

Community Safety Listening & Strategy Session

March 30, 2022, 6-7:30pm

Intended Outcomes:

1. Connect community members concerned about safety in the neighborhood
2. Build a shared understanding of safety problems impacting the neighborhood, and a shared vision
3. Identify resources within the community to address safety problems and build toward the vision

Participation

Over 50 people attended – an exact head count was not taken

Overview

After the welcome and introductions, the group began discussion of their neighborhood safety concerns in plenary (see notes below). After approximately 25-30 minutes, the group was divided on whether to continue a discussion of safety concerns or to move on to discuss potential solutions. It was decided that the large group would divide into two (“concerns” and “solutions” groups). About one-third of participants chose to continue discussing concerns and two-thirds chose to discuss potential solutions (see notes below). The group discussing solutions decided to break up into two groups. At approximately 7:25, the session was ended. The notes below are based on the notes from flip charts and post-its.

Safety Concerns

Note: Not all participants agreed with every concern raised. For example, individual participants disagreed about the level of police presence desired in the neighborhood. The below list represents issues raised but not necessarily agreement.

Police

- Not enough police presence
- Deterioration in community relationship with police

Crime

- Car theft / other theft
- Open drug market at Dawson Park and near schools
- Repeat window breaking on MLK (understood to be done by one or a small group of persons)
- Graffiti
- Speeding and running of stop signs – PBOT says there isn't speeding data to justify traffic calming, but some in the community point out issues with the data used to make the determination; for example, how far away from the stop sign car speed is measured
- Stanton street has no traffic calming from the hospital all the way to 7th Ave

- General sense of “lawlessness” - many of the policies related to drug sales near schools are not being upheld by City/PPB

Issues caused by houselessness

- Dangerous conditions in the houseless camp along the substation (propane explosion earlier this year)
- Abandoned cars – PBOT says it can’t tow because it’s not high enough on the criteria

Root causes of safety issues

- Mental health issues & drug addiction
- Lack of affordable housing
- Affordable housing complexes need continuum of services (e.g. – events for youth and others who live or have stake within the building).
- Not enough low barrier jobs

Challenges in the community

- Neighborhood Association members are working without pay
- Eliot has “two communities”: newer homeowners and the historical residents who want to stay and have more struggles
- Because of the danger, the community is losing people it needs to address community issues; for example, several physicians and staff at Randall’s Children’s Hospital have quit or moved to other places

Relationship with policy/policymakers

- Policies don’t fit current needs
- Laws & policies that exist are not enforced
- Community presents ideas, but they aren’t implemented

Potential Solutions

Note: While some in the group felt more police presence would address some (or all) of the safety concerns, others were open to exploration of non-police mechanisms for deterring crime/violence. The groups brainstorming solutions were asked to try to focus on solutions that could be implemented with resources that already exist in the community.

Community engagement

- Block Managers/captains (paid)
- Build relationships within the community through “convening” methodology
- Communicate with houseless community members
- Neighborhood backfill support for community events
- Neighborhood Coalition Communications/Consolidation
- Collaboration between orgs on the ground (in the park) and those trying to join the effort

- Align various neighborhood efforts

Infrastructure / Rehabilitation

- Graffiti should come down within two days
- Fixing broken glass within 24 hours
- Traffic management on Stanton & Rodney
- Better lighting in hot spots
- Cameras at Dawson Park
- Trash/debris on MLK & Ivy (consolidate who to call – volunteers/support)

Business Engagement

- More business involvement and contribution, business owner engagement
- Development & support for businesses on hot spot corners (e.g. Ivy & MLK)

Non-profit support

- Fund organizations trying to fight crime (the organizations that don't necessarily have a 501c3)
- Non-profit support for gang & drugs

Policy changes

- Make some bus lines free (lines 6 and 4)
- Free (no fee) dumping
- Can we get some of the PCEP money the City can't spend?

Social / community-building activities

- Outlets for activity
- Utilize Dishman for youth programs
- Play music in the neighborhood
- Community spaces in hot spot areas (gardens, etc.)
- Educational services at Dishman and raise awareness of current programs
- Re-occupy Dawson Park
- Have events/programming @ Dawson Park

Services for those at-risk

- Expungement fair (at Dishman?)
- Gun buy back (email the sheriff)

Housing

- Service to housing continuum – transitional resources
- Analysis on alternative support (*not sure what this was referring to*)

Increase economic opportunity

- Work with Legacy regarding hiring programs
- Resource & job fairs (@Dishman?) or Cascadia

Communications Initiatives

- Good press
- Bulletin Board for communications
- Increase awareness of the right resource to call during emergencies
 - Multnomah County Crisis Line (503-988-4888) – put it in your phone!

Resources in the Community to Implement Solutions

Note: While the original agenda allotted time to focus on identifying resources that already exist in the community, time did not allow discussing this as a discrete section of the agenda. This list was compiled based on resources that came up during the meeting and some previous knowledge of the neighborhood. This is not exhaustive, and almost certainly just represents a small sliver of the neighborhood's resources.

- Community members at the meeting concerned about safety
- Neighborhood Association
- Dawson Park
- Library
- Several bus lines
- Local businesses
 - Nike Community Store & employee volunteer program
- Miracles Club
- Urban League of Portland
- Matt Dishman Community Center
- Legacy Emanuel Medical Center
- Randall's Children's Hospital
- Cascadia Behavioral Health
- St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church
- Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church
- Inner Resources Organizational Consulting
- Arc en Ciel Montessori French Immersion School