



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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November 22, 2017

West Side Community Organization Board of Directors
209 Page Street
Saint Paul, MN 55107

Dear West Side Community Organization Board of Directors:

I am writing in response to the resolution you sent on Friday, November 17. I sincerely appreciate your interest in the work our officers are doing to keep Saint Paul safe for everyone who lives, works and visits the city.

Your willingness to share your questions, concerns and ideas about strengthening the Saint Paul Police Department plays an important role in our mission of protecting the peace and maintaining public safety through trusted service with respect.

I also appreciated the resolution you crafted. It's clear to me that much thought went into it—and your organization shares our vision for making a great police department even better.

We are committed to becoming a model police department for the 21st century, and are taking aggressive steps to achieve our goal. You can read more about our efforts by visiting our "21st Century Policing Report," which was launched earlier this year and provides detailed information about our efforts to:

- build and strengthen trust and transparency
- strengthen policy and oversight
- leverage technology and social media
- expand community policing and crime reduction
- provide training and education that aligns with the values we share with our community
- ensure officer wellness and safety.

If these six categories sound familiar, it's because they are the six pillars identified by in the "Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing," which is widely recognized as the gold standard for how police departments across the country can promote effective crime reduction while building trust.

The website can be found at www.stpaul.gov/police. I encourage you to visit the site and explore all of the ways we're working to increase trust, transparency and effectiveness.

I'd also like to take a moment to address the action steps you outlined in your letter.

You identified critically important steps that our department can take to become a police department that is even more connected to our community. I'm happy to share with you that we are already moving forward with many of your recommendations:

- Earlier this year we established the Community Engagement Unit to build even stronger ties with the people we serve. The unit includes a senior commander, two sergeants, a police officer and four community engagement specialists who work to address questions and concerns that arise in our diverse community.

I believe that trust between the police and the people we serve is critically important to our ability to keep Saint Paul safe, so we're also involved in National Night Out, Safe Summer Nights, the Civilian Police Academy, our Junior Police Academies, community meetings, social media and more.

- We are working harder than ever to increase transparency. After all, we are not the police department, we are your police department. Since the beginning of the year, we have launched the above-mentioned "21st Century Policing Report," posted 15 years' worth of traffic stop data online and launched a community survey, which provides the public an opportunity to let us know what we're doing well and where we can improve. In addition, we are working hard to provide as much information as quickly as possible (under Minnesota State Statute 13.82) after critical incidents and other high-profile interactions.

I firmly believe that transparency is the hallmark of a model 21st century police department, so we'll continue to work to release as much information as possible, whenever possible.

- We share your commitment to addressing racial disparities. That's why we have a Racial Equity Plan, which ensures that we work to identify disparities based on race, socio-economic situations and other factors that may inadvertently interfere with our ability to ensure that we are policing based on behavior. Every department employee—sworn and civilian—participates in racial equity training. We provide officers with data about their traffic stops so that they can be aware of potential issues. And we talk about it.

As a police department, we acknowledge our implicit bias. After all, we're human—and everyone has biases. I'm proud to lead a department that is willing to address the issue openly and honestly.

- We recognize that everyone who cares about our city has a vested interest in our work. Many people share their feelings, ideas and opinions—about policing, politics and even individual people. And while we might not always agree with their positions, we respect their right to make their voices heard.

We understand that communication is vitally important to our ability keep Saint Paul safe. As a department, we work hard to be as transparent as state law allows—when good things happen as well as when unfortunate incidents occur. When we are wrong, I believe it is our obligation to take responsibility and find ways to address issues as soon as possible.

- We hold ourselves to the highest standards of professional and personal responsibility. I know that our officers work hard to deliver trusted service with respect on a daily basis. Unfortunately, we sometimes fall short of our expectations for ourselves and those of the people we serve.

In these rare occasions, it is my job to hold employees accountable, which is something I do not take lightly. It's too important.

- I feel extremely fortunate to live in and serve a community that cares so deeply about public safety and is willing to step up to help us be the best department possible by serving on the Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission, attend our Civilian Police Academy and share their experiences through our community survey.

Only by working together can we truly achieve our mission of becoming a model police department for the 21st Century.

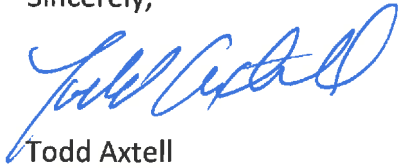
And we are making incredible progress.

Our officers do amazing things every day. They are caring, highly skilled law enforcement professionals who respond to more than 250,000 calls for service every year. They help people in the throes of the worst moments of their lives, run towards danger and build relationships that make Saint Paul such a great place.

We have a great city and a great police department. With the continued engagement of your organization and others, we can become even better.

I truly appreciate your time, energy, thoughtfulness and work on behalf of the people we serve. I or a member of my staff would also welcome the opportunity to attend one of your meetings to further discuss your letter and resolution, answer questions and share even more information with you about how we are working to build trust, become even more transparent and make the Saint Paul Police Department an organization that reflects our community in both diversity and values. I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,



Todd Axtell
CHIEF OF POLICE

P.S. I know that your organization is interested in our training program, so I've attached a document that outlines the training our officers receive.

cc: Mayor Chris Coleman
Saint Paul City Councilmembers
Deputy Mayor Kristin Beckmann
Mayor-Elect Melvin Carter
Deputy Mayor-Elect Jaime Tincher

Attachment

Saint Paul Police Department | Training Unit Fact Sheet

- The department re-engineered its use of force training to focus on these core concepts:
 - The sanctity of human life is at the core of everything the agency does
 - Focus on effective de-escalation techniques
 - Recognize pre-assault indicators and the signs and symptoms of mental illness
 - How and when to slow things down
 - Avoid single-officer arrests when possible and use available resources
 - Use “Team Tactics” and “Control Techniques” to minimize the use of force
 - Goal to create competent and confident officers who are able to think critically under stress and make good decisions
- The department exceeds state Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) standards, which do not require a police academy for new recruits. The Saint Paul Recruit Academy training is a comprehensive 16-week (500 hour) program, which includes:
 - 170 hours of response to resistance and aggression training
 - 24 hours of use of force scenario-based training
 - An additional 50 hours of scenario-based training emphasizing techniques for de-escalating situations involving distraught individuals, with simulated calls for petty theft, child custody disputes, sexual assaults and deaths. (The only force allowed during these scenarios is controlled handcuffing.)
 - Officers learn how to constantly re-evaluate and de-escalate force when feasible
 - After the 16-week Academy, each officer attends a 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team training, during which officers learn to identify the signs and symptoms of various types of mental illness, learn additional de-escalation techniques for people suffering mental health crisis, and learn about different community resources available as alternatives to incarceration
 - Eight hours of LEADS (Law Enforcement Active Diffusion Strategies) training and 21 hours of diversity training on racial equity and implicit bias.
- The department exceeds state POST standards for in-service training for sworn officers
 - Officers are required to attend 60 hours of in-service training every three years
 - Officers receive eight hours of resistance to response training annually
- Sworn officers have received the following in-service training
 - Eight hours of Street Safe scenario-based training. This training is a consistent focus and strategy used in training Saint Paul police officers annually for the purpose of preparing them to be able to think critically under stress and make good decisions.
 - Eight hours of LEADS (Law Enforcement Active Diffusion Strategies) this focused on tactical de-escalation, conflict resolution, and distraction techniques. Our training has focused on effective de-escalation techniques. Since 2013 we have held annual training that builds on the LEADS training. All recruits in our academies receive LEADS training as part of their academy curriculum.
 - 40 hours of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training. At the conclusion of 2017 approximately 300 Saint Paul (all front-line patrol) police officers assigned to

patrol will be trained in CIT. The remaining sworn staff will be fully trained in CIT over the course of the next two years. The initial CIT is a weeklong intensive training program and we will be providing refresher courses annually.

- Eight-hour diversity training, which began being offered in 2013. Starting in 2018, the Minnesota Police Officer Standards and Training Board (POST) will mandate 16 hours of training every three years pertaining to diversity/mental health and de-escalation. Saint Paul has been exceeding this mark for the past three years. Racial equity is now also an annual in-service training topic.
- Four-hour training on High Risk Youth. This began in 2015, and all academies since continue to receive this training as part of their academy curriculum.
- Eight hours of implicit bias/racial equity training occurred in 2016
- Four hours of implicit bias/racial equity training occurred in 2017
- The department allows for 40+ hours of additional optional training courses annually. The department has a formal training approval process for all training requests.

The department does not sanction training that does not adhere to its policies or reflect the department's mission of protecting the peace and maintaining public safety through trusted service with respect. Please note that components of the Bulletproof Warrior training model do not appear to reflect the department's mission and therefore is not an authorized course.