

# Community Policing Changes Since 2016

## Introduction

The Office of the City Auditor (OCA) is currently conducting an audit to determine if the Austin Police Department's (APD) community policing efforts have been effective. As part of the audit, we reviewed APD's progress toward implementing consultant recommendations related to community policing. This update provides preliminary results of that review and the remaining audit work will focus on the effectiveness of APD's efforts. We expect to complete the full audit later this year.

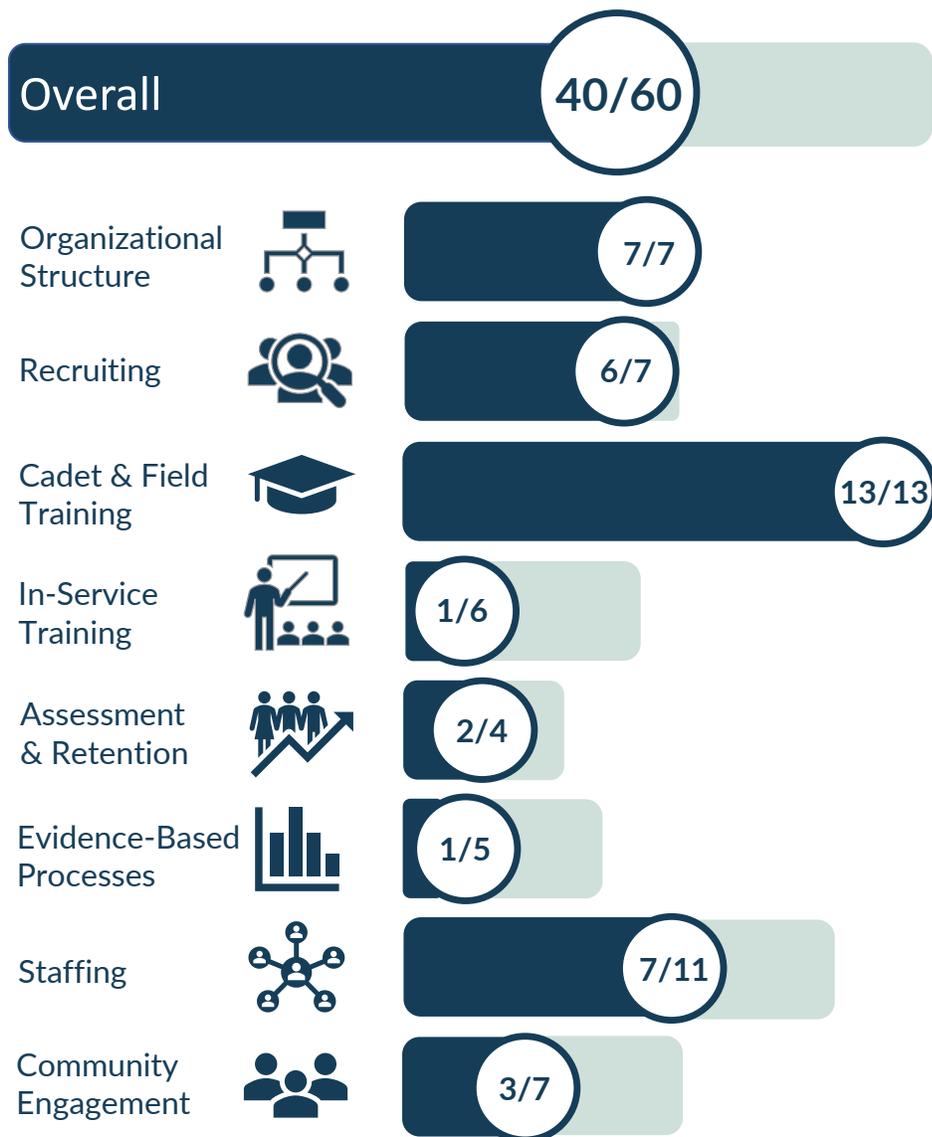
## Background

APD defines community policing as "building positive relationships, one contact at a time, by being present, engaged, and visible in [the] community to address crime and improve the general well-being of residents and visitors." In 2016, the City hired Matrix Consulting Group (Matrix) to assess APD's community policing efforts. Matrix made 63 recommendations for improving community policing efforts in the City. APD disagreed with three of the recommendations and has been working toward implementing the remaining 60 since July 2016.

## What We Found

We found APD made progress toward implementing the Matrix recommendations. As shown in the graphic below, we verified APD completed 40 of 60 recommendations. Most of these recommendations related to organizational structure, recruiting, cadet training, and field training. Although APD has made progress on many other recommendations, the remaining 20 recommendations are not yet complete. This includes recommendations related to in-service training and evidence-based processes. Appendix A includes a summary of the implementation status of the Matrix recommendations.

Exhibit 1: APD has implemented 40 of 60 recommendations



SOURCE: OCA review of APD's implementation of Matrix recommendations, August 2019.

# Appendix A - Preliminary Results of APD Implementing Consultant Recommendations

For more detail about the Matrix recommendations, see the complete Matrix report [here](#).

C = COMPLETE   D = APD DISAGREED   IP = IN PROGRESS   NC = NOT COMPLETE

Category	Recommendation	APD Reported Status	OCA Determined Status	OCA Comments
Structure	Rewrite the mission statement so that it is clear that the Austin Police Department conducts business that recognizes Community Policing and Problem-Solving as the foundation of all activities.	C	C	
Structure	Develop a marketing plan that supports the agency's Community Policing goals and efforts.	C	C	
Structure	The APD should provide funding for the Public Information Office (PIO) to market its Community Policing efforts.	C	C	
Structure	Revise the APD website and Facebook page to reflect Community Policing principles.	C	C	
Structure	Establish a clear policy that defines community policing and problem-solving at the Austin Police Department. The policy should be comprehensive so that the philosophy of Community Policing is established in all functions of the Department.	C	C	
Structure	Revise job classifications and policies and procedures that subscribe to Community Policing principles.	C	C	
Structure	Define the roles of supervisors, managers, command and executive staff as they relate to community-oriented policing and problem-solving.	C	C	

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Recruiting	Assign all resources necessary to recruiting in an effort to attain the number of applicants necessary to fill attrition and newly authorized positions.	C	C	
Recruiting	Develop a Marketing and Strategic plan for Recruiting and Hiring that emphasizes Community Policing principles.	C	C	
Recruiting	Produce a recruiting video that is more in alignment with community policing and problem-solving and make it available to the general public.	C	C	
Recruiting	Continue efforts to utilize Community Liaisons, Explorers and Police Activities League (PAL) as feeders for Recruiting.	C	C	
Recruiting	Reduce the number of days required to complete the testing process to four months total and one visit.	C	C	
Recruiting	Automate all background and testing to speed the process.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Develop a Community Policing theme that highlights the philosophy as a major focus of Academy training.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Develop an introductory survey class to teach cadets the history, structure, philosophy and application of Community Policing in the Austin Police Department.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Cadets should continue to write the observation report or make a presentation on their experience in the Immersion Program.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Explore the use of problem-based learning methodology in the Police Academy.	C	C	

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Cadet & Field Training	Continue to search for a Community Policing related train-the-trainer class to offer to Police Academy instructors and field training officers.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Transfer all exit interviews of cadets and trainees who self-terminate employment during the Police Academy and the Field Training Program to Human Resources.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Explore the use of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as a limited tool to engage trainees in problem identification and solution activities.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Explore the use of Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning as a tool to construct learning activities and to identify learning issues faced by trainees.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Explore the potential for developing and implementing a Community Policing-based field training program, such as that proposed by the Department of Justice, COPS Office (PTO), to replace the present program.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	The APD should approve the Field Training Program (FTP) proposal to add a Daily Observation Report (DOR) dimension that specifically includes community organizing and problem-solving.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Reconsider the planned change in the 1-7 rating scale to a 1-4 scale. The 1-7 scale allows trainees to work within a range of ratings where positive reinforcement is easier to attain.	C	C	

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Cadet & Field Training	Implement a requirement that trainees complete a neighborhood portfolio that analyzes a specific area of the city, which will not only create a useful database for Community Policing activities but will establish the foundation for partnerships between the community and the Department.	C	C	
Cadet & Field Training	Reassess proposed changes to the present Trainee Checklist. Instead of a reduction of tasks, the checklist can be redesigned to become a training guide (with no checkoff process) and include the processes of Community Policing.	C	C	
In-Service Training	Identify and adopt a definition of leadership that is focused on problem-solving and facilitates the involvement of all employees in leading the community.	C	C	
Assessment & Retention	Develop a reward system that encourages employee efforts in Community Policing. This may be a separate system or a modification of the Superior Service Citation.	C	C	
Assessment & Retention	Evaluate the software currently used by Internal Affairs to store investigative records and determine if modifications are needed or if new software must be purchased so that sufficient records searches may be conducted.	C	C	
Evidence-Based Processes	Add measures to report on traffic safety performance (e.g., the number of contacts per work hour, injury accident reduction) to objectively evaluate performance.	C	C	

Category	Recommendation	APD Reported Status	OCA Determined Status	OCA Comments
Staffing	<p>Increase the number of staff allocated to each region by adding the following positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DTAC (Downtown): 4 officers</li> <li>• Region I (Central): 13 officers and 2 corporals</li> <li>• Region II (North): 18 officers and 2 corporals</li> <li>• Region III (East): 12 officers and 2 corporals</li> <li>• Region IV (South): 19 officers and 2 corporals</li> </ul> <p>These changes result in a net increase in the number of positions allocated to patrol by 66 officers and 8 corporals.</p>	C	C	
Staffing	<p>Redeploy a limited number of officers from the evening and night shifts to each of the two day shifts to increase proactivity during those time periods (Districts I, II, III, IV).</p>	C	C	
Staffing	<p>Evaluate reasons for the high attrition rate in the Communications Unit and take immediate steps to try and reduce it to the 10% - 12% range.</p>	C	C	
Staffing	<p>The Highway Enforcement Command should continue its focus of having Motor Units spend more time in Patrol Districts handling traffic accident calls for service and selective traffic enforcement.</p>	C	C	
Staffing	<p>Maintain the current staffing level in Parks and Lakes Units and continue to use these work units as necessary in support of safety and order maintenance goals in the downtown area.</p>	C	C	

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Staffing	The current staffing levels in Metro Tac Units and the current mission to focus on Regional crime and hot spots should be maintained and the centralized investigative units should continue their primary responsibility to address narcotics crimes.	C	C	
Staffing	Evaluate the effectiveness of staffing the Telephone Reporting Unit (9-1-1 Call Takers) with dedicated staff during certain hours of the day.	C	C	
Community Engagement	The APD should fund the publication of crime prevention materials for non-English speaking constituent communities.	C	C	
Community Engagement	Explore ways to fund Youth Camp and Leaders in Knowledge & Support (LINKS) programs.	C	C	
Community Engagement	Community programs need to continue to work closely with District Representatives to support neighborhood events.	C	C	
Recruiting	Develop methods to recruit youth in languages representative of Austin's diverse community.	C	IP	APD staff told us they have limited funding to support recruiting initiatives targeted at increasing language diversity into their youth engagement programs. However, APD staff told us several languages including Spanish, Hindi, and Mandarin are spoken by participants in one program. Additionally, APD staff said future recruiting efforts will focus on increasing African-American and Asian representation.
In-Service Training	Provide leadership training to all members of the Department.	C	IP	APD staff told us they began offering a new leadership course in June 2019 and they expect all staff will have received the training by the end of 2019.
In-Service Training	Provide problem-solving leadership to all employees through local delivery or e-learning methods already established by the Department.	IP	IP	APD staff told us they began offering a new leadership course in June 2019 and they expect all staff will have received the training by the end of 2019. APD reported this course includes problem-solving leadership.

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In-Service Training	Provide training on Community Policing to all non-sworn members through local delivery or e-learning methods already established by the Department.	IP	IP	According to APD staff, APD is exploring the best way to provide training on community policing to non-sworn staff.
In-Service Training	Develop e-Learning training program that encompasses cultural and social issues that affect the relationship between the APD and the community it serves.	IP	IP	According to APD staff, they developed a four-course series called 'Building Bridges' in response to this recommendation and three of four modules have been developed.
Assessment & Retention	Analyze the performance evaluations for all employees, sworn and non-sworn, and develop a system that evaluates employees' efforts in Community Policing, including specific dimensions on the Department's values, vision and mission.	C	IP	APD reported they updated officer SSPRs to include community policing roles and responsibilities. However, not all officer SSPRs were updated. Additionally, some SSPRs for civilian staff who are involved in community policing efforts were not updated. APD staff said they are continuing to review SSPRs.
Assessment & Retention	Develop an evaluation system that allows employees to assess supervisory, management, command, and executive efforts in Community Policing.	C	IP	APD staff told us they will add expectations for community policing leadership into their evaluation process and utilize a new tool for employees to evaluate supervisors in this area.
Evidence-Based Processes	Formalize the collection of employee demographic data/statistics by race, ethnicity, and gender, to be conducted annually by Human Resources.	C	IP	Matrix noted that at the time of their report APD Human Resources collected employee demographic data in a spreadsheet, but it was only released by request, rather than regularly reported to command staff or made available to the public. Based on documentation provided by APD staff, APD has formalized the way employee demographic data is collected but still does not regularly report employee demographic information publicly or to APD management.
Evidence-Based Processes	Include pedestrian stops and field interviews in the yearly Racial Profiling Report.	C	IP	Based on a review of the 2018 Racial Profiling Report, APD has not added pedestrian stops and field interviews to the report. However, APD staff said they will include the data in their 2019 report which will be released by March 1, 2020.

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Evidence-Based Processes	Develop specifically defined performance measures to gauge the effectiveness of the Community Policing efforts of the Department at the organizational level. Publish a yearly report of the findings.	IP	IP	While APD tracks percent of community engagement time available, APD has not yet settled on metrics to gauge the effectiveness of community policing.
Evidence-Based Processes	Work with the community to develop appropriate performance measures and a reporting process that supports accountability for results.	IP	IP	Based on documentation provided by APD staff, APD worked with a nonprofit to identify potential performance measures, which APD staff said have not been fully implemented.
Staffing	In addition to the staffing recommendations made in the previous section, add the following number of officer positions over the next four years in order to accommodate increases in patrol workload that will result from the City's population growth and to maintain an appropriate amount of 'proactive' or 'community engagement' time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2017: 20 officers</li> <li>• 2018: 18 officers</li> <li>• 2019: 15 officers</li> <li>• 2020: 13 officers</li> </ul> These positions should be deployed to the regions as determined by the rates of growth in community generated activity by area.	C	IP	Based on data provided by APD staff, APD added 43 officers since Matrix made this recommendation. APD requested an additional 20 officers in the fiscal year 2020 budget.
Staffing	Patrol officers need to engage in community activities at a higher level than present efforts. This has been addressed in the resources analysis of this study.	IP	IP	Proactive time is time available for conducting proactive policing rather than responding to calls and may be used for engaging in community activities. APD has increased proactive time and appears to be working to increase it to the level recommended by Matrix (35%).
Staffing	Review opportunities to transfer the workload of districts with high workloads to the surrounding districts in order to better balance proactive capabilities (Districts II, III, IV).	C	IP	APD staff said they transferred staff to the downtown area in 2019 to address workload issues in downtown and are considering conducting a citywide workload analysis in 2020.

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Community Engagement	Provide Annual Reports of Office of Community Liaison (OCL) activities and performance.	C	IP	APD provided evidence that OCL tracks year end statistics and staff said APD is preparing to publish the data starting in 2019.
Community Engagement	Produce an annual report that highlights Police Activities League (PAL) successes and community policing principles.	IP	IP	APD staff told us they are preparing to publish the data starting in 2019.
Community Engagement	Establish formal boards or committees for each constituent community that meet with a liaison on a quarterly basis (minimum) to discuss issues and ways to improve service.	C	IP	APD staff said they decided to have Neighborhood Liaisons attend existing City of Austin Quality of Life Commission meetings instead of creating formal boards and committees. APD staff were unable to provide evidence that this approach enables constituent communities to regularly discuss issues with Liaisons, but said they are continuing to refine their process for engaging community members.
Community Engagement	The District Representative Units should be re-focused to implement a community policing effort by identifying and forming stakeholder groups (a Project Team) that will identify issues to address, develop and implement effective responses to the identified problems and provide feedback to the Project Team. Staff a new Lieutenant position to implement and coordinate the transition to a formal Community Oriented Policing program.	C	IP	The second part of the recommendation (to staff a lieutenant position) was implemented. According to APD staff, District Representatives work with the community to identify and respond to issues in various ways. Prior to 2019, District Representatives held three stakeholder group meetings in each of the nine APD sectors with varying levels of attendance. APD staff told us they modified their approach to host open community engagement meetings instead of stakeholder meetings. More work is needed to determine the effectiveness of this approach.
In-Service Training	Conduct a training needs assessment of all APD training functions every 3 years.	C	NC	APD staff were unable to provide evidence that they are conducting training needs assessments at least every three years. However, APD staff told us they do review individual course lesson plans before courses are taught.

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Staffing	Increase the current level of staffing in the Motor Units by 4 Officers (to staff each of the six Motor Units with eight Officers) and add staffing in the future as needed to address traffic problems and provide traffic safety enforcement in support of the identified needs in the Regions.	C	NC	APD reported that patrol staffing shortages have prevented them from increasing Motor Units staff at this time.
Assessment & Retention	Develop a policy that addresses officers volunteering their personal time to APD programs.	D	N/A	
Staffing	Add 12 new Community Service Officer (CSO) positions to function in a field role, handling certain types of low-priority and nonemergency calls that would have otherwise contributed to sworn officer workload. Assign them to the patrol regions as follows to maximize their effect on improving patrol proactive capabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region I (Central): 3 CSO positions</li> <li>• Region II (North): 3 CSO positions</li> <li>• Region III (East): 3 CSO positions</li> <li>• Region IV (South): 3 CSO positions</li> </ul>	D	N/A	
Staffing	Add 12 civilian Community Service Officers and re-assign 11 of the sworn District Representative positions to Patrol Operations.	D	N/A	