



Draft Report on the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

Village of Ossining, New York

matrix 
consulting group

Project Overview

- ◆ New York Executive Order 203 provided the impetus for organizing a thorough review of policing.
- ◆ The process was collaborative, involving a Working Committee comprised of Village residents who met several times to discuss the process and the development of suggested recommendations.
- ◆ Subcommittees were created to increase the focus on specific reform areas.
- ◆ Extensive input was received through interviews, several community meetings and an online survey.

Public Input

- ◆ The project team held several public listening sessions to get input on police issues in Ossining:
 - A Spanish-language meeting (December 10th)
 - A general meeting (December 12th)
 - The African-American community (December 17th)
 - The LGBTQ+ community (January 7th)
 - Ossining High School students (January 19th)
- ◆ The project team developed an online survey, in both English and Spanish, to obtain broader input from the community. There were over 800 responses.
- ◆ Key themes arising from listening sessions and survey included the need to address bias in policing and accountability to the public.

Working Committee

- ◆ The consultants met several times in November through January to discuss the process and suggested recommendations for the Board.
- ◆ The Subcommittees also met several times before and after the holidays to focus more on areas defined by EO203. The subcommittees were:
 - Governance
 - Policies and procedures
 - Internal operations
 - Hiring and training

Suggested Recommendations

Governance

- ◆ Change the Village Charter and the Westchester County Police Act to create a new police board of commissioners that is comprised of five community members and two Board of Trustees members.
- ◆ Appointment to the new police board of commissioners should follow one of two routes:
 - ➔ The Mayor nominates and village board approves appointments to the board;
 - ➔ Initially, for the first full term of the board, the mayor nominates and village board approves appointments to the Board. Thereafter, members are directly elected.
- ◆ The OPD should make regular reports to the Police Commission on a variety of metrics.

Suggested Recommendations Oversight

- ◆ Remove OPD representation on the CPCRB, for a total of five civilian seats, with one alternate.
- ◆ Consider hiring an outside investigator to review complaint cases.
- ◆ Add to the code that the Village Counsel or their deputy is in attendance at every meeting.
- ◆ Change the Village Code so that the location of CPCRB meetings should not be at OPD facilities.
- ◆ Increase the maximum amount of time an individual has to file a complaint from 90 to 120 days.
- ◆ Specify that investigation of complaints will begin within 10 business days of the complaint being filed, and will be completed within 30 days.

Suggested Recommendations

Transparency

- ◆ Names and contact info for all police personnel ranked lieutenant and above should be listed on the website.
- ◆ The OPD policy manual should be more transparent and available on the village website. In addition, the policy manual should be made available in hard copy free of charge at the police department or village hall.
- ◆ Tying in with the suggested recommendations on governance, police commissioners on a newly created board should have a role in reviewing policies.

Suggested Recommendations Policies

- ◆ In order to increase transparency and to better inform the public, police department policies should be posted online.
- ◆ The department should adopt bias-free policing policies.
- ◆ To reduce the perception of cooperation, the department should modify its general orders so that OPD officers will not respond with ICE unless they are called to the location.
- ◆ Develop policy to require reporting misconduct by department personnel.

Suggested Recommendations

Internal Operations

- ◆ Work with Westchester County, neighboring communities and non-profit agencies to develop a mental health, homeless and substance abuse crisis response unit.
- ◆ Provide officers with crisis intervention training to improve response.
- ◆ Create a voluntary response registry which would assist emergency communications and responders.
- ◆ Implement new or improved existing community policing efforts including police officer liaisons with community groups, greater presence at community events, improved and more meaningful presence in Ossining schools.
- ◆ Develop a public awareness campaign in both English and Spanish to explain the OPD's role with respect to ICE activities.
- ◆ Develop an officer mental health program that includes counseling with a tele-therapy option, and an early intervention program.

Suggested Recommendations

Hiring and Training

- ◆ Work to increase diversity in department hiring and on promotional processes.
- ◆ Work with Ossining High School to start a program to introduce high school students to the Ossining Police Department.
- ◆ The Police Department should develop a multi-year training plan that includes greater emphasis on:
 - Anti-racism in policing
 - Implicit bias
 - De-escalation
 - Procedural justice
 - Cultural competency
 - Handling protests
 - Crisis intervention training

Next Steps – Public Reviews

- ◆ The project team will review the draft Police Reinvention Collaborative reform report in 3 public sessions next month:
 - February 6th – a general session
 - February 20th – focusing on the African American community
 - February 27th – in Spanish
- ◆ In addition, comments can continue to be received via:
 - Email – Ossining@matrixcg.net
 - Telephone hot lines
 - * English: 866-262-9756
 - * Spanish: 888-958-1384

Next Steps – Public Acceptance

- ◆ Board and community input will result in a revised report that will go to the Village Board on March 5th.
- ◆ A Board Work Session will provide an opportunity for Board discussion on March 10th.
- ◆ The Board's Legislative Session on March 17th will result in final report adoption.
- ◆ If the Board needs additional time, however, they could adopt the report at a Special Meeting which could be called on March 24th
- ◆ Ossining's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative report would be submitted to the Governor's Office by April 1st