mandate more and ongoing training for officers. Others felt like the trainings themselves needed to be overhauled and focused on non-violent responses. Participants thought a consent decree could prioritize third parties or organizations with expertise in non-violence as partners or leaders in training.

> Many participants hoped a consent decree might mandate more and ongoing training for officers.

Taken together, community members often turned to training as the pathway forward. Through training, officers might change their practice and tool-use resulting in shifts in culture to one less focused on violence.

Recommendation 2: Community Wants MPD to Prioritize Reciprocal Relationships

"We just want to understand and be understood."

2.1 Community Wants to Understand How the System of Policing Works

Community Wants:

- To understand what's happening in MPD.
- More educational opportunities to better understand the system of policing and how to transform public safety

2.2 Community Wants MPD to Better Understand Them

Community Wants Officers To:

- Know the history of policing and Minneapolis communities.
- Better understand their circumstances
- Better understand existing power dynamics.
- Connect with them in positive and productive ways outside of enforcing the law.

Recommendation 2: Community Wants MPD to Prioritize Reciprocal Relationships

In addition to highlighting the need to change tools and practices to de-center a culture of violence, community members expressed a desire for a consent decree to create the structures necessary for greater understanding between communities and officers. The importance of reciprocal relationships and a connection between community members and police officers characterized a vast majority of the conversations and insights shared in our engagement sessions.

"People are always scared of what they don't know," one participant explained. This fear exists on both sides: community members are afraid of officers as they don't fully understand their job and know who they are, and community members experience officers being afraid of them when they don't know and understand the trauma, hardships, joy, cultural practices, and lives of the community members they serve.

2.1 Community Wants to Understand How the System of Policing Works

On one hand, community members expressed a desire to better understand police and policing. Specifically, many community members noted a need for a consent decree to require increased transparency - how officer behavior and practice should be accessible to the public and clear. As one participant declared, "Sunshine heals wounds."

In addition to better "seeing" what is happening with police and policing, a few community members also expressed a desire to better understand, that is to say, comprehend and appreciate, the role of police officers. Our research team observed a lack of understanding and topical knowledge among many community members about what officers do and what policies and practices already exist in MPD. In building community trust, a consent decree might address this specifically.

> Many community members noted a need for a consent decree to require increased transparency - how officer behavior and practice should be accessible to the public and clear.

Finally, and directly connected to the importance of transparency, community members expressed a need for a consent decree to require increased oversight - the actual process of accountability from a third party outside of the MPD and the City. Community wants to see, understand, and oversee police.

Community wants to see what is happening within MPD

Within the topic of transparency, community members shared input around the importance of publicly available records, especially race data connected to police practice (e.g., use of force, traffic stops, etc.), discipline data when officers engage in misconduct, training practices and data, and case outcomes where appropriate.

> Community members repeatedly and explicitly stated a simple yet beseeching request: MPD must tell the truth.

In one specific example around a desire for publicly available data and reporting, several community members discussed the need for better transparency around coaching decisions.

To community members, the use of coaching as a discipline tool feels opaque and, in many cases, insignificant. Some requested the elimination of coaching entirely. Others wondered what coaching actually looks like. Ultimately, community wanted to understand the effectiveness of coaching as a tool. Community members believe that a consent decree could limit when coaching is used, provide transparency around what it actually looks like and the outcomes of coaching when it is used.

Community members also discussed a desire for "the truth" and many referenced seeing body camera footage to better understand the context around police-community interactions. At the root of these insights, community members expressed a hope that they could get a truthful understanding of what police officers do. In fact, community members repeatedly and explicitly stated a simple yet beseeching request: MPD must tell the truth.

Community wants educational opportunities to better understand the system of policing and how to transform public safety

In addition to visibility of data and process, community members expressed a desire to better understand police and policing.

"Community needs education on how the system [of policing] works!"

We also observed these gaps in topical understanding on the community side more broadly in examining some of the content of the feedback. While some input from the community was aspirational and framed as such, other ideas did not seem necessarily feasible or even desired by the majority of community members.

> Community members expressed a desire to better understand the barriers to enacting changes in policing.

Connected to this, community members expressed a desire to better understand the barriers to enacting changes in policing (e.g., state laws) and where the change can occur (MPD policy changes vs. changes required by state law). For example, the majority of the sessions had at least one participant, and sometimes many, expressed a hope that a consent decree might include requirements that would in fact not be possible without a change in state law. For instance, requirements that officers live in Minneapolis (a "residency requirement") and requiring officers to carry personal liability insurance are changes that would not be possible without a change in state law and these were suggestions we heard frequently. Furthermore, community members requested changes that may conflict with the police union's collective bargaining agreement and can only occur if that agreement changes, not as part of a consent decree.

Even if these specific changes would not be possible without changes to state law or to the union collective bargaining agreement, the values behind the changes – relationships, commitment to seeing the humanity in people, better accountability – are important values to carry forward and find ways to incorporate into a consent decree. Ultimately, community members expressed a desire for increased educational opportunities about the role of police and policing.

"I would love to see an embedded and ongoing training that educates the community about the police department and for the police department on the community."

2.2 Community Wants MPD to Better Understand Them

Community members noted a need for police to have a better understanding of community. This perspective was reflected in many of the sub-categories of feedback we identified. Largely, community members want to be seen as human. One participant noted, exasperated, "[I'm] at a loss for how you impose or measure a policy that simply asks officers to treat people the same, with respect."

> Community members want to be seen as human.

First, community members shared ideas related to how a consent decree should require training and education about the history of policing broadly and the historical context of policing and race in Minneapolis. In addition, participants implored that a consent decree include training or educational processes that increase officers' awareness of "community contexts," namely, the ability to better know, understand, and meet the needs of the community.

They also discussed the importance of power, both within the department (i.e., officer rank) and between police and community members, reflecting on how abuses of power quash any possibility of meaningful relationship development. And finally, participants explicitly suggested ideas around how a consent decree might require officers to actively engage with community members alongside their normal duties.

Community wants police to know the history of policing and of Minneapolis communities

In discussing the importance of an understanding of history, community members hoped a consent decree could require officers to demonstrate knowledge of the history of policing as an institution in the United States, the history of policing in Minneapolis, and the history of the neighborhoods and city where they work. One participant explained, "I asked my uncle (who is a police officer) if they told him if they taught him the history of policing in slavery. I think that the history cannot be divorced from the institution and, if you knew it, it could help." Participants discussed the connection to a history as a foundation for reciprocal relationship development.

Community wants officers to better understand their circumstances

The contexts of communities and individuals are vast and varied. Officers are often engaging with community members in high-stress encounters and community members consistently suggested a need for a better understanding and increased capacities on the part of officers to manage the contextual factors of an encounter.

> Community members expressed a desire for a consent decree to require officers to have more and better education and training.

For example, community members expressed a desire for a consent decree to require officers to have more and better education and training on race relations, bias, mental health, PTSD, and working with specific populations. They shared ideas around the importance of multidisciplinary teams, training on decision-making, or inter-group dialogue. One participant suggested a specific set of trainings, the "ABLE/EPIC[6] bystander intervention training."

In addition to sharing input about how to improve officer understanding of community contexts, participants touched on the importance of a consent decree specifying who is doing the training and in particular, involving community members directly in the process.

> "We need to incorporate community sessions, community members, community trainers into the trainings!"

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[6] [Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement "ABLE" training](#) / [Ethical Policing is Courageous "EPIC" training](#)

Community wants officers to better understand existing power dynamics

The role and importance of power dynamics between police officers and community members was both explicitly and implicitly addressed in every engagement session. As one person noted, "The police department remains to be the most powerful and untouchable entity."

Some participants recommended a direct reexamination of the power differential between officers and community members. By beginning to acknowledge this power imbalance, officers may be better equipped to consider how their language and physical behavior feels to community members.

> The role and importance of power dynamics between police officers and community members was both explicitly and implicitly addressed in every engagement session.

One participant noted that, if "officers see their job as all about using their power to control rather than serving to keep people safe, racist policing will continue," while another said, "It's not about power, it's not about the number of people you've arrested, it's not about having a rank or title or large salary… it all needs to be about humanity."

In direct response to the investigation findings around "instant and unquestioned compliance" (MDHR, 2022, p. 40), a few community members suggested that a consent decree should require officer trainings to also focus on how to challenge a fellow officer with more power, noting the importance of power differentials among rank.

> Community members expressed a desire for the consent decree to not be a race-neutral document and require the collection of and discussion of race data.

A few community members connected conversations about power directly to race, expressing a desire for the consent decree to not be a race-neutral document and require the collection of and discussion of race data. Critically, the conversations at each table did not shy away from the topic of race, even in the sessions where a mix of community members of color and white community members sat together at small tables.

The sessions opened with a context setting about the history of race-based policing in Minneapolis, and many participants noted that grounding helped open the space to discuss and share what it feels like to be on the receiving end of "a deep-seeded, historic fear of Black people" or wonder "why we see evidence every day of white men doing murderous things without any harm being done to them, yet we see Black men and women being shot down. We need to have one standard for everyone: to bring them in alive." One participant, asking about representation on the MPD force asked, "Where are the Native officers?" Community members discussed the historical and current impacts of white supremacy on officers and police culture. The "us vs. them" culture is complex, as a few participants noted, it's not just police vs. community but pitting people of different racial groups against each other when they are treated differently. Race and power impact relationships.

Community wants officers to connect with them in positive and productive ways outside of enforcing the law

Visibility was important to community members because, as one participant noted, when you do "community-based policing, the same people can walk the same beat… [they] see each other as people and are most invested in community. Community-based internships as part of the job." Some participants believed all police officers should be unarmed. Others demanded a shift in culture so officers would be more "community-minded." Currently, many community members described a notable lack of positive officer visibility in community.

> **"When we invite the police, they either don't come or they sit in the corner outside in their car."**

Communities and police departments are removed from the experiences of one another and given the professional role of officers, community members emphasized the importance of police taking the lead in building relationships.

In nearly every session, community members expressed a desire for a residency requirement for officers, that is, a requirement that some portion of officers live in the City of Minneapolis where they patrol. As mentioned above, this is one of a handful of suggestions that is important to include and understand - that most community members want officers to be a physical part of their community - but that actually cannot be implemented through a consent decree as residency requirements are written into state statute.

> Most community members want officers to be a physical part of their community.

Typically, as with practices and tools, community members focused on training as the method to address the above areas for improvement in order to develop stronger community connections and increase understanding. In short, community wants police to consider history, contexts, power, and visibility to better understand them. Taken together, community members continued to turn back to the importance of reciprocal relationships to develop a level of trust and understanding necessary to shift culture. Throughout the sessions, participants continually expressed a desire to understand and be understood.

Recommendation 3: Community Wants More and Better Accountability

3.1 Community Wants Quality Accountability Systems

3.2 Community Wants a Community-Focused, Skilled, and Diverse Monitoring Team
- Characteristics of the Monitoring Team
- Skillset and Role

Recommendation 3: Community Wants More and Better Accountability

Third and finally, a significant portion of the input from the community engagement sessions fell into the theme of accountability. As described above, several of the other findings overlap with the broad concept of accountability. For example, to build better relationships, community members described the need for transparency of practice and oversight of process - both components of accountability. Furthermore, community members described ideas about how to shift current tools and practices in policing, many of which were specific proactive or reactive accountability practices (e.g., ideas around body camera use). However, in addition to the role that accountability plays in practice and relationship building, community members shared other ideas related to the importance of accountability. Specifically, we present findings related to evaluation and the consent decree monitoring team.

3.1 Community Wants Quality Accountability Systems

Within the category of accountability, community members stressed the importance of independent accountability systems, public data, holding supervisors accountable, and positive rewards or incentives.

Many participants gave input around the need for true independent, "outside" or "third party" review of police training, policy, and practice. Some residents thought localizing the oversight at the ward-level may be helpful.

> Many participants also gave input around the need for true "outside" or "third party" review of police training, policy, and practice.

While some residents mentioned reviving and re-energizing oversight bodies like the Police Conduct Oversight Commission (PCOC), others hoped for more of an "independent civilian oversight [entity] with actual teeth and power."

According to the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), independence is "one of the most important and defining concepts of civilian oversight." NACOLE is an organization that works with civilian oversight entities across the country. "In order to maintain legitimacy, a [civilian oversight entity] must be able to demonstrate the extend and impact of its independence from the overseen law enforcement agency – especially in the face of high-profile issues or incidents."

Several participants emphasized the importance of publicly available and accessible records on officer history.

"There needs to be a cohesive, extensive system to track and monitor police actions over time."

Several community members shared input around the importance of positive reward systems and performance-based incentives (including pay-based incentives) that centered around non-violence and positive engagement with community. Participants expressed varying levels of confidence around this approach, with some noting that behavior will never change if we only punish negative behaviors and others wondering, "is there any opportunity to reward good behavior or is it fruitless to try and take that approach?" Community members again discussed how financial systems may be necessary to shift officer behavior – as discussed above, community members asked a lot of questions around liability insurance or officers being required to pay for a portion of settlement complaints which would require changes to state and/or federal law.

3.2 Community Wants a Community-Focused, Skilled, and Diverse Monitoring Team

While much of the findings centered around changes to the MPD specifically, community members also shared input specific to the process of launching a consent decree. In every engagement session, community members offered ideas around who and how a third-party monitoring team of experts - or put shortly, "monitors" - would assess and report on the City and MPD's compliance with the consent decree and manage the accountability process for adhering to the terms outlined in the agreement.

What is a monitoring team?

- A monitoring team of experts is chosen after the consent decree is submitted to the court.

- The monitor, which can be an individual but is usually a team of individuals, provides independent and expert assessment to ensure the City and MPD are complying with the agreement.

- The monitoring expert(s) does this by evaluating progress, working to help understand and address barriers to compliance, providing technical expertise, and reporting progress to the court and community on a regular basis.

Characteristics of the Monitoring Team

When community members discussed the monitors, their input focused primarily on the characteristics of members of the monitoring team. Most frequently and fervently, community members expressed a desire for the monitors to be connected to community. Some felt that required residency - "the monitoring team must have community members actually on it" - while others spoke more broadly about the importance of a commitment to community or investment in the safety and well-being of community members.

> The monitoring team must put community interests and perspectives at the forefront of their work.

Community members implored that the monitors not "be political" or have a specific agenda or tie to the political process. They discussed the importance of having monitors who value equity and empathy while having clear and consistent follow-through. Participants were clear that, while the role of the monitors is to oversee and analyze adherence to procedure, the monitoring team must put community interests and perspectives at the forefront of their work.

> In every session, participants noted the importance of creating a diverse monitoring team.

In every session, participants noted the importance of creating a diverse monitoring team. Diversity was referenced in regards to race, gender (a few folks passionately made the case for a majority of women on a monitoring team), age, and work experience. In particular, many community members suggested including at least one, if not several, formerly incarcerated individuals on the monitoring team. Diversity around lived experience was mentioned several times as a critical consideration.

One person noted that the monitoring team must be "diverse on an intersectional level." With the unique opportunity to create a team of individuals that can evaluate and also understand barriers to compliance, community members implored that the perspectives and life experiences of the monitoring team be varied.

> Many community members suggested including at least one, if not several, formerly incarcerated individuals on the monitoring team.

Skillset and role

Finally, community members shared input on the importance of deeply skilled members of a monitoring team. "They should employ people with arbitration skills," suggested one participant. Others noted the need for strong "data skills" and (critically) communication skills. One participant suggested that the monitor(s) be in consistent contact with community members and skilled in their ability to connect and deliver updates.

> Participants suggested ideas about how the monitoring team might hold regular check-in or report-back sessions with community members or "open hearings."

Regarding expertise, many participants expressed a hope for the monitoring team to understand policing but critically (and overwhelmingly) participants implored that the monitors not be former law enforcement.

In addition to focusing on who the monitors should be, participants shared their ideas about how a monitor might work with community members. Participants suggested ideas about how the monitoring team might hold regular check-in or report-back sessions with community members or "open hearings." A few participants suggested the monitoring team connect to community in a way that models how MPD should connect to community.

Thus, connected to our findings above, the monitors should have reciprocal relationships with community members.

Session Experience: What the Process Was Like for Community

As we analyzed the vast content of input shared by community members around what should be included in a consent decree, we also sought to examine what the experience of being in space with one another and contributing ideas and insights was like for participants. We focused both on the content of ideas as an outcome and the process as an outcome; we believed that the act of bringing community together and into the official process had the potential to be consequential.

We present the process findings incorporating both on direct feedback from community members about their experience and data collected from our staff and volunteers on the emotional contexts that characterized the spaces. We also share some insights from our staff, partners, and volunteers about how they experienced the process.

> **"When groups started to share, the noise level went up significantly. I saw [community] members leaning forward, lowering masks to be heard."**

Community Expressed Hope and Gratitude

In each session, we debriefed the small group work and allowed community members and facilitators alike to reflect on what the experience *felt like*. Sentiments surrounding *hope*, *gratitude*, and *relationship* were voiced across the room and across sessions.

"I just came away with a feeling of gratitude, with people showing how much they care about this issue."

Some community members expressed a familiarity with these conversations while others noted this was the first time that they were given this kind of opportunity.

"I have gratitude for the number of people who care about this city and each other."
A chorus of "mhmm" ensued.

The degree to which community members demonstrated a passion for the issues, despite decades of history which demonstrates the stickiness of real change in race-based policing, and showing up to contribute was remarkable.

As mentioned above, community member participants did not show up with blind optimism but instead with a tired yet strong sense of hope. Community members believed with the right people and efforts things might get better without distorting their reality and avoiding the hard work of change.

One data collector wrote in their notes, "The vibe feels friendly - like people are fully welcome here like family - and it's interesting how the vibe is happy despite this community being representative of those facing the most violence." The resilience of community members ready to continue the work was exceptional.

Community Had Hard Conversations, Disagreed, and Wanted to Move Forward Together

One consistent set of sentiments demonstrated in the engagement sessions was the process of grappling with hard ideas, disagreeing with each other, wondering about what is possible, and moving forward together. Nearly all of the sessions were described as "lively" at some point as people did not seem to shy away from sharing their input and insights. Community members from different backgrounds both shared similar perspectives (like the need for more accountability) but also disagreed on ideas like whether or not an officer should ever be armed or whether more or less funding will shift police practice. But in observing the disagreement, our team also observed a sense of shared purpose: we might disagree about the path forward, but we know we need to walk together.

The sessions were a model for what engagement between community members and law enforcement might look like if done well.

> "This process is like restorative justice. [It] could be powerful to have a conversation in the community with police officers in a safe space like this."

In addition, one staff member remarked on how engagement sessions seemed to...

> ...parallel the very essence of what most of us hold when thinking about our own sources of support – acknowledgement of the duality in our lives and in our communities, of the heavy and also fulfilling dynamics present in interdependent relationships, reciprocal effort, and a space at the table for breaking bread when attempting to heal, together.

Community members found the opportunity to engage and disagree a profound way to move the needle forward together. In each session, several participants asked, "What's next?" In addition, a few community members attended several sessions and one participant even noted, "I don't want to participate today, my voice has already been captured I think, but I'm here today again to listen to what others have to say."

In research, we often try to explore outcomes and analyze processes to determine "what works" or how to approach a problem. The meaningful outcomes of this effort, starting with a consent decree shaped by community members and leading to sustained culture change in the MPD and City of Minneapolis, will hopefully unfold over the coming months and years.

However, as described above, these engagement sessions served in the moment as a space to highlight and potentially even foster a sense of hope and gratitude. The sessions were an opportunity for community members to wrestle with complex ideas and recognize the importance of a collective journey forward.

Conclusion

Community members have made clear that changes to culture in MPD and the City are necessary, but that the path forward is complex. Culture is a nebulous concept, but culture exists everywhere. Culture is the patterns that help us to make sense of what is acceptable and what is not. These patterns are not created, nor do they shift, overnight.

What does it look like to design a consent decree with meaningful involvement from community members? With the engagement sessions, our team created a space for critical conversations and powerful input. But taking the findings - changes in practice and tools to de-center a culture of violence, the importance of reciprocal relationships, and the need for more and better accountability - and creating an agreement with specific changes that actually reflect what community members expressed is no small task. The challenge ahead, of meaningfully including requirements for relationship-building for example, is vast. The team at the Minnesota Department of Human Rights has worked tirelessly to read and process the data and findings all summer and continues to advocate for the input and insights of community members in negotiating a consent decree.

But the design of a consent decree is just one step, following a vast history of change efforts, in the long journey ahead. The power of a consent decree alongside the precarity of the opportunity was clear to community members.

At one point, one participant asked "But who is actually going to hold the police accountable?" to which another participant exclaimed, "We are!" Community showed up and will continue to show up. Across sessions, community members remarked there was never enough time and that they wanted more. They want more understanding of the processes and more opportunities to engage. They want more connections with each other and officers. They want more accountability and more meaningful change. Community wants more from the Minneapolis Police Department and from the City of Minneapolis.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Community Partners

Organization/Group Name	Organization descriptions/community served
Black Legacy Organizations: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) The Urban League (UL) The African American Leadership Forum (AALF) The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) (Northside Residents Redevelopment Council) NRRC	A gathering of residents from the following Black legacy organizations: • The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) works to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons, as well as working to eliminate race-based discrimination. The Minneapolis-based chapter is of one of the oldest civil rights advocacy organizations. • The Urban League is a culturally-specific organization, seeking to help African descendants strive for and achieve economic empowerment and self-sufficiency to build wealth that can be passed down from generation to generation through education, employment and civic engagement. • The African American Leadership Forum (AALF) is a culturally specifically, Black organization, working to identify disparities, heal the past and transform the future in key areas including public safety, employment, economic opportunity, education, housing and healthcare. • The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) is a culturally specific council and its role is to advise the state legislature and Governor on issues confronting People of African Heritage. The council also provides opportunities for community members to get involved and information needed to navigate the legislative process and which makes a direct impact during the legislative session. • Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) is a neighborhood organization serving primarily the Near North and Willard Hay neighborhoods. The organization has worked

	with residents on many housing and economic development projects in the neighborhood over the last 20 years.
East African Community at the [Brian Coyle Center](#)	Rep. Mohamud Noor (House District 60B which houses one of the largest Somali population in the United States) hosted a gathering of East African Minneapolis residents at the Brian Coyle Center with leaders from the East African Community. The Brian Coyle Center is an essential gathering place in the East African community and provides an extensive number of resources to the neighborhood.
[Little Earth](#)	Community members and residents of *Little Earth of United Tribes* - a subsidized housing complex located in the urban industrial core of Minneapolis the only Indigenous preference project-based Section 8 rental assistance community in the United States.
[Minneapolis Quakers](#)	A chapter of the Religious Society of Friends (founded around 1650), Quakerism is non-credal group that hold a central belief that all people are endowed with a measure of the Divine Spirit.
[The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA)](#)	A statewide coalition driving transformative culture change to address sexual violence through advocacy, prevention, racial justice, and systems change and policy.
[Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) - Twin Cities](#)	Minnesota chapter of SURJ, a national network of groups and individuals organizing white people for racial justice.
The Re-Enfranchisement Coalition	A coalition of justice-impacted individuals working in alliance to empower formerly and currently incarcerated people and their families.
[Twin Cities Diversity in Practice - Wanton Injustice Legal Detail (TCDIP-WILD)](#) - General members	TCDIP is a consortium of over 70 Member law firms and corporate legal departments, which collectively employ over 3,400 lawyers across the Twin Cities. WILD provides a platform through which TCDIP's lawyers and Members can actively combat anti-Black racism and all forms of racism through direct support and partnerships with existing community organizations currently rooted in this work.

Twin Cities Diversity in Practice - Wanton Injustice Legal Detail (TCDIP-WILD) - BIPOC members	(See above description) - focused on BIPOC members.
Youth from Youthprise and The Link	• Youthprise is an organization working to increase equity with and for Minnesota's indigenous, low-income and racially diverse youth through learning and leadership, economic opportunity, and health and safety. • The Link works with youth and young families to overcome the impacts of poverty and social injustice. Currently the Link engages in approximately 28 programs to provide supportive housing, intensive case management, and skills development to youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness, sex trafficking and/or involvement in the juvenile legal system.

Appendix B: Detailed Community Engagement Session Description

We employed a group facilitation strategy called "Wise Crowds" (Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2014) for the engagement sessions. Wise Crowds is a facilitation approach that allows participants to uncover ideas and tap into differences within a group around experiences and knowledge and generate results within an "insider" (or in our case, community) perspective. This strategy also allows for a significant amount of information to be collected in a short amount of time. "Wise Crowds" centers the collective wisdom that exists in community and liberates individual knowledge rather than seeking a single solution or "right" answer to a question.

To engage this strategy, each session had a large group facilitator and several "table top" facilitators (the number of facilitators and groups depended on session attendance). The large group facilitator introduced the activity, kept time, and prompted transitions. The table top facilitators ran the activity in small groups with several community members in each group.

For the activity, the MNJRC team created seven topics for discussion by studying consent decrees across the United States in connection to the MDHR investigation findings. We used the topics as boundaries to help guide conversations. Each topic received its own laminated placard with the definition on the front and examples, corresponding investigation findings, and two key questions on the back. The facilitator led their small group in conversation for around 10 minutes per topic for a total of 70 minutes (with each of the seven topics).

Appendix C: Codebook Development

Codes

Data analysis is often a multistep, iterative process. To make sense of input collected from the community engagement sessions as data, the research team and volunteers engaged in a process of "coding" by creating a list of themes or "codes" and applying those codes as labels to the written data.

Coding is a widely recognized aspect of qualitative data analysis, yet there is not a universal standard for what it entails. In qualitative research, codes are defined as, "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the description or inferential information compiled during a study (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall & McCulloch, 2011, p.137). In short, codes are categories. Subcodes or "child codes" are a layer deeper, pulling out distinct aspects of a category. Codes can be theory-driven and "deductive" when they are created *prior* to gathering data. For example, when you want to find community input about a specific topic (say, use of force), you might create a code called "Use of Force" and label any input related to that topic with that code. Codes can also be data-driven and "inductive," emerging from raw data (Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). For example, community members may offer insights about how to positively influence officer behavior through either direct support for wellness, or through support via compensation and rewards. Upon reading the data, this insight may arise several times throughout the data, prompting the creation of a new code perhaps called "Officer Support." The development of inductive codes requires repeated examination of the raw data, highlighting the iterative process of code development.

Codebook

A codebook is a set of codes with definitions, examples, and non-examples used as a tool to label and analyze data. Codebooks operationalize codes and, like codes, are developed through an iterative process that often results in multiple revisions, condensing and expanding as insights arise. Detailed codebooks allow coders to more clearly distinguish between codes, creating consistency across coders.

For this project, the research team used both deductive and inductive codes. The deductive codes were pulled directly from the small group themes used to guide discussion in the community engagement sessions (e.g., accountability). The inductive codes were developed using a sub-set of the processed raw data.

The first step in developing data-driven codes is to combine, reduce, and digitize raw data. Researchers then engaged in several meetings 1) creating and combining codes, 2) crafting clear and specific, yet encompassing definitions of the codes by identifying and comparing themes across subsets of data, and 3) testing the codes with several coders to establish consistency. The process of establishing inter-coder consistency required agreement on code labels and definitions, group coding and think-alouds to identify different interpretations of code definitions, creating more refined definitions and identifying examples and non-examples, and seeking as much consensus as possible to create a final codebook.
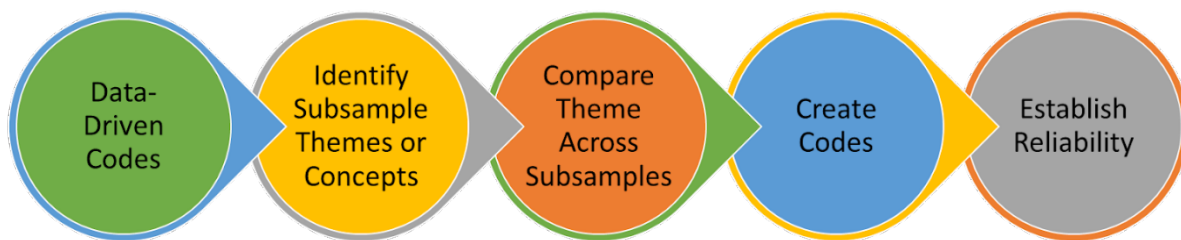
Coding and Analysis

Once we developed a final codebook, we trained a team of 6 volunteer coders to apply the codes to the full corpus of data. In the training, our research staff ensured the coders 1) were briefed on the project background, 2) engaged in a positionality exercise to address coder bias, and 3) learned how to effectively use a qualitative research program called Dedoose.

Using Dedoose, each coder read and analyzed five or six of the 15 sets (each community engagement session had a corresponding data set) which ended up being around 100 pages of notes. This resulted in each data set being double-coded, blindly, by two separate coders. "Blind coding" refers to the process of applying codes in which each coder views the data without knowledge of the previously applied codes, ensuring that the analysis allows for increased reliability and reduced bias.
Once we coded the data, analysis of patterns and themes commenced as described in the report.