

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA**

**CIVIL + HUMAN RIGHTS AND
EQUITY DEPARTMENT**

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City of Los Angeles Human Relations Commission (City HRC)
Policing and the Black Community: Where Do We Go From Here
Report Back

Ad Hoc Committee Members: Courtney Morgan-Greene (Committee Chair), Nirinjan Singh Khalsa, Rosa Russell, Stacy Twilley, Herpsima Khatchadorian

Background: The Dinner Dialogue Ad Hoc Committee was convened to conclude the Dinner Dialogue Pilot Program which consisted of nine facilitated dinner dialogues with the Black community in South Los Angeles during 2018 and 2019. City HRC generated a report of its findings which was presented to the Chief of Police and the Police Commission in 2019 and 2020. The primary goals of the original Dinner Dialogue Pilot Program were to:

1. Facilitate small dialogues with a diverse cross-section of the Black community in South Los Angeles in order to gather experiences, perceptions, and community-sourced recommendations for building trust with the LAPD.
2. Create a best practices model for eliciting and elevating community voices.
3. Advise the City (LAPD, Police Commission, and Mayor's Office) of findings and recommendations to inform policy and programming aimed at improving the relationship between the Black community and the LAPD.
4. Act as a liaison between the LAPD and the Black community regarding policing in the Black community.
5. Alleviate tensions and build trust between the Black community and the LAPD.
6. Advance Public Safety.

Ad Hoc Purpose: The goal of the ad hoc committee was to complete the Dinner Dialogue Pilot Program by hosting an event to reconvene original participants, thank them for their participation, provide a report back, and facilitate additional dialogues to ascertain any changes to experiences, perceptions, or recommendations resulting from societal changes in 2020 and 2021.

Convening Overview: On January 21, 2021, The Human Relations Commission convened, *Policing and the Black Community: Where do we go from here?* The event was held on the ZOOM platform from 5:00 -7:00

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p.m. Brief remarks of gratitude and a report back of the initial Dinner Dialogue Pilot Program Report were made by Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department Senior Project Coordinator, Francisco Ortega, City HRC Commissioner, Courtney Morgan-Greene, Director of the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department, Capri Maddox, and LAPD Chief of Police, Michael Moore. Police Commission President Eileen Decker and Police Commission Director Richard Tefank were also introduced and in attendance.

After opening remarks, participants were dispersed into one of four breakout rooms for a follow-up dialogue about how the events of 2020-2021 have impacted their experiences, perceptions, and recommendations about policing. There were two breakout rooms for prior Dinner Dialogue Pilot Program participants including one youth room and one adult room. There were two additional breakout rooms for community partners including a breakout room for leaders of Community-Based Organizations (CBO) and a breakout room for LAPD rank and file officers assigned to South Los Angeles.

The input received from all four focus groups provided insight into the relationship with the LAPD and how it has been impacted by the events of 2020 and 2021. The core themes derived from the initial Pilot Program remained true. Participants again expressed widespread empathy for LAPD officers and a desire for a changed relationship. Themes of transparency, accountability, training/ hiring and procedure, community engagement, and fundamental fairness remained consistent. However, the community spoke to these issues in new ways after the events of 2020 and 2021, recommending a truth and reconciliation process, widespread civilian replacement of LAPD officers in specialized areas, working to achieve long term widespread ideals of equality and equity, implementing anti-racist culture within the LAPD particularly among the rank and file officers, expansion of the Community Partnership Bureau, LAPD budget reform and enhanced partnership with community-based organizations. Notably, these themes were prevalent in the LAPD conversation and viewed through a different lens.

The participants, whether they were youth, adult, CBO leaders, or LAPD officers, gravitated to many of the same issues: (1) the devastating impact of COVID-19 in South Los Angeles, (2) the sharp increase in crime in South Los Angeles during the pandemic (3) the Capitol Riots and white supremacy (4) department culture and (5) the status of police reform in Los Angeles. The participants deeply cared about the same or similar issues, they just had different perspectives and different ways of approaching these issues.

There remains a disconnect between the Black community and the LAPD. However, these groups are not polar opposites. They are concerned about the same issues. They want the same things: dignity, safety, and genuine respect. The gap in thinking and culture is not nearly as wide as the social chasm that has been created between them. City HRC remains hopeful that a bridge can be thoughtfully constructed and maintained between these two groups. Through LAPD policy and programming, these differences can be addressed and diminished in a significant and meaningful way that enhances public safety, dignity, and understanding throughout the City of Los Angeles.

Recommendations to LAPD: Based on information learned throughout the project, City HRC recommends the following:

1. Formally set a goal of creating an LAPD free of racism, sexism, religious intolerance, and homophobia; an LAPD with an anti-racist culture among all ranks and in all divisions; an LAPD that no longer has a discriminatory impact or the community perception of racism.
2. Embrace that there is no magic, one-size-fits-all solution to creating a strong relationship between the LAPD and the Black community. This is a complex issue that can only be alleviated by a long-term, multi-faceted, coordinated strategy, policies, training, and on-going programs by the LAPD. Understand this problem as solvable through efforts of the LAPD.

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3. Implement as many community-sourced recommendations as possible, particularly the easy lifts, like creating basic customer service standards compelling officers to say, “hello” and employ common courtesy as well as equity in recruitment and retention strategy, thereby cultivating a reciprocal system of listening, trust, participation, and understanding between LAPD and South Los Angeles. Community sourced recommendations from the original dialogues and reconvening are included in the full report.
4. Hold regular dialogues with members of the Black community and CBO leadership utilizing the best practices model and methodology created by this project in order to keep a finger on the pulse of the community, and stay abreast of evolving community sentiment. Expand dialogues to include other BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities. The small dinner dialogue methodology is an effective strategy for collecting community sentiment on any issue before the government. This focus group model allows for the creation of more precise, targeted policy and programming to more efficiently address the concerns of the community, alleviate tensions, and promote public safety. In addition to data collection and community input, the act of listening builds trust with project participants and their sphere of influence.
5. Hold continued dialogue and interactive cultural exchange programming for rank and file officers in South Los Angeles facilitated by an independent source, creating proximity and mutual understanding between officers and the people they serve.
6. Expand the Community Partnership Bureau (CPB) and its culture to all precincts and all officers.
7. Embrace and support the responsible transfer of select non-criminal or non-violent incidents to non-LAPD civilian experts including homeless intervention, mental health intervention and wellness checks, drug intervention and intoxication, school details, and traffic stops. See Denver’s [Star Program](#).
8. Utilize an emergency response team to facilitate community and stakeholder dialogue in response to officer-involved incidents that have sparked community outrage.