What are your experiences interacting with the police department in Petaluma? [slide 1/2]

- One participant shared that his children withheld their experiences that they had throughout their time in school. It wasn’t until the recent events that they’ve opened up about the troubling experiences they’ve had with on campus police and racism in their schools.

- Skate park with PD arriving (not warranted but they did), all of the youth were briefly questioned but the ONE Black male was interrogated, separated from the group, had his ID scrutinized & backpack searched three times over

- my mother confronted the Petaluma Police often many years ago because they would harass my younger brother every time they saw him walking in the community.

- The older ones in the group were comfortable and had no problem with the police. However they have heard of others having problems.- 8-12 years ago. He was approached by 5 or 6 PPD cars. They came at him with guns drawn and before he could talk, they told him to raise his hands

- In last year stolen property dealt, felt PPD was open to dialogue, good research in dept.

- Positive to cordial relations w/PPD

- Mostly traffic stops, immigrants being stopped, “mistaken” identity
What are your experiences interacting with the police department in Petaluma? [slide 2/2]

• POC target for “random” stops
• she was pulled over because her husband (who is black), felt like it was for sure racial profiling.
• Raising a black son in Sonoma County talk to him about both the police and gangs “Survive the encounter”
• Do best to avoid, do know have benefit of looking “exotic” vs “dangerous”
• Most interactions with the police were through work/professional relationships
• Recognizing their experiences and interactions with the police have been very different compared to experiences of other communities of color in Petaluma, as they recognize from listening to the town hall as well as from listening to their friends.
How did it affect you?

• In general: All agree that there’s been a learning/living experience to navigate the duality
• You’re Black in a very white town, you learn to find ways to try and be non-threatening, deflect attention & yet still end up in scenarios where you’re confronted with police department
• He doesn’t go out at night or walk around by himself.*Childhood/trauma/imposter syndrome*
• Higher likelihood of health problems and diminished life expectancy
• Experiences of feeling like a threat in your own community.
• Racial biases, prejudice, profiling in fatherhood.
• Disparities and inequalities compared to more affluent communities
• Criminalization of Black and Brown communities, disparity in receiving COVID-19 treatment, and disparity in prison/ jail populations and deaths.
• When you hear sirens and helicopters, she calls her son to check
• Culture shock b/c how look vs ‘majority’
• Visceral fear relating to some areas & will not go

What did you do when this happened?

• children's hesitation was to try and shield their parents from worrying about their overall safety and the continued discrimination became normalized behavior.
• avoidance
What are your experiences interacting with the police department in Petaluma? [slide 1/3]

- Their husband had pulled off the road on the way out towards the coast to step out of the car and enjoy nature. Was later approached by police officers who began to question motives and actions.
  - White man = most positive, doesn't remember having campus police
  - White woman = only positive
  - White woman = professional interactions, observed a woman being arrested forcibly by P.P.D. and decided to video tape - was approached by police and asked why they were videotaping, what their name was and that they may need the video as evidence themselves. Party felt they were being lied to as an intimidation tactic
  - MA (?) /White woman = P.P.D. handling overt acts of racism extremely mildly and modeling to our community that hate and racism is very present in this community and of no concern to them, Pulled over 1 time in Petaluma for an expired license plate sticker and allowed to leave with warning.
  - Not many
  - Happy with how PPD handled situations where called for assistance for 2 instances
What are your experiences interacting with the police department in Petaluma? [slide 2/3]

- several years ago, her and some friends filmed PPD interacting with POC to make sure all was cool – she remembered officer didn’t like that she was filming but she doesn’t remember if he asked her to stop
- Black husband and Latino friend taking pictures at a parade and stopped and questioned for "theft"
- Maybe it’s “telling” that she has rarely had any interaction
- Communications with for work reason - nothing of note
- 5-6 years ago there was a big interaction where police stopped a car with POC, rifles drawn, extremely tense, wanted to witness but not get shot but seemed important and he thought it was pretty egregious, doesn’t remember if he talked to the 2 kids later, but there were 4-5 officers on the block, using a bullhorn to issue commands, no attempt to de-escalate
- only interactions have been as a journalist, writing a few stories about police program, haven’t had any troubles but self-acknowledged as a privileged white lady
- Several members of the group described experiences where officers responded with many cars, 3-4 at a time. This causes intimidation, doesn’t seem necessary. It’s a bigger show of force.
- My children have had experiences with officers. Underage smoking, skateboarding where they shouldn’t. They have been hassled but this has never developed into anger or pushed limits, there have been few negative consequences.
What are your experiences interacting with the police department in Petaluma? [slide 3/3]

- When I was younger I was playing hacky sack after hours at a school and police came up and pulled guns on us and cuffed us. If we were not white things could have been much worse.
- There were positive observations of Petaluma police that had been part of a task force on homelessness which no longer exists. They were passionate about working with this population and had specific training to do so, and showed compassion when being called to address and interacting with those who were unsheltered.
- They were leaving a parking garage after going to an art and garden festival. They had a mixed race teenager in the car from Sweden. The police followed them out of the garage and pulled them over. I think it was because of a license being experience or something like that. They spoke aggressively and treated them disrespectfully.
- I was given a ticket for stopping just past a stop sign. I was lectured on safety and driving. It was unpleasant and the police were condescending to me.
- I had experience with the police after a house burglary. I had a very positive experience they were very professional. “what you would expect”
- I’ve also interacted with them in regards to a “drug dealing operation” on our block. They have been able to deescalate situations effectively
What are your experiences interacting with the police department in Petaluma?

How did it affect you? What did you do?

- left him feeling violated, resentful, irritated
- Another community member answered questions calmly as he was aware his black skin made him more of a target for police.
- had to tell officer to call chief to clear it all up
Have you ever called 911 to get the police?

- BIPOC: Called Police directly out of necessity when saw 2 white men trying to take 1 white woman, still got questioned by cops, called 911 to make sure white woman was ok
- White: has called 911 but mostly fire department; has called PPD 4-5 times when people speeding in her neighborhood, people on phone were pleasant and no bad interactions

Have you ever had the police called on you?

- BIPOC: Decoy practices to incriminate in business, which seems to be targeted to people of color, and escalate quickly to intimidation.
Have you ever been pulled over?

- All participants in the conversation agreed they have not experienced anything egregious with police. The root of all experiences were through traffic stops, followed in police cars and obvious profiling.
- “How did you purchase this car?”, “Well, what do you do for a living?”, “Are you from here or did you move here? I haven’t seen you before.”, “Why are you parked here (in a legal space*) What are you waiting on?” (was parked outside a clothing donation box waiting for it to open)
- Pulled over for expired tags - they were loud, drive with drivers license on seat “I don’t need anyone shooting me while I grab my ID”
- Stop and frisk, police brutality, racial profiling like it’s no coincidence that we look different than most folks (young man with melanin in their skin, jeans and t-shirt common dress makes us look like a threat or a suspect or like we don’t belong)
- Petaluma was particularly tough on taking cars from immigrants that had no (driving) licenses- There is a lot of tension
- Husband went to the bar downtown - the bartender didn’t want to serve him.
- He was called the N-word while trying to do work. Also refused work in Masonry

How did it affect you?

- No good cops
- Police speaks English (and keep speaking) even when people do not understand – sometimes as intimidating practice
Have you ever been pulled over?

- one traffic stop long time ago when she rolled through stop sign near her house, officer gave her ticket and was fine and perfunctory
- 3-4 traffic stops that were upsetting but positive interactions with officer
- received a speeding ticket deservedly – handled professionally
- A black friend was stopped 5 or 6 times coming home from school in Petaluma to her home in Penngrove.
- There were some black bakers who would deliver to the west side. They were stopped by the police so often that they had to have white employees deliver to the west side for them
- Wife was pulled over 3 houses away from home for fix-it ticket

How did it affect you?

No comments.
Do you feel safe in Petaluma?

- Doesn’t feel safe in Petaluma
- Attitude towards African American isn’t good
- Suffocated in fear
- “Liberal” w/heavy redneck overtone - confed flag – “illusion of safety/liberal”
- No moved away because of racism felt
- Yes, despite know people will judge
- Safe is a relative term
- Always nervous that police will stop you – being extra careful. Have to go to extra length measures to avoid the attention. Or to demonstrate that we belong to the community.
- No, moved away
Do you feel safe in Petaluma?

- Fear has increased immensely in past few months
- fearful of safety in Petaluma as an organized protester, a feeling of being unsafe if not in a group, overt racist behavior present in Petaluma, very unsafe due to COVID19 and the lack of masks and concern by community members, fear of repercussions of “political” statement of wearing a mask vs. not (ie. making a sign saying “mask save lives” and having property harmed), fear of walking alone on Lynch Creek Trail due to houseless population and mental illness.
- “as a white person, sure” but aware with these new weapons, none of us are safe – very against the militarization of the PPD
- depends on how you conceive of safety – foundation of safety is everyone in the community having their needs met – when we “prioritize aversion of harm” and instead of putting resources into education and needs, we “arm up,” we are all less safe
- No, my kids are bi-racial
- white mature women = yes
- most part yes
- feels safe because of his whiteness, and when he doesn’t feel safe, it because when he’s marching he is aware that there is a possibility someone might drive into people, which was never a concern about 10 years ago
- tends to feel safe, not when alone on trail early morning or now
- knowledge of LGBTQ youth not feeling safe in the community
- a personal experience with feeling unsafe while at a candlelight vigil, some harassing trucks arrived and made people feel unsafe. the Police were called. no-one came. The Chief didn’t hear about it until days/weeks later via social media. Who are people to call when they feel unsafe?
What do you want from our City – for yourself, your family, community, congregation or organization? [slide 1/2]

- Wanting to be able to comfortably walk around without needing additional support because you Black
- For example, consciously grabbing a wallet with ID/cash/creditcards to demonstrate -xyz. Assuring you have your cell phone. Bringing a dog to look like a “friendly Black neighbor.” All additional weight - emotional/physical - we know others would never have to consider bringing.
- Citizens committee for police, men/women - restructuring police all together
- Opportunity to change policing policies as a citizen/community (solely in Petaluma) **Would choose to be involved in that action
- Need to be able to talk about differences - being black while driving = dangerous broaden conversations = important
- The roles of the PPD need to be taken away.
- Defunded and reinvested in other areas.
- Demilitarization of police. They don’t need to be out and looking like they're in a war zone, especially when they’re working a fair, parade, or community event.
- See more beat cops. Want to see them walking the neighborhoods so that they know us. Less likely to see us as a threat.
What do you want from our City – for yourself, your family, community, congregation or organization? [slide 2/2]

- More community service. Spending more time with youth in this town.
- Can there be conversations?
- Need to stop talking over us!
- White allies need to speak up and not be scared to speak up on our behalf.
- Believe and trust Black people
- Respect what we have to say
- We don’t feel respected!!
- Listen to and give us spaces to speak freely
- Police to have interpreters and members of the community that they can call for support (to people stopped by police)
- Stop militarization of police – that assume others (civilians) are enemies, they supposed to be protective
- Stop being targeted and assuming we are criminals, maybe through anti-racist training
- Transparency in police budget and report to the community
What do you want from our City – for yourself, your family, community, congregation or organization?

- I want to know how the City will redirect funds so that social services and oversight can happen
- I don’t understand what police do. The Chief has said that 94% of calls are not criminal calls. What are our patrols actually doing? Would there be better resources to send to those calls?
- I want our elected officials to do things that result in helping us to feel safe
- Defund the police and redirect that money into social services and programs
- The police budget is high. $80,000 for assault rifles was not a good investment. I’d rather see money put toward other services to help the community
- To determine how to redistribute police resources to schools, addiction recovery, housing for all and more effective social services
- To accomplish true community-based policing Insuring that listening circles be at the center of future action steps so that deep listening can continue to occur.
What actions should the City take to achieve what you want for Petaluma? [slide 1 of 2]

So, how are they recruiting? What is the messages being shared about the town and department that attract (certain) officers

- Known reputation amongst other forces/law enforcement agencies as one of the most racist departments in the state
- Is there room for community/training experts to implement these impressions into the hiring process and initial training?
- In such a small community, why is there such glory in such a high powered fleet of weapons? lower crime? Is it truly a necessity? Who wins in moments of opposition? Again, what message does this send about Petaluma PD culture?
- Approaching citizens committe pushing it forward - included citizens who pay salaries,
- Include all races = a joint, all voices, equal representation
- Have the community members/Mayor/counsel members:
  - Look at Police polices and practices from different lens to see the language that is being used. This process can be informative. Old polices are outdated.
  - 2- Everyone felt they wanted more Community Forum like this one. It’s important to listen to Black and Brown residents of Petaluma. That means reaching out to the young people. Survey the young people!
  - 3- Hire a Black officer who speaks Spanish and hire more officers of color.
  - 4- Look into racial profiling- How often are Black and Brown people stopped and harassed and/or ticketed in relationship to White people.
What actions should the City take to achieve what you want for Petaluma? [slide 2 of 2]

- Local, state, federal ground up involvement
- Criminal justice and the police force should be recreated for a better future
- Empathetic way to treat people healthily rather than punish, beat, enforce citations
- Training for Professionalism versus Racial Microaggression
- A lot of is Old families with roots in Petaluma that you can’t break into that world. New Faces in Leadership. A diverse police force that reflects the community. Spanish speaking officers - bilingual - multi-cultural people on the force
- Trust of the community of the police force needs to be improved.
- City officials need to take divesting in police budgets and re-investing into community programs seriously or they need to be replaced with people who are willing to support that movement.
- City newsletters contain racist imagery, organize for all city staff to go through several Anti-Racism training.
- The Model Minority Myth works to separate us from other BIPOC communities, and there is a real need for our community to show up for other BIPOC communities and that there may be discomfort that is necessary to confront in order to continue showing up.
- Racial profiling is alive and well in our city, and we are not immune to it. Believes there is a real surface level understanding of other cultures (BIPOC) in our city that may contribute to profiling.
- He went to the forum that happened a few weeks ago that was led by the city and PPD and his questions were not acknowledged or answered
What actions should the City take to achieve what you want for Petaluma?

- Allocating those funds to different places in our community that need it the most.
- Frequent racial bias training along with non-violent crisis intervention, ensuring this is not just a one time program and refreshing this certification be mandatory.
- have more of these listening circles – let community be part of next steps – police seem to be untouchable – good that they want feedback but they need to be “on our side” as “public servants”
- cut police budget in half and create programs to create “true safety.”
- Defund the Police
- Civilian Oversight
- Transparency – Want to see public response on actions items regarding Defunding Police and Civilian Oversight.
- People of Color should lead the way.
- need to identify those people and communities who don’t feel safe and work with community members to identify how best to reach out and appropriately engage.
- Divest from the police and invest with a focus on what makes a healthy community
- strong request from a teacher to not militarize the police especially in a school shooting situation, does not think the solution is more guns, need better tactics for deescalation
- put money towards bias, sensitivity and deescalating training
- Want to invest in support + community services such as mental health
Few extra notes

- One individual “felt pain” about the community leaving Savano out of these listening circles because Savano cares so much about communication.
- Santa Rosa Junior College is uncovering some things. There is an effort in exploring police training and education. There’s work to be done.
- Reporting on white experience is important for contrast and in the white group we don’t have to apologize. Attendee appreciates that because she was feeling uncomfortable replying since this is a forum to give voice to POC.