

★ MAYOR ★
MARTIN J. WALSH

BOSTON2014
TRANSITION COMMITTEE



Public Safety
Working Group
Transition Team Report
April 16, 2014

Photos: Kit Pyne





“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to make Boston a national leader in ending gun violence and youth violence?”

INTRODUCTION

Mayor Martin J. Walsh’s Public Safety Working Group is comprised of public safety professionals, community advocates, elected officials, and policy makers.

Mayor-elect Martin J. Walsh asked the Public Safety Working Group, “What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to make Boston a national leader in ending gun violence and youth violence?”

THE PROCESS

While we discussed and received public testimony concerning many different issues related to public safety, combatting gun violence and youth violence were our two main

areas of focus. We also considered complex issues including human trafficking, violence against women, high levels of psychological/emotional trauma, substance abuse, scarcity of reentry supports, gun trafficking, problems in policing, terrorism, property crimes, and a myriad of quality-of-life issues.

After three policy discussion meetings and two public forum events, the Public Safety Working Group found many commonalities across topic areas. Certain overarching themes emerged. We consistently heard calls for:

- 1) Increased interagency coordination around public safety goals—this includes all municipal agencies, not just agencies commonly considered “public safety” agencies. These requests often included increased communication with state and federal agencies, as well as other relevant private foundations, agencies, and nonprofit groups.
- 2) Increased social support services.
- 3) Thoughtful planning around prevention.
- 4) Neighborhood-based programming.
- 5) Increased platforms for community engagement.

These four specific areas emerged as the areas to begin applying these principles:

- 1) Enhance Community Policing
- 2) Create a High-level Position for Public Safety Coordination

- 3) Increase Prevention Services through Neighborhood-based Health Centers

- 4) Increase Trauma-Informed Services to Female Survivors of Violence and Exploitation

Within each of these four areas we offer Keep, Implement, and Dream recommendations, defined as policies, ideas and practices that are currently in place and should be kept; implemented in the short term; and implemented as long-term but realizable “dream” goals.

Finally, our Working Group suggests that every City of Boston agency have a public safety goal and that Boston Police reciprocally establish a goal for each city agency.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

FOCUS 1: ENHANCE COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing in Boston consists of two integral pieces: neighborhood community members and the Boston Police Department (BPD). Community members want to live in safe and livable neighborhoods and police want to build trust. The community would like police to be consistent in the ways laws are enforced, to be fair, and to allow



opportunities for community members to regularly provide input in the way that they are policed. These goals are not and should never be mutually exclusive.

Community policing in the 1990s was neighborhood-based and was grounded in the “Three P’s”: Prevention, Partnership, and Problem Solving. Boston’s new vision must be Collaborative Policing: a fluid, cooperative model

that mobilizes the skill, power, and commitment of all city agencies and the community at large.

KEEP

- 1) Community Service Officers: There are incredible Community Service Officers in the BPD who must continue to be supported.
- 2) Police Partnerships with Youth: Collaborations like YouthConnect, a partnership between Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston and BPD, which works to provide neighborhood youth with support, should be maintained. The Police Athletic League (PAL) also provides engagement opportunities for Boston’s young people.
- 3) Neighborhood Watch: Neighborhood Watch continuously creates and fosters relationships with many engaged community groups and should be maintained.

IMPLEMENT

- 1) More Walking Beats: This will help maintain positive relationships with the neighborhoods.
- 2) Increased Amount and Promotion of Community Advising Councils: This will allow for community members to share their questions and concerns directly with the BPD.
- 3) Examine Specialized Units: It is suggested that BPD review its staffing levels, especially in the specialized units, to put more uniformed officers on walking beats in the neighborhood business districts.
- 4) Establish and Promote District Community Councils: Each BPD District should have a

council of community members to advise District Commanders in the implementation of Community Policing. Every Police District shares common issues, but also has specific concerns that require their own particular solutions.

DREAM

- 1) Community Policing Principles in All Areas of Policing: This refers to agreeing upon a definition of the fundamentals of community policing, changing perceptions around it, and finding more innovative ways to incorporate it into all levels of policing.
- 2) High Levels of Reciprocal Trust and Engagement between Community and Police: This can be achieved with steadfast commitment to increased collaboration and innovative engagement practices.

FOCUS 2: CREATE A CABINET-LEVEL POSITION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY COORDINATION

This recommendation was decided upon before Mayor Walsh appointed two full-time staff to work exclusively on coordination around violence and public safety. That decision is a great step in a positive direction, but it is recommended that a cabinet level position overseeing all aspects of public safety should still be considered.

KEEP

- 1) Department Autonomy: Public Safety departments would still have autonomy. A person overseeing all the departments would mainly work to provide insights around collaboration, not micromanage staff.

IMPLEMENT

- 1) Chief of Public Safety: The person in this position would work to ensure coordination and cohesiveness across all public safety departments (Police, EMS, Fire, Office of Emergency Management).

DREAM

- 1) High Levels of Efficiency and Collaboration: The existence of a Chief of Public Safety will enable public safety groups to collaborate better and more efficiently. It will also open new opportunities to increase collaboration between traditional public safety departments and non-traditional departments. For instance, the Chief could work more closely with Parks & Recreation or Arts & Culture departments.

FOCUS 3: INCREASE PREVENTION SERVICES THROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED HEALTH CENTERS

Because the Affordable Health Care Act will expand the number of Boston patients seeking health care at their Neighborhood-

Photo: Kit Pyne



based Health Centers (NHCs), many different populations will be accessing health care with a new urgency in coming years. Therefore, we feel it is beneficial to partner NHCs with the City of Boston so they can become central locations for Boston’s public safety prevention and intervention efforts. This would include, but is not limited to reentry services, substance abuse

services, support for survivors of domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation, and programming for high-risk youth.

Our recommendation does not suggest or expect that NHCs create and facilitate all of the programming themselves. They may create and facilitate some programming, but we primarily envision them as hosts of other facilitators from municipal government, nonprofit, and private sectors. Utilizing NHCs will also allow each neighborhood to have its own resources which would lead to localized best practices.

KEEP

- 1) Neighborhood-based Health Center
Autonomy: Partnering with the city is beneficial for NHCs and does not require the many organizations currently doing good work to stop providing excellent service. Rather, these partnerships are mutually beneficial and allow for comprehensive care.

IMPLEMENT

- 1) Mapping of Resources: Utilizing data from government agencies (e.g., city, state, federal), nonprofits, community groups, and colleges and universities, all services related to public safety should be mapped out so that each NHC could be properly aligned with relevant community resources.
- 2) More Preventative Resources for High Risk Youth: Programming at NHCs should make

identifying high risk youth and providing them with a range of supportive services at earliest signs of risky, violent, or disruptive behavior a priority. Presently, services are often made available once high-risk youth are already well into destructive behaviors. Early programming at NHCs could work to prevent this trend.

- 3) Pilot Models: Involve a small number of NHCs in pilot public safety programs. If successful, the model would be expanded.

DREAM

- 1) Comprehensive Prevention and Intervention: The ideal is that every Boston neighborhood would have NHCs that can comprehensively support the health, safety, and well-being of every resident. This public health model works to prevent root causes of individuals' problems and issues, and intervenes by providing wrap-around supports to individuals and families.

FOCUS 4: INCREASE TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES TO FEMALE



Photo: Kit Pyne

SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

Female survivors of violence and exploitation have been underserved for a long time. This population ranges from survivors of rape, domestic violence, prostitution and human trafficking, to victims of street assaults and harassment, as well as females coerced into holding/purchasing firearms. All these forms of violence are highly traumatic. We suggest there be increased, trauma-informed public safety resources for women who experience this kind of violence.

KEEP

- 1) Maintain and Promote Current Support Services for Women: A wide array of local programs, many of which have been doing consistently good work for many years, exist across the city of Boston. There are also newer initiatives like LIPSTICK, which focus on women buying/holding firearms, and Hollaback! Boston, a website and social media campaign that works to eliminate street harassment of women. Programs and initiatives of this sort should be more actively supported and promoted.



- 2) Keep BPD’s Human Trafficking Unit: The Human Trafficking Unit of the BPD has done great work with limited resources.

IMPLEMENT

- 1) Provide More Resources to the Human Trafficking Unit: This unit should be made a priority at BPD’s Bureau of Investigative Services. There should be an increased punitive focus on demand, with more services dedicated to women who are struggling to exit a life of prostitution.
- 2) Create a High Risk Runaway Squad: This squad, housed at BPD, could work in coordination with the Boston School Police to bring an end to the exploitation of children through sex trafficking. It should be fashioned after Dallas, Texas’ High Risk Runway Team.

DREAM

- 1) Consistently Fund Services for Exploited Women: We would like to see well-funded, and consistently supported programs for exploited women. This includes vocational and housing opportunities for formerly prostituted women, increased beds for domestic violence survivors,

and exploitation prevention programming in schools.

- 2) Cultural Change Towards Violence Against Women: With so many rapes, assaults, and incidents of harassment in Boston neighborhoods, it is our dream to have a culture that is wholly intolerant towards these types of behaviors because the highest levels of leadership in city government is prioritizing policy to defeat such injustices.

CONCLUSION

Some of the suggestions in our report are small changes, while others are bigger and will take more time to realize. We understand that patience and perseverance are needed to meet these goals.

As a group, we did not always agree on every point, but we were surprised by how much consensus was reached around our highest priorities. With increased collaboration and inclusiveness around the areas we have highlighted, we believe that Boston could be one of the safest and most resource-rich cities in America. As Mayor Walsh and others have frequently noted, we cannot arrest our way out of public safety problems. Everyone in Boston needs to work collectively to make this vision a reality.

Public Safety Working Group

Co-chairs

- Andrea Cabral, MA Secretary of Public Safety
- Bob Dunford, Former Superintendent, BPD; Facilitator, UMass Boston

Members

- Mukiya Baker-Gomez, Manager of Compliance, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance
- Molly Baldwin, CEO & Founder, ROCA
- Rev. Jeffrey Brown, Founder, Ten Point Coalition
- Clementina Cherry, President and CEO, Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
- Mike Christopher, Manager, Public Policy/ Public Affairs, Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
- Mike Coelho
- Michael Donovan, Clerk Magistrate-Superior Court
- Thea James, Emergency Medicine Physician, Boston Medical Center; Director/Founder, Violence Intervention Advocacy Program
- Cherie Jimenez, Director, EVA Center
- Genevieve King, Former Captain Detective, BPD
- Dr. Jack McDevitt, Associate Dean, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Northeastern University
- Michael Mullane, Retired Boston Firefighter; 3rd Vice President, International Association of Firefighters
- Dana Pierce, Chief, Roxbury District Court
- Ricardo Quiroga, Founder and Former Executive Director of Casa Esperanza, Inc.
- William Rodriguez, Chair and Assistant Professor, Juvenile Justice and Youth Advocacy Department, Wheelock College
- Carol Rose, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts
- Kevin Sibley, Program Coordinator, StreetSafe Boston
- Steve Tompkins, Sheriff, Suffolk County
- Lauren Woods, Patrol Officer, Boston Police Department

Staff Support

- Brendan Little, Dorchester resident

Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.