SAFE CITY COALITION

SAFE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

CITY OF ALBANY, GEORGIA
FEBRUARY 2018

Message from the
CHIEF OF POLICE, MICHAEL PERSLEY

To: Dorothy Hubbard, Mayor of Albany, GA

Sharon Subadan, City Manager of Albany, GA

Board of Commissioners for Albany, GA

Citizens of Albany, GA

Greetings!

It is an honor and privilege to present to you the Safe City Strategic Plan. This document is the culmination of a vision Mayor Dorothy Hubbard shared in October of 2017. At that time, the Mayor announced to the citizens of Albany (GA) a desire for a strategic plan to be put in place to enhance the citizenry's ability to be safe and live with a perception of safety. By strategically addressing five focus areas detailed in this document, I believe that we will accomplish the Mayor's vision. Together, we will utilize these strategies to continue to build upon the efforts of an already progressive and transformational community that enjoys meaningful partnerships between its stakeholders. Thank you for your support of the Albany (GA) Police Department and for the other agencies in this community that are working to make a positive difference in your life and in the lives of your family, friends, and neighbors. We could not be effective without the numerous acts of goodwill and encouragement you show us. Please know that the Albany (GA) Police Department will always endeavor to serve you with the utmost integrity, respect, and sincerity. Together, we can make a positive difference!

Sincerely,

Chief of the Albany (GA) Police Department

THE SAFE CITY COALITION

- Dorothy Hubbard, Mayor, City of Albany (GA)
- Chief Michael Persley, Albany (GA) Police Department, **Chair** of the Safe City Coalition
- Dr. Marlene Ramsey, **Facilitator** and **Drafter** of the Safe City Strategic Plan

MEMBERS

- Samuel Allen, Director, Dougherty County Emergency Management Services
- Cynthia Battle, Chief of Police, Dougherty County Police Department
- David Blackwell, Chair of Albany-Dougherty Coalition to End Homelessness
- Robert Boney, Asst. Chief Supervision Officer, Department of Community Supervision
- Troy Conley, Chief of Police, Dougherty County School System Police Department
- Nathan Davis, City Attorney, Albany (GA)
- Prurince Dice, Major, Albany-Dougherty Drug Unit
- Greg Edwards, District Attorney, Dougherty County
- Aaron Favors, President, Country Club Estates Neighborhood Association
- John Fields, Jr., Chief of Police, Albany State University Police Department
- Michael Fowler, Coroner, Dougherty County
- Tom Gieryic, Owner, Gieryic Automotive Repair
- Russell Gray, President, Lake Park-Merry Acres Neighborhood Association
- Dr. Kimberly Sinclair Holmes, Interim Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Albany State University
- Kenneth Johnson, Assistant Chief of Police, Dougherty County Police Department
- Mary Ligon, Owner, Mary Ligon, Etc.
- Pamela Lofton, Director, Dougherty County Department of Family and Children Services
- Debra McFadden-Bryant, Business Process Improvement Specialist, City of Albany (GA)
- Kimberly Persley, Chief Supervision Officer, Department of Community Supervision
- Ben Roberts, Public Relations Manager, Phoebe Putney Health System
- Dianne Rogers, Executive Director, Liberty House of Albany, Inc.
- Samuel Sneed, Jr., Pastor, Bethesda Community Outreach Church
- Sharon Subadan, City Manager, Albany (GA)
- Chad Warbington, Owner, Shutters Plus, Inc.

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SECTION 1:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN (SCSP) OVERVIEW

Many researchers and academicians have identified significant relationships between city growth, population trends, quality of life, and community conditions. A healthy economy, substantial employment opportunities, a robust education system, decreasing poverty rates, and low crime positively contribute to a city's appeal and its ability to expand and thrive. Therefore, in May 2017 when *24/7 Wall Street* (a financial news and opinion company) designated Albany as "the most dangerous city in Georgia," city officials in Albany began to closely monitor local crime statistics. The reason for this depiction of Albany was *24/7 Wall Street*'s report that Albany's violent crime rate was 667.9 per 100,000 inhabitants with a state violent crime rate of 378.3 per 100,000 inhabitants. These numbers suggest that an abnormally high and disproportionate amount of violent crime had occurred – when the number of people living in Albany were considered against the number of violent crimes that had occurred in Albany. The report further indicated that limited economic opportunities, inadequate income, and poverty – prompted and perpetuated financial hardship in Albany and contributed to Albany having the highest violent crime rate in Georgia.

In June 2017 (and updated again October 25, 2017), *24/7 Wall Street* reported that when considering national averages, as other cities grew 11.5%, Albany experienced a decline in growth of 4.0%. According to the report, the factors contributing to this decline were an unfavorable job market, a 7.9% unemployment rate, a poverty rate doubling that of the national average, and a population in which only 19% of residents had college degrees. Now, in addition to being designated as "the most dangerous city in Georgia," 24/7 Wall Street declared that Albany was the "7th worst city in America" in which to live.

Although the Albany (GA) Police Department worked vigilantly to decrease violent and overall crime, by late October 2017, the Department's year-to-date crime statistics revealed a spike in murders (21 homicides), representing an almost 62% increase in murder when compared to the same time period for the previous year (2016), and an approximately 163% increase in murder when compared to the same time period for October 2015. Although the reported murders included domestic violence incidents and other incidents between individuals who knew each other – a positive perception of safety in Albany took a major hit. Therefore, City of Albany (GA) leaders met to discuss and determine the best way to approach and combat violent crime and other persistent issues – such as the opioid epidemic, poverty, and recidivism – that impact quality of life.

Following this meeting, the Mayor of Albany (GA), Dorothy Hubbard, issued a call to action and established a Safe City Coalition (SCC). The Coalition was given a charge to work cooperatively to develop ideas and recommendations that could be included in a Safe City Strategic Plan (SCSP). The Safe City Strategic Plan would be introduced within 60-days of the Mayor's charge, and would be something that she, future mayors, city government, and citizens could use to address prevailing community problems. This plan would be something the City of Albany could use to proactively deter crime and crime-promoting elements and respond to citizens' negative perceptions about safety in Albany.
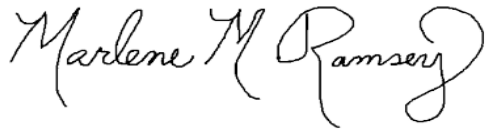
Chief Michael Persley, Chair of the Safe City Coalition, and Dr. Marlene Ramsey, Facilitator for the Safe City Strategic Plan, galvanized community voices to produce a strategic plan. As a result, a vast and diverse network of stakeholders collaborated to problem-solve and critically-think about challenges facing Albany, make the effort toward strategic plan

successful, and return a comprehensive strategic plan of action. To use a term coined by the City Manager of Albany (GA), Sharon Subadan – a "playbook" has been developed for now and posterity. This playbook contains several strategies with numerous tasks to accomplish these strategies.

Through various means, methods, research, and collaboration with many members, an inclusive plan is now available to specifically address "how" the City of Albany (GA) can and should work together to reduce and eradicate crime and its related issues. Although this inaugural playbook presents ways to deal with specific focus areas, it is a living problem-solving reference that is flexible and adaptable in its capacity to consider the future and address other focus areas and unusual and persistent community phenomenon (that create barriers to achieving a safe community and a sense of safety).

Contained herein are strategic recommendations, tasks, applications, methods, models, and roles to promote the City of Albany's (GA) ability to deal with a broad range of community complexities through collaboration between individuals, organizations, the Albany Police Department, and the City of Albany government structure. The recommendations for this strategic action plan are divided into five focus areas (or The Five Focus Areas) that are broken down into specific strategies. These strategies are then further broken down into tasks necessary to complete the strategies. The current plan will enhance rational, open-minded, and evidence-based thinking to empower Albany (GA) members to be informed participants involved in leadership and change. This is truly a community collaborative plan of action.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene M. Ramsey, PhD, MS, CCIA
Law Enforcement and Government Consultant
CEO, RPB Consulting
Safe City Strategic Plan Facilitator and Drafter

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN VISION STATEMENT

The City of Albany (GA) is a vibrant community with a rich cultural heritage, natural wonders, and historic treasures. As Albany grows, it will relish its past and embrace progress toward a bright, prosperous, and sustainable future. Albany is a unique community with talented residents who contribute to innovation and advancement. It has resources that impact the local, state, national and global economies, and it displays good stewardship over its resources. Albany is a first-class metropolis with dynamic opportunities for entertainment, recreation, and artistic experiences, as well as access to diverse faith-based associations. Albany is a safe community where residents demonstrate a respect for laws, show concern for each other, display reverence for their neighborhoods, and where residents support the community institutions and components that promote the survival of their norms and subsystems.

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Safe City Strategic Plan is to support the City of Albany's efforts to fight crime and promote a safe community. Because of the SCSP, the community will increase its collaborative efforts. Stakeholders from across the community spectrum will collectively problem-solve when issues arise that jeopardize the ability of Albany residents to be safe and live with a perception of safety. Community members will work cooperatively with city officials to preserve the community and eradicate any barriers that prevent the citizens from having the opportunity to enjoy a healthy quality of life in the "Good Life City."

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE

To promote collaborative work on ways to positively address community safety and perception of community safety.

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN FIVE FOCUS AREAS

The Safe City Strategic Plan contains recommendations that are delineated into five focus areas (or The Five Focus Areas) for strategic action. These are the guiding tenants for efforts to bring the Mayor's vision to fruition.

Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Social Services

Focus Area 1 involves developing strategies and establishing practices to increase citizens' access to and participation in social services relevant to their individual needs and circumstantial experiences. This will promote a better quality of life for citizens and support conformity to conventional activities and law-abiding behavior. The strategies for increasing access to social services are provided below. Each strategy has associated tasks that will increase the potential for the strategy's success. These tasks can be found in Section 12 of the SCSP.

- 1.1 Raise Community Awareness about Social Services
- 1.2 Partner and Mobilize against the Opioid Crisis (and other substance abuse crises)
- 1.3 Partner and Mobilize against Domestic Violence
- 1.4 Partner and Mobilize against Individual Violence
- 1.5 Announce and Host Diverse Topics Social Services Workshops at the LEC
- 1.6 Fill Service Gaps by Utilizing Public Service-Oriented Organizations
- 1.7 Establish a Connection between Albany Police Department, Social Services, and Juvenile Delinquents or At-Risk Youth

Focus Area 2: Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

Focus Area 2 involves developing strategies and establishing practices to promote the success of law enforcement activities and opportunities to be effective. This will increase police officer satisfaction, ability, longevity, professionalism, and work ethic – which all support police officer retention and citizens' satisfaction with law enforcement. Promoting law enforcement effectiveness will also contribute to a better overall police department. The strategies for promoting law enforcement effectiveness are provided below. Each strategy has associated tasks that will increase the potential for the strategy's success. These tasks can be found in Section 12 of the SCSP.

- 2.1 Revamp and Revitalize Operation Ceasefire to Address Gun Violence
- 2.2 Create a Southwest Georgia Safe City Crime Prevention Taskforce
- 2.3 Hire Civilians and Volunteers for Services Not Requiring Certified Police Officers
- 2.4 Consolidate the Albany Police Department and Code Enforcement
- 2.5 Increase Tangible Incentives to Combat Police Officer Attrition
- 2.6 Give Police Officers a Voice to Combat Police Officer Attrition
- 2.7 Actively Promote Police Officer Success to Positively Impact Officer Retention
- 2.8 Create Bridge Programs with Local Institutions
- 2.9 Create a Partnership with Local Businesses
- 2.10 Address Advancement and Promotion
- 2.11 Address Citizen Perception of Police Officer Professionalism
- 2.12 Reassess and Revamp Recruitment Efforts
- 2.13 Establish Staple Employee Bonding Events
- 2.14 Keep Retirees and Former Members Connected to the Department

Focus Area 3: Leveraging Technology

Focus Area 3 involves developing strategies and establishing practices to leverage and

increase the intelligent use of technology to support crime-fighting efforts and community safety. This will reduce crime, positively impact citizens' perception of safety, and advance the City of Albany's ability to serve and protect its citizens. The strategies for leveraging technology are provided below. Each strategy has associated tasks that will increase the potential for the strategy's success. These tasks can be found in Section 12 of the SCSP.

- 3.1 Enhance Lighting to Create a Safer Environment
- 3.2 Implement and Strategically Institute a City-Wide Camera System
- 3.3 Partner with Citizens on Use of Home Security Systems for Crime-Fighting
- 3.4 Promote Citizens' Use of 311 and Other Crime-fighting Applications
- 3.5 Implement a License-plate Reader System
- 3.6 Neighborhood Watch Groups Should "Friend" Their Beat Officers

Focus Area 4: Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

Focus Area 4 involves developing strategies and establishing practices to encourage prosecutorial and judiciary innovation. This will promote a more effective and equitable criminal justice system that not only employs punitive sanctions, but one that also implements alternatives to incarceration and criminal justice system processing and embraces a restorative approach to the administration of justice and public safety. The strategies for prosecutorial and judiciary innovation are provided below. Each strategy has associated tasks that will increase the potential for the strategy's success. These tasks can be found in Section 12 of the SCSP.

- 4.1 Establish a Community Prosecution Unit to Increase Citizen Involvement
- 4.2 Establish Community Prosecution Offices to Expand Community Outreach
- 4.3 Create Greater Roles for and Hire Civilians
- 4.4 Create More Specialized Court Structures

- 4.5 Develop Customized and Alternative Restorative Justice and Sentencing Resolutions
- 4.6 Convene Annual Judicial Summits
- 4.7 Create Campus Safety Zones for Albany State University and Albany Technical College

Focus Area 5: Increasing Community Involvement

Focus Area 5 involves developing strategies and establishing practices to engage community stakeholders in collectively problem-solving community issues. This will promote collaboration between citizens and city government and promote the systematic use of partnerships to address public safety and disorder. The strategies for increasing community involvement are provided below. Each strategy has associated tasks that will increase the potential for the strategy's success. These tasks can be found in Section 12 of the SCSP.

- 5.1 Establish Storefront Police Substations
- 5.2 Revamp, Reprise, and Reignite the Community Policing Coordinator Position
- 5.3 Encourage Police Officers to be 24-Hour Community-Policing Ambassadors
- 5.4 Create a Captivating Community-Wide and Community-Focused Marketing Plan
- 5.5 Conduct Periodic Topic-Focused Community Forums
- 5.6 Embrace Faith-Based Communities as Partners
- 5.7 Utilize Community Faith-Based Leaders to Create a Chaplains Council
- 5.8 Expand and Revise the Role of Community Advisory Boards
- 5.9 Utilize Social Media
- 6.1 Develop Ways to Engage and Protect the Community's Youth
- 6.2 Revitalize Community-Mindedness through Volunteer Service
- 6.3 Host an Annual Community Appreciation Day
- 6.4 Host Community Outreach Weekends

THE SAFE CITY COALITION FOCUS GROUP

Focus groups are small groups of individuals who are guided in discussion by a facilitator. Focus groups capture opinions about specific topics to direct future action. Several focus groups were utilized in the development of the Safe City Strategic Plan (SCSP). The first focus group developed contained members from the Safe City Coalition. Using a facilitated discussion plan Dr. Marlene Ramsey, Safe City Strategic Plan facilitator, met with members of the group and engaged them in discussion to capture their views on community safety and ideas for improvement. This allowed group members the opportunity to share qualitative feedback for consideration and inclusion in the Safe City Strategic Plan (relevant to The Five Focus Areas). Focus Group 1 members were: Aaron Favors – President of the Country Club Estates Neighborhood Watch, John Fields – Chief of Police, Albany State University Police Department, Michael Fowler – Dougherty County Coroner. Tom Gieryic – Owner of Gieryic's Automotive Services, Kenneth Johnson – Assistant Chief of Police, Dougherty County Police Department, Ben Roberts – Public Information Officer for Phoebe Putney Health System, Diane Rogers – Executive Director of Liberty House of Albany, Inc.

SAFE CITY COALITION MEMBER INTERVIEW

An interview was conducted with a member of the Safe City Coalition. Pastor Samuel Sneed, Jr. provided an extensive response to strategic recommendations for the Safe City Strategic Plan.

SAFE CITY COALITION WORK GROUPS

Following the Safe City Coalition Focus Group meeting and Safe City Coalition Member Interview, Safe City Coalition Work Groups were assembled by Chief Michael Persley. Dr. Marlene Ramsey disseminated assignments to each Work Group based upon specific recommendations from the SCC Focus Group. The SCC Work Groups created plans to implement the recommendations of the SCC Focus Group. At the time of the printing of this document, four plans were completed. Group dynamics are presented below.

SCC Work Group 2 Members: Chief Jackie Battle, Dougherty County Police Department

Chief Troy Conley, Dougherty County School System Police Department

Mr. Chad Warbington, Owner, Shutters Plus, Inc.

SCC Work Group Focus Area: Law Enforcement Effectiveness

SCC Focus Group Recommendation: The Albany Police Department should establish a Safe City Southwest Georgia Taskforce to holistically address community issues and share information.

SCC Participating Work Group 3 Members: Russell Gray, President, Lake Park-Merry Acres Neighborhood Association

SCC Work Group Focus Area: Leveraging Technology

SCC Focus Group Recommendation: Install a city-wide camera system to capture more criminal activity.

SCC Work Group 4 Members: Chief Kimberly Persley, Coordinating Chief Supervision Officer, Department of Community Supervision

Attorney Nathan Davis, City Attorney, Albany (GA)

District Attorney Gregory Edwards, District Attorney, Dougherty County

SCC Work Group Focus Area: Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

SCC Focus Group Recommendation: Albany-Dougherty County should create more separate court structures/specialized courts to deal with various community issues, promoting judicial consistency, fairness, treatment customization, and better outcomes.

SCC Participating Work Group 5 Members: Dr. Kimberly Sinclair Holmes, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Albany State University

Mrs. Mary Ligon, Owner, Mary Ligon, Etc.

SCC Work Group Focus Area: Increasing Community Involvement

SCC Focus Group Recommendation: The City of Albany should work to increase fun interaction between police and citizens to develop positive relationships.

MODELS FOR THE SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Safe City Coalition Strategic Plan utilized three models to enhance the opportunity to collect and compile data and develop strategic recommendations. The models utilize interaction and collaboration to impact change of identified issues. The models for this plan are derivatives of national tools. Further, these models will be the guiding tenets for the implementation of the plan.

- SCSP Socio-Ecological Model of Interaction
- SCSP Venn Target of Change Diagram
- SCSP Collaborative Approach Model

IMPLEMENTATION

- Utilize Community Assets

- Key Roles

- Identify Funding Sources

- Create a Positive Environment

- Management Structure

- Utilize a Progress Timetable

- Enhance the Opportunity for Success

Year to Date Part I Crimes
Albany Police Department

Part I Crimes Committed Year-to-date as of October 2017 with Compairsons of October 2016 & 2015								
Actual Offenses	**2017** **Year to Date**	**2016**	**+/- Change**		**2017** **Year to Date**	**2015**	**+/- Change**	
Offenses Committed	October 2017	October 2016	#	%	October 2017	October 2015	#	%
Murder	21	13	8	61.54	21	8	13	162.50
Rape	21	18	3	16.67	21	29	-8	-27.59
Robbery	125	174	-49	-28.16	125	164	-39	-23.78
Aggravated Assault	550	543	7	1.29	550	463	87	18.79
Violent Crime Total	**717**	**748**	**-31**	**-4.14**	**717**	**664**	**53**	**7.98**
Burglary	742	738	4	0.54	742	966	-224	-23.19
Larceny	2508	2132	376	17.64	2508	2233	275	12.32
Auto Theft	130	123	7	5.69	130	153	-23	-15.03
Arson	20	18	2	11.11	20	24	-4	-16.67
Property Crime Total	**3400**	**3011**	**389**	**12.92**	**3400**	**3376**	**24**	**0.71**
Crime Trend Total	**4117**	**3759**	**358**	**9.52**	**4117**	**4040**	**77**	**1.91**

Part I Case Clearances Year-to-date as of October 2017 with Compairsons of October 2016 & 2015							
	2017	**2016**	**2015**		**2017**	**2016**	**2015**
Offenses Cleared	YTD # Cleared	YTD # Cleared	YTD # Cleared		YTD % Cleared	YTD % Cleared	YTD % Cleared
Murder	19	12	6		90.48%	92.31%	75.00%
Rape	17	11	14		80.95%	61.11%	48.28%
Robbery	46	61	46		36.80%	35.06%	28.05%
Aggravated Assault	204	199	239		37.09%	36.65%	51.62%
Violent Crime Cleared	**286**	**283**	**305**		**39.89%**	**37.83%**	**45.93%**
Burglary	111	147	152		14.96%	19.92%	15.73%
Larceny	497	440	496		19.82%	20.64%	22.21%
Auto Theft	46	40	47		35.38%	32.52%	30.72%
Arson	1	2	12		5.00%	11.11%	50.00%
Property Crime Cleared	**655**	**629**	**707**		**19.26%**	**20.89%**	**20.94%**
Clearance Total	**941**	**912**	**1012**		**22.86%**	**24.26%**	**25.05%**

* The Crime Trend and Clearance Totals do not include percentages for numbers not divisible by 0.

Year to Date Part I Crimes
Albany Police Department

Part I Crimes Committed Year-to-date as of November 2017 with Compairsons of November 2016 & 2015

Actual Offenses	2017 Year to Date	2016 Year to Date	+/- Change		2017 Year to Date	2015 Year to Date	+/- Change	
Offenses Committed	November 2017	November 2016	#	%	November 2017	November 2015	#	%
Murder	21	13	8	61.54	21	9	12	133.33
Rape	26	21	5	23.81	26	34	-8	-23.53
Robbery	135	192	-57	-29.69	135	183	-48	-26.23
Aggravated Assault	592	587	5	0.85	592	503	89	17.69
Violent Crime Total	774	813	-39	-4.80	774	729	45	6.17
Burglary	804	793	11	1.39	804	1036	-232	-22.39
Larceny	2745	2324	421	18.12	2745	2425	320	13.20
Auto Theft	141	132	9	6.82	141	163	-22	-13.50
Arson	20	20	0	0.00	20	24	-4	-16.67
Property Crime Total	3710	3269	441	13.49	3710	3648	62	1.70
Crime Trend Total	4484	4082	402	9.85	4484	4377	107	2.44

Part I Case Clearances Year-to-date as of November 2017 with Compairsons of November 2016 & 2015

Offenses Cleared	2017 YTD # Cleared	2016 YTD # Cleared	2015 YTD # Cleared		2017 YTD % Cleared	2016 YTD % Cleared	2015 YTD % Cleared
Murder	20	13	7		95.24%	100.00%	77.78%
Rape	18	11	15		69.23%	52.38%	44.12%
Robbery	47	68	53		34.81%	35.42%	28.96%
Aggravated Assault	222	220	266		37.50%	37.48%	52.88%
Violent Crime Cleared	307	312	341		39.66%	38.38%	46.78%
Burglary	119	154	160		14.80%	19.42%	15.44%
Larceny	549	486	549		20.00%	20.91%	22.64%
Auto Theft	52	43	52		36.88%	32.58%	31.90%
Arson	1	3	12		5.00%	15.00%	50.00%
Property Crime Cleared	721	686	773		19.43%	20.99%	21.19%
Clearance Total	1028	998	1114		22.93%	24.45%	25.45%

* The Crime Trend and Clearance Totals do not include percentages for numbers not divisible by 0.

CONCLUSION

The Safe City Coalition is a highly effective way to galvanize the City of Albany's resources to support a common goal. Partnering with community members, organizations, groups, and businesses will reduce the barriers to improving community conditions. The complexity of this new dynamic organization is what will empower the City of Albany to cross boundaries, sectors, wards, and districts to sustain an interdependence that will have lasting positive implications for maintaining a Safe Albany.

Sections 2 through 11 of this document will present the activities and background information used to develop the Safe City Strategic Plan. Section 12 of this document contains the strategic plan recommendations. Section 13 presents recommendations for implementation of strategic plan recommendations and tasks. Section 14 presents recommendations for measures and outcomes. Section 15 presents additional recommendations. Section 16 is the conclusions section of the Safe City Strategic Plan. Section 17 describes potential future research that has been proposed by a member of the community not associated with the Coalition.

SECTION 2:
MODELS, FEATURES, AND COMPONENTS FOR PROGRESS

THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL MODEL (SEM)

The Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) considers how interaction between complex environmental components influence behaviors. The figure below is a modified version of the Centers for Disease Control SEM. This SEM shows four nested hierarchical levels that represent the framework for the Safe City Coalition collaborative. This model is a physical representation of the environment in which collaboration, culture, critical-thinking, and problem-solving will exist as efforts are endeavored and undertaken toward maintaining a safe Albany (GA) community. As the SEM model shows, the Safe City Strategic Plan will require a collaboration between city government, organizations, groups and individuals contributing their time, talent, resources, and efforts to meaningful activities that will promote Albany's ability to be a safe community. Through a process of positive interaction, stakeholders will engage one another to strengthen community ties.

(Source: Centers for Disease Control)

SCSP VENN TARGET OF CHANGE DIAGRAM

The target of change diagram below displays how culture, structure, and systems must interact to produce a change in an identified target. Applying this model used by the National Institute of Justice, the Safe City Strategic Plan will strategically utilize community culture, structure, and systems to target community safety by addressing The Five Focus Areas. Culture is the social, psychological, human features, and phenomena in a community. Structure is the power, authority, accountability, operating procedures, and rules in a community. Systems refers to the collaborative approach, sub-systems, and the environment of interaction. The target of change is the issue or focus point that will change if the culture, structure, and systems combine to produce a beneficial result. The target of change for the current plan is real and perceived community safety.

Real and Perceived Community Safety

(SCSP Target of Change)
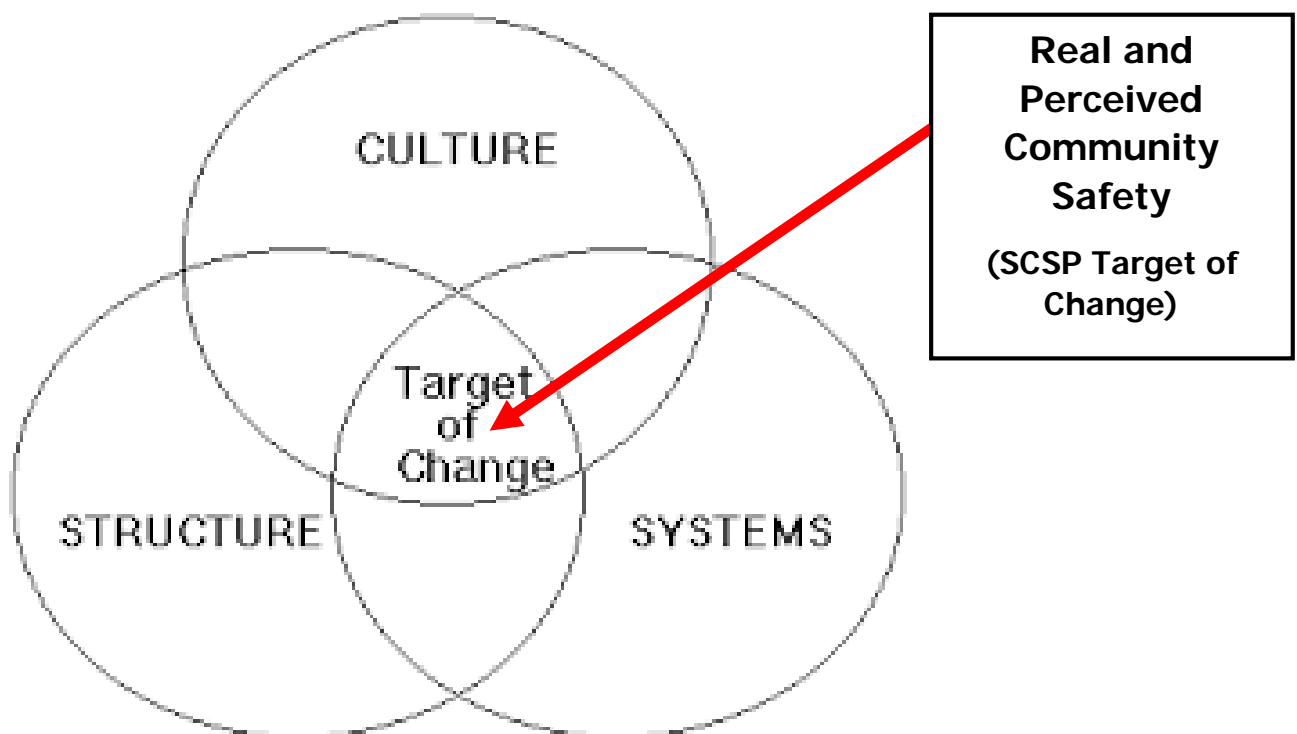
(Source: National Institute of Justice)

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN COLLABORATIVE APPROACH MODEL

In a safe community, collaboration is a continuous process embedded into the daily lives of people committed to making improvements that will benefit their city for years to come. The model below, from the Center for Community Health and Development, is a tangible representative of the Safe City Strategic Plan approach, and it demonstrates how fluid and interactive the process is of working together to transform a community. This fluidity is perpetuated by common goals, principles and values, setting objectives, planning, and action that will empower people to maintain a vision and work effectively together to see it through.
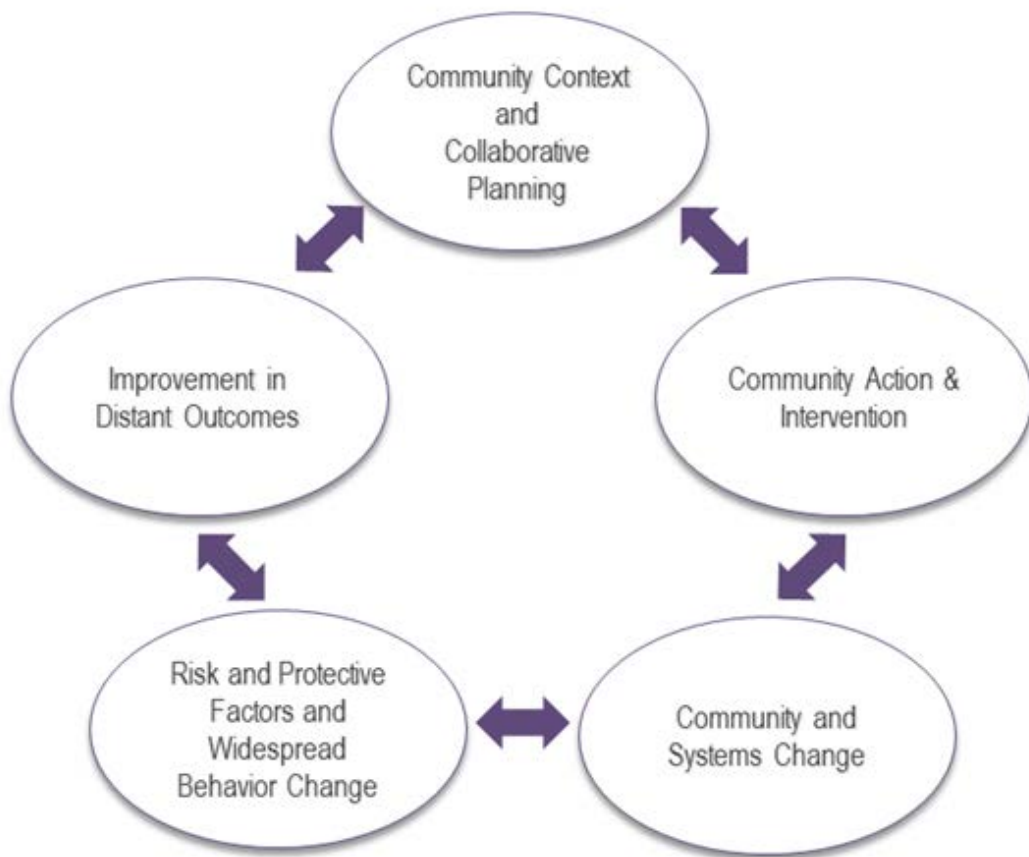
(Source: Center for Community Health and Development)

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN MAJOR COMPONENTS

LAW ENFORCEMENT

SOCIAL SERVICES

COMMUNITY

JUDICIARY, PROSECUTION, TECHNOLOGY

& INNOVATION

SECTION: 3
COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS

NARRATIVE OF ALBANY (GA)

Establishment

Albany, GA is a captivating destination and area of interest. In its earliest days, it was originally inhabited by the Creek Indians who called it "Thronateeska" (the place where flint is picked up). Later, Albany was founded in 1836 and chartered on December 27, 1838, receiving its name from Founder Nelson Tift who named Albany for the capital of New York. Over time, peanuts, pecans, and cotton became successful cash crops for Albany. Utilizing one of its greatest natural resources, the Flint River, Albany became a shipping port for transporting its crops to markets. Ultimately, Albany established a rail transport system that used seven rail lines, and this promoted Albany to become an important railroad hub for export that still operates today.

Natives

Albany has several natives who reached the world's stage and made (and are making) noteworthy achievements. They are civil rights icons, decorated military heroes, entertainers, government officials, professional athletes, and more. One of these notable Albany natives is the late great entertainer and musician Ray Charles. Against the backdrop of the historic Flint River, the Ray Charles Plaza leaves an indelible impression upon those who visit. Captured in illuminated bronze and seated at a baby grand piano, is a life-like replica of Ray Charles performing songs from his musical repertoire. The late Olympic Gold Medalist, Alice Coachman, for whom Alice Avenue and Alice Coachman School are named, is another notable native. Alice Coachman returned to Albany to live after an accomplished athletic career. She worked in and served the Albany community until her death in 2014. Byrd Holland, a male

who dominated the makeup industry for years, is an Albany native credited with: makeup work on 28 films and movies from 1966 to 1990, appearing in 21 films and movies from 1955 to 2014, creating the visual effects for 2 films, and serving as art director for 1 film. Today, at age 90 he still has a net worth of close to $1 million dollars. Original Freedom Singer, Rutha Mae Harris, continues to call Albany home. She increases the interest in the Civil Rights Museum at Old Mt. Zion Baptist Church, where she performs songs from the Civil Rights Movement on weekends throughout the year. Additionally, she continues to promote civil rights by traveling globally and rendering masterful performances of songs from the Civil Rights Movement Era. Among her stateside performance venues are the White House and Carnegie Hall. A play about her life was written, and it has been performed in cities across the United States.

Then, there are the other Albanians – world-class citizens, legendary in their own right – who live and work in Albany and take actions to positively affect change in Albany. The current Safe City Strategic Plan considers their input.

Landmarks

In addition to the Civil Rights Museum at Old Mt. Zion Baptist Church, adding to the charm of Albany, are other landmarks such as the: Flint Riverquarium, Parks at Chehaw, Radium Springs, Tift Park, Thronateeska Heritage Center, and other parks, gardens, and trails. These local treasures have provided numerous hours of enjoyment and awareness for those interested in local culture and natural resources. These landmarks will continue to offer insight and interest for anyone who desires to embrace them.

Education

Albany is a cutting-edge center for educational innovation, achievement, and excellence. The Dougherty County School System provides many diverse opportunities for students to realize their educational goals through traditional and non-traditional means. In 2017, the Dougherty County School Board recognized five Merry Acres Middle School students for their exceptional achievement in securing 1st place gold medals in two international competition categories for the Health Occupations Students of America Association and its chartered associations. Further, Albany State University, Albany Technical College, and satellite campuses that represent other institutions of higher learning (here in Albany) have positively impacted student ability, enhanced international research efforts, and whose graduates have contributed to the global economy.

CHALLENGES

Civil Rights

During the 1960's, the turbulence that accompanied the Civil Rights Movement impacted Albany. Civil rights figures who came to Albany left feeling a low sense of accomplishment or mild feelings of success. This attitude toward Albany eventually became an historic perception that civil rights progress was derailed in Albany. However, Albany persevered.

100-Year Flood

In 1994, Tropical Storm Alberto brought a torrential rain system that stalled over Albany, resulting in a flood that has been called the 100-year flood. During this event, Albany experienced devastation and lives were disrupted in major ways. Over 23,000 residents were displaced from their homes and property. The flood resulted in loss of lives and the

disinterment of over four-hundred caskets from the Riverside Cemetery – a cemetery located near the Flint River. Four years later, in 1998, the Flint River flooded again – although not as devastating as the Flood of 1994. Other major floods that occurred in Albany were in 1841 and 1925. However, Albany persevered.

Tornado

Early 2017, a large violent and deadly tornado hit Albany, destroying property and claiming lives in the process. According to the historical record, this was not the first deadly tornado to touch down in Albany. According to the New York Times, a deadly tornado struck downtown Albany in 1940, claiming the lives of 23 of its residents. However, after both events, Albany persevered.

Hurricane

Late 2017, Hurricane Irma arrived in Albany, damaging some property and leaving citizens without access to many essential services and necessities. As a result, citizens once again faced the task of rebuilding both their property and lives. Albany however, is a community that is unique in its response-ability to successfully navigate times of trouble. Having been the recipient of previous natural disasters, Albany residents developed a strong spirit of community, and that is what has sustained Albany during times of crisis. This spirit of community cooperation consistently prevails, and citizens readily answer calls for service in support of their neighbors in need because Albany always perseveres.

Final Analysis

The challenges Albany has faced throughout its history have created and contributed to its current state. Yet, just as Albany has overcome social and cultural turmoil and natural

disasters in the past, Albany will continue to persevere and rise above the issues that threaten

its vitality – because Albany is "*Albany Strong.*"

2016 U.S. CENSUS DATA FOR ALBANY-DOUGHERTY COUNTY

Compounding the challenges presented by the previously mentioned social, cultural, and natural phenomena, the U.S. Census Bureau Statistical Report for Albany (GA) reveals systemic circumstances that have contributed to Albany's inability to fully eradicate some of its community problems. The demographics presented by the U.S. Census Bureau help to provide an understanding of why crime occurs in cities and about who may be committing the crime.

When educational achievement is low, unemployment high, and poverty high – crime rates tend to rise. Usually, these characteristics are found in neighborhoods where residents are considered to comprise the working poor and poor social classes. In these areas, there are increased incidences of crime, causing these areas to be vulnerable and susceptible to disorder and safety issues. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 33.8% of people who live in Albany (GA) live in poverty. Of the number of people who live in Albany and are employed, the average annual income is $17, 391. Further, only 17.7% of Albany residents have college degrees which decreases the number of individuals available to be employed for higher paying jobs that require highly-skilled professionals with advanced education and college degrees.

The U.S. Census Bureau statistics also help to explain how age corresponds with crime. Individuals between the ages of 16 and 25 have higher arrest rates than other age groups. Therefore, communities that have a considerable number of individuals in this age category are at-risk for higher numbers of drug activities, gang-activities, assaults, and larcenies – than other communities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 26% of Albany's population is under the age of 18.

Despite the data about the people and economy in Albany, Albany continues to show itself to be a resilient and perpetual force for change and progress. In Albany, citizens display empathy for one another and determination to forge a bright future for the "Good Life City." The following pages display Albany (GA) data that has been collected by the United States Census Bureau. Please note that some reporting is inconclusive and incomplete.

ⓘ Population estimates, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	**73,801**
👤 **PEOPLE**	
Population	
ⓘ **Population estimates, July 1, 2016, (V2016)**	**73,801**
ⓘ Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2016)	77,434
ⓘ Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2016, (V2016)	-4.7%
ⓘ Population, Census, April 1, 2010	77,434
Age and Sex	
ⓘ Persons under 5 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	X
ⓘ Persons under 5 years, percent, April 1, 2010	7.9%
ⓘ Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	X
ⓘ Persons under 18 years, percent, April 1, 2010	26.4%
ⓘ Persons 65 years and over, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	X
ⓘ Persons 65 years and over, percent, April 1, 2010	11.3%
ⓘ Female persons, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	X
ⓘ Female persons, percent, April 1, 2010	53.9%
Race and Hispanic Origin	
ⓘ White alone, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (a)	X
ⓘ Black or African American alone, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (a)	X
ⓘ American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (a)	X
ⓘ Asian alone, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (a)	X
ⓘ Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (a)	X
ⓘ Two or More Races, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	X
ⓘ Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016) (b)	X
ⓘ White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	X
Population Characteristics	
ⓘ Veterans, 2011-2015	4,922
ⓘ Foreign born persons, percent, 2011-2015	2.5%

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Population estimates, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	73,801
Housing	
Housing units, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	X
Housing units, April 1, 2010	33,436
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2011-2015	38.3%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2011-2015	$98,200
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2011-2015	$1,110
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2011-2015	$418
Median gross rent, 2011-2015	$684
Building permits, 2016	X
Families & Living Arrangements	
Households, 2011-2015	29,076
Persons per household, 2011-2015	2.50
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2011-2015	81.4%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2011-2015	3.6%
Education	
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2011-2015	79.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2011-2015	17.7%
Health	
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2011-2015	11.7%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	⚠ 24.7%
Economy	
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2011-2015	58.0%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2011-2015	56.5%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	D
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	868,844
Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	D
Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	824,672
Total retail sales, 2012 ($1,000) (c)	1,449,584

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Population estimates, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	73,801
Transportation	
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2011-2015	17.8
Income & Poverty	
Median household income (in 2015 dollars), 2011-2015	$29,676
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2015 dollars), 2011-2015	$17,391
Persons in poverty, percent	⚠ 33.8%
BUSINESSES	
Businesses	
Total employer establishments, 2015	X
Total employment, 2015	X
Total annual payroll, 2015 ($1,000)	X
Total employment, percent change, 2014-2015	X
Total nonemployer establishments, 2015	X
All firms, 2012	7,385
Men-owned firms, 2012	3,283
Women-owned firms, 2012	3,494
Minority-owned firms, 2012	4,587
Nonminority-owned firms, 2012	2,425
Veteran-owned firms, 2012	866
Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012	6,144
GEOGRAPHY	
Geography	
Population per square mile, 2010	1,404.7
Land area in square miles, 2010	55.13

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Value Notes, Fact Notes, Value Flags for Albany (GA) Census Data

Value Notes

⚠ This geographic level of poverty and health estimates is not comparable to other geographic levels of these estimates

Some estimates presented here come from sample data, and thus have sampling errors that may render some apparent differences between geographies statistically indistinguishable. Click the Quick Info ⓘ icon to the left of each row in TABLE view to learn about sampling error.

The vintage year (e.g., V2016) refers to the final year of the series (2010 thru 2016). *Different vintage years of estimates are not comparable.*

Fact Notes
- (a)   Includes persons reporting only one race
- (b)   Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories
- (c)   Economic Census - Puerto Rico data are not comparable to U.S. Economic Census data

Value Flags
- -   Either no or too few sample observations were available to compute an estimate, or a ratio of medians cannot be calculated because one or both of the median estimates falls in the lowest or upper interval of an open ended distribution.
- D   Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information
- F   Fewer than 25 firms
- FN   Footnote on this item in place of data
- NA   Not available
- S   Suppressed; does not meet publication standards
- X   Not applicable
- Z   Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

QuickFacts data are derived from: Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, Current Population Survey, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits.

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

SECTION: 4
PRISON DATA

2016 PRISON STATISTICS FOR ALBANY–DOUGHERTY COUNTY

During the prison intake process in Georgia, inmates self-report their home county. The chart below shows that two-hundred fifty-four inmates reported Dougherty County as their home prior to their arrival to prison. Sometimes, inmates choose not to report their home of origin. These numbers will be missing from the chart below. Of the 254 inmates that did self-identify with Dougherty County as home in 2016, Dougherty County residents represent 1.40% of inmates in the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections. Of that number, males were 235 (1.47% column total) and females were 19 (.90% column total). The row totals for Dougherty County (Dougherty to Dougherty comparisons) were 235 (92.52%) males

Home County		Male			Female			Total	
		Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
038	Coweta County	162	1.01%	90.50%	17	.81%	9.50%	179	.99%
039	Crawford County	10	.06%	76.92%	3	.14%	23.08%	13	.07%
040	Crisp County	54	.34%	85.71%	9	.43%	14.29%	63	.35%
041	Dade County	29	.18%	96.67%	1	.05%	3.33%	30	.17%
042	Dawson County	40	.25%	81.63%	9	.43%	18.37%	49	.27%
043	Decatur County	42	.26%	93.33%	3	.14%	6.67%	45	.25%
044	Dekalb County	823	5.15%	91.14%	80	3.80%	8.86%	903	4.99%
045	Dodge County	47	.29%	90.38%	5	.24%	9.62%	52	.29%
046	Dooly County	23	.14%	88.46%	3	.14%	11.54%	26	.14%
047	Dougherty County	235	1.47%	92.52%	19	.90%	7.48%	254	1.40%

and 19 (7.48%) females.

(Source for Prison Statistical Charts: Georgia Department of Corrections)

The next chart on the following page shows that of Georgia inmates returning to transitional centers in Georgia in 2016, 24 (6.92% CT) males and 0 (0% CT) females returned to the Albany (GA) Transitional Center. This represents a 5.31% column total for individuals returning to community transitional centers across Georgia. The row totals for Dougherty

County (Dougherty to Dougherty comparisons) were 24 (100%) males and 0 (0%) females.

Institution Type - Trans. Centers	Male			Female			Total	
	Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
Albany Tc	24	6.92%	100.00%				24	5.31%

The chart below shows the county of conviction from which inmates in the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections originated. There were 317 (1.75% CT) inmates in custody whose county of conviction was Dougherty County. Of that number, there were 289 (1.81% CT) males and 28 (1.33% CT) females. The row totals for Dougherty County were 289 (91.17%) males and 28 (8.83%) females.

County of Conviction		Male			Female			Total	
		Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
038	Coweta County	197	1.23%	89.95%	22	1.04%	10.05%	219	1.21%
039	Crawford County	10	.06%	90.91%	1	.05%	9.09%	11	.06%
040	Crisp County	68	.43%	88.31%	9	.43%	11.69%	77	.43%
041	Dade County	35	.22%	85.37%	6	.28%	14.63%	41	.23%
042	Dawson County	49	.31%	76.56%	15	.71%	23.44%	64	.35%
043	Decatur County	37	.23%	92.50%	3	.14%	7.50%	40	.22%
044	Dekalb County	791	4.95%	93.50%	55	2.61%	6.50%	846	4.67%
045	Dodge County	57	.36%	89.06%	7	.33%	10.94%	64	.35%
046	Dooly County	30	.19%	88.24%	4	.19%	11.76%	34	.19%
047	Dougherty County	289	1.81%	91.17%	28	1.33%	8.83%	317	1.75%

The next chart on the following page shows the circuit of conviction from which inmates in the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections originated. There were 317 (1.76% CT) inmates in Georgia whose circuit of conviction was Dougherty County. The percentages differ slightly from the previous chart. However, these differences could represent a discrepancy in the original report. There were 289 (1.81% CT) males and 28 (1.33% CT)

females. The row totals for Dougherty County were 289 (91.17%) males and 28 (8.83%) females.

Circuit of Conviction		Male			Female			Total	
		Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
1	Alapaha Circuit	107	.67%	95.54%	5	.24%	4.46%	112	.62%
2	Alcovy Circuit	461	2.89%	86.33%	73	3.47%	13.67%	534	2.96%
3	Atlanta Circuit	1,274	8.00%	95.29%	63	3.00%	4.71%	1,337	7.41%
4	Atlantic Circuit	203	1.27%	89.82%	23	1.09%	10.18%	226	1.25%
5	Augusta Circuit	837	5.25%	90.29%	90	4.28%	9.71%	927	5.14%
6	Blue Ridge Circuit	226	1.42%	82.78%	47	2.23%	17.22%	273	1.51%
7	Brunswick Circuit	316	1.98%	92.13%	27	1.28%	7.87%	343	1.90%
8	Chattahoochee Circuit	402	2.52%	88.94%	50	2.38%	11.06%	452	2.51%
9	Cherokee Circuit	413	2.59%	82.27%	89	4.23%	17.73%	502	2.78%
10	Clayton Circuit	454	2.85%	90.44%	48	2.28%	9.56%	502	2.78%
11	Cobb Circuit	1,069	6.71%	84.31%	199	9.46%	15.69%	1,268	7.03%
12	Conasauga Circuit	375	2.35%	82.60%	79	3.76%	17.40%	454	2.52%
13	Cordele Circuit	186	1.17%	88.15%	25	1.19%	11.85%	211	1.17%
14	Coweta Circuit	712	4.47%	88.89%	89	4.23%	11.11%	801	4.44%
15	Dougherty Circuit	289	1.81%	91.17%	28	1.33%	8.83%	317	1.76%

Other Noteworthy 2016 Georgia Prisons' Data

The chart below shows the age of offenders in the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections. Of the 18,097 in custody, 549 inmates (3.03% CT) are between the ages of 1 and 19. Six-thousand three-hundred fifteen (34.90% CT) are between 20 and 29, 5,754 (31.80% CT) are between 30 and 39, 3,257 (18.00% CT) are between 40 and 49, 1,783 (9.85% CT) are between 50 and 59, 386 (2.13% CT) are between 60 and 69, 53 (.29% CT)

Current Age		Male			Female			Total	
		Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
Teens (1-19)		530	3.31%	96.54%	19	0.90%	3.46%	549	3.03%
Twenties (20-29)		5,683	35.54%	89.99%	632	30.00%	10.01%	6,315	34.90%
Thirties (30-39)		4,970	31.08%	86.37%	784	37.21%	13.63%	5,754	31.80%
Forties (40-49)		2,808	17.56%	86.21%	449	21.31%	13.79%	3,257	18.00%
Fifties (50-59)		1,592	9.96%	89.29%	191	9.07%	10.71%	1,783	9.85%
Sixties (60-69)		359	2.25%	93.01%	27	1.28%	6.99%	386	2.13%
Seventy + (70 and above)		48	0.30%	90.57%	5	0.24%	9.43%	53	0.29%
Total Reported		15,990	100%	88.36%	2,107	100%	11.64%	18,097	100%

are

70

and above.

Race of persons in custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections are shown in the next chart on the following page. Of the 18,097 in the custody, 7,702 (42.56% CT) are White,

		Male			Female			Total	
Race Group	Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
1 White	6,318	39.51%	82.03%	1,384	65.69%	17.97%	7,702	42.56%
2 Black	9,153	57.24%	92.91%	698	33.13%	7.09%	9,851	54.43%
5 Other	24	.15%	92.31%	2	.09%	7.69%	26	.14%
6 Asian	64	.40%	88.89%	8	.38%	11.11%	72	.40%
9 Unknown	3	.02%	100.00%				3	.02%
10 Hispanic	419	2.62%	96.77%	14	.66%	3.23%	433	2.39%
12 Native American	8	.05%	88.89%	1	.05%	11.11%	9	.05%
13 Native Hawaiian	1	.01%	100.00%				1	.01%
Total Reported	15,990	100%	88.36%	2,107	100%	11.64%	18,097	100%

9,851 (54.43% CT) are Black, 26 (.14% CT) are other, 72 (.40% CT) are Asian, 3 (.02% CT) are unknown, 433 (2.39% CT) are Hispanic, 9 (.05% CT) are Native American, and 1 (0.01% CT) is a Native Hawaiian.

The below chart shows the breakdown of crimes committed for which inmates in Georgia are incarnated. Approximately 32% (5,806) of all Georgia inmates are incarcerated for violent crimes, 8.80% (1,591) for sex crimes, 28.56% (5,164) for property crime, 20.58% (3,722) for drug activity, .50% (90) for habit/other, and 9.45% (1,709) for other crimes.

		Male			Female			Total	
Crime Categories	Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
1 Violent	5,347	33.47%	92.09%	459	21.79%	7.91%	5,806	32.11%
2 Sex Crime	1,561	9.77%	98.11%	30	1.42%	1.89%	1,591	8.80%
3 Property	4,364	27.32%	84.51%	800	37.99%	15.49%	5,164	28.56%
4 Drug	3,065	19.19%	82.35%	657	31.20%	17.65%	3,722	20.58%
5 Habit/DUI	82	.51%	91.11%	8	.38%	8.89%	90	.50%
6 Other	1,557	9.75%	91.11%	152	7.22%	8.89%	1,709	9.45%
Total Reported	15,976	100%	88.35%	2,106	100%	11.65%	18,082	100%

These percentages

represent column totals.

Five-thousand seven-hundred eleven inmates were evaluated for mental health. The next chart on the following page shows the breakdown of these statistics. Approximately 17%, (13,063) of the 18,097 Georgia inmates, required receipt of mental health treatment. For

inmates

Mental Health Treatment Lev	Male			Female			Total	
	Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
1 No problem at current time	2,334	54.34%	88.14%	314	22.18%	11.86%	2,648	46.37%
2 Receiving outpatient treatment	1,694	39.44%	60.83%	1,091	77.05%	39.17%	2,785	48.77%
3 Inpatient, moderate treatment	240	5.59%	96.39%	9	0.64%	3.61%	249	4.36%
4 Inpatient, intensive treatment	21	0.49%	91.30%	2	0.14%	8.70%	23	0.40%
5 Undergoing crisis stabilization	6	0.14%	100.00%				6	0.11%
Total Evaluated	4,295	100%	75.21%	1,416	100%	24.79%	5,711	100.0%

receiving outpatient treatment, there were 1,694 (39.44% CT/60.83% RT) males and 1,091 (77.05% CT/39.17% RT) females. For inmates receiving moderate inpatient treatment for mental health, there were 240 (5.59% CT/96.39% RT) males and 9 (0.64% CT/3.61% RT) females. For inmates receiving intensive inpatient treatment for mental health, there were 21 (0.49%

CT/91.30% RT) males and 2 (.14% CT/ 8.70% RT) females. For inmates undergoing crisis stabilization there were 6 (.14% CT/ and 100% RT) males and 0 (0.0% CT/0.0% RT) females.

Two-thousand eight-hundred seventy-four (15.8%) inmates in the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections have been reported to have psychiatric conditions. The chart below shows that of these, 1,536 (10.37% CT/57.61% RT) males are (have) stable/in remission/mild

impairment or retardation compared to 1,130 (60.56% CT/42.39% RT) females. There are one-hundred ninety-five inmates who require moderate inpatient treatment (1.28% CT/97.44% RT) - 190 (1.28% CT/97.44% RT) males and 5 (.27% CT/2.56% RT) females. Five males (.03% CT/100% RT) compared to 0 (0% CT and RT) females require intensive inpatient treatment. Eight (.05% CT/100% RT) males require crisis stabilization unit inpatient care compared to 0 (0% CT and RT) females. Both the mental health and psychiatric charts are important to note because a correlation between mental health and a proclivity toward crime has been established in the literature.

	Male			Female			Total	
'S' pSychiatric	Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
1 No impairment or disorders	13,066	88.25%	94.70%	731	39.17%	5.30%	13,797	82.76%
2 Stable, or in remission, or mild impairment or retardation	1,536	10.37%	57.61%	1,130	60.56%	42.39%	2,666	15.99%
3 Requires moderate inpatient treatment	190	1.28%	97.44%	5	0.27%	2.56%	195	1.17%
4 Requires intensive inpatient treatment	5	0.03%	100.00%				5	0.03%
5 Requires Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) inpatient care	8	0.05%	100.00%				8	0.05%
Total Reported	14,805	100%	88.81%	1,866	100%	11.19%	16,671	100%

Sociological research confirms that there is a correlation between low educational attainment and proclivity toward crime. The chart below supports these conclusions. Shown in the chart below are educational attainment statistics for inmates in the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections. As the chart below displays, of the 14,470 inmates reported here, half have less than a 12th Grade education or GED (50.07%). According to the chart, 8 inmates (.06% CT) have a 1st Grade education, 12 (0.8% CT) have a 2nd Grade education, 12 (.08% CT) have a 3rd Grade education, 18 (.12% CT) have a 4th Grade education, 25 (.17% CT) have a 5th Grade education, 80 (.55% CT) have a 6th Grade education, 183 (1.26% CT) have 7th Grade education, 753 (5.20% CT) have an 8th Grade education, 1,548 (10.70% CT) have a 9th Grade education, 2,166 (14.97% CT) have a 10th Grade education, and 2,419 (16.72% CT) have an 11th Grade education.

Grade Level	Male			Female			Total	
	Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
Grade 1	8	0.06%	100.00%				8	0.06%
Grade 2	7	0.05%	58.33%	5	0.31%	41.67%	12	0.08%
Grade 3	11	0.09%	91.67%	1	0.06%	8.33%	12	0.08%
Grade 4	18	0.14%	100.00%				18	0.12%
Grade 5	24	0.19%	96.00%	1	0.06%	4.00%	25	0.17%
Grade 6	76	0.59%	95.00%	4	0.24%	5.00%	80	0.55%
Grade 7	159	1.24%	86.89%	24	1.47%	13.11%	183	1.26%
Grade 8	667	5.20%	88.58%	86	5.26%	11.42%	753	5.20%
Grade 9	1,410	10.99%	91.09%	138	8.44%	8.91%	1,548	10.70%
Grade 10	1,996	15.55%	92.15%	170	10.39%	7.85%	2,166	14.97%
Grade 11	2,195	17.10%	90.74%	224	13.69%	9.26%	2,419	16.72%
Grade 12 or GED	4,955	38.61%	88.10%	669	40.89%	11.90%	5,624	38.87%
Some tech school	89	0.69%	76.72%	27	1.65%	23.28%	116	0.80%
Completed tech school	45	0.35%	63.38%	26	1.59%	36.62%	71	0.49%
College, 1 year	395	3.08%	80.94%	93	5.68%	19.06%	488	3.37%
College, 2 year	513	4.00%	83.01%	105	6.42%	16.99%	618	4.27%
College, 3 year	98	0.76%	83.05%	20	1.22%	16.95%	118	0.82%
Bachelor's degree	138	1.08%	80.23%	34	2.08%	19.77%	172	1.19%
Master's degree	17	0.13%	73.91%	6	0.37%	26.09%	23	0.16%
Ph.D. degree	3	0.02%	100.00%				3	0.02%
Law degree	8	0.06%	72.73%	3	0.18%	27.27%	11	0.08%
Some medical school	1	0.01%	100.00%				1	0.01%
Medical degree	1	0.01%	100.00%				1	0.01%
Total Reported	12,834	100%	88.69%	1,636	100%	11.31%	14,470	100%

Research has often touted that family structure has positive benefits for encouraging an individual's conformity to societal norms and law-abiding behavior. Further, it has been suggested that spouses and children promote a person's potential to make better life decisions because of the importance and influence of these attachments. The below chart offers support for these conclusions, highlighting that approximately 80% of all persons in the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections – are unmarried, widowed, or divorced. The actual number and percentage are 14,405 and 79.59% respectively. Additionally, another 946 (5.23%) inmates are separated from their spouses. Therefore, approximately 85% of inmates are

Marital Status	Male			Female			Total	
	Count	Col %	Row %	Count	Col %	Row %	Total	Col %
0 Unknown	422	2.64%	91.94%	37	1.76%	8.06%	459	2.54%
D Divorced	1,780	11.13%	82.48%	378	17.94%	17.52%	2,158	11.92%
M Married	1,942	12.15%	84.91%	345	16.37%	15.09%	2,287	12.64%
S Separated	722	4.52%	76.32%	224	10.63%	23.68%	946	5.23%
U Unmarried	10,959	68.54%	91.04%	1,079	51.21%	8.96%	12,038	66.52%
W Widow	165	1.03%	78.95%	44	2.09%	21.05%	209	1.15%
Total Reported	15,990	100%	88.36%	2,107	100%	11.64%	18,097	100%

missing the potentially positive benefits of marriage and spousal influence.

Community Reintegration After Prison

Thousands of individuals return to communities across the country after the completion of their prison sentences. Most of them desire to reintegrate into society, and they count on the support and assistance of programs, jobs, educational opportunities, and people who will encourage their future and not condemn them for past behavior. Realistically though, many societal barriers prohibit successful reintegration of ex-offenders. For example, the Ban the Box legislation is useful majorily for people who desire to obtain state jobs and therefore;

private industry is sparsely affected. Ex-offenders also face: issues with paying for education without access to financial aid, returning to neighborhoods that perpetuate their criminal activities, finding suitable living arrangements, dealing with behavioral or mental health issues, combatting substance abuse problems, ineffective conflict resolution, low self-concept, and a proclivity toward recidivism as a response to problem-solving their circumstances.

Low availability of financial resources to support ex-offender reintegration has decreased the ability of many communities to support successful ex-offender reintegration efforts. Therefore, increased use of civic organizations, public service organizations, churches, and other community groups and nonprofits would positively benefit efforts to provide meaningful assistance to ex-offenders.

Decriminalization

Decriminalization is the process of removing or lessening the criminal penalties for certain criminal actions. Many states decriminalize public order offenses which are violations against publicly shared values and norms. These crimes may vary by community and include activities that are considered harmful to society from a moral standpoint. In some cases, public order crimes are considered moral violations where the only victim of the crime is the community at-large. Prostitution is one such violation. Other public order violations are crimes such as: open-container and loitering. This is not an exhaustive list.

The main point of decriminalization is to free individuals from the stigmatization of involvement with the criminal justice system which often results in the establishment of a criminal record and time missed from school, work, and family (positive attachments that bond individuals to their community and the society at-large). Ultimately, decriminalization can help

individuals avoid jail time for the commission of minor offenses and provide them with more equitable ways to accept responsibility for their actions. Therefore, it is important for prosecutors and judges to develop ways to balance promoting the ideals of decriminalization against public safety and justice for all.

SECTION 5:
DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIVE FOCUS AREAS

DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS AREAS

Mayor Dorothy Hubbard, Chief Michael Persley, and Dr. Marlene Ramsey met with the Safe City Coalition (SCC) on Tuesday, November 7, 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to formally establish the Coalition and share the Mayor's vision for developing a strategic plan that could be implemented to address crime and community safety. During the meeting, various SCC members offered recommendations. This provided critical and valuable input for establishing a purposeful direction for impending strategic plan efforts and ultimately, the development of this plan's strategic focus areas. Meeting input was collected from the following: 1) a dialogue between the Chief of Police and SCC members, 2) dialogue between the Chief of Police and visitors, and 3) SCC members' and visitors' participation in a Perceptions and Perspectives Survey developed by Dr. Ramsey.

In response to rising community gun-violence, Domestic Violence, the Opioid epidemic, and other negative factors plaguing the City of Albany (GA), the Mayor gave a very specific timeline for the "roll-out" of the Safe City Strategic Plan – 60 days. The Mayor's call to immediate action demonstrates her concern to be proactive against community trends that threaten Albany's progress. It also displays the Mayor's resolve to making the City of Albany a better community and a place where citizens can live with the perception of safety – and not be negatively impacted by fear of perpetual crime.

Swift action ensued during the days immediately following the Safe City Coalition meeting. Dr. Marlene Ramsey, facilitator for this effort and plan consultant, met with Chief Michael Persley (of the Albany (GA) Police Department) to discuss the information provided at the SCC meeting and determine what could be gleaned from the information shared. There

were several themes that emerged from the data reviewed.   The following pages display

explanations of the data and the results.

PERCEPTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE SURVEY DATA

Community Affiliation of Respondents

Community Affiliation	Number of Respondents
Member, Law Enforcement Services	8
Member, Fire Department Services	0
Member, EMS Services	1
Member, Healthcare Profession	1
Member, Mental Health Profession	0
Member, Social Services Profession	2
Member, Community Organization	2
Member, Education Profession	2
Member, City/County Government Employee	7
Member, Faith-Based Organization	1
Member, Concerned Citizen	3
Member, Concerned Citizen Retired	1
Member, Media Outlet	2
Total Responses	30

The chart above displays the community affiliation of respondents who participated in the survey. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents were affiliated with law enforcement, 3% of the respondents were affiliated with EMS Services, 3% of the respondents were affiliated with the healthcare profession, 7% of the respondents were affiliated with social services, 7% of the respondents were affiliated with community organizations, 7% of the

respondents were affiliated with the education profession, 23% of the respondents were affiliated with city/county government, 3% of the respondents were affiliated with faith-based organizations, 10% of the respondents were concerned citizens, 3% of the respondents were retired concerned citizens, and 7% of the respondents were members of local media outlets. There were no members of mental health or fire services represented on the Coalition at the time of the survey. This absence of membership would be addressed by the plan's completion.

Biggest Community Concern

Perception of Biggest Community Problem	Number of Respondents
Code Violations	0
Crime	13
Poverty	12
Inequality	0
Ordinance Violations	0
Traffic Violations	0
Quality of Life Issues	1 High Unemployment Rate
Other	4 Mental Health Issues Low Motivation to Work Low Educational Attainment Incorrect Perceptions Ad Valorem Tax Handling Issues
Total Responses	30

In the chart above, 43% of the respondents perceived crime to be the biggest community concern, 40% of the respondents perceived poverty to be the biggest concern, 3% of the respondents perceived quality of life issues to be the biggest concern, 13% of respondents perceived other issues to be the biggest concern. No respondents reported code violations, inequality, ordinance, or traffic violations to be the biggest community concern.

Recommended Strategies for Dealing with Community Problems

Problem	Recommended Strategies for Dealing with Community Problems
CRIME	1. Communication between local law enforcement including intelligence sharing and adoption of a web-based information sharing system 2. Economic Growth – recruit businesses and create local jobs
CRIME	1. Continue the efforts of the Coalition as a long-term initiative for problem-solving 2. Hire a strategic plan implementation person to ensure the plan gets done
CRIME	1. Family is key, help develop better parents; Encourage church group involvement 2. Use innovative restorative justice approaches for rehabilitation
CRIME	1. Focus on crime prevention by engaging citizens in reporting and partnerships 2. Create more neighborhood watch programs and more community-police connections
CRIME	1. Target recidivism through harsher and consistent sentencing/punishment 2. Increase employment opportunities (EDC, Albany Works...resources)
CRIME	1. More funding for crime stoppers hotline and create platform for universal reporting 2. Mentor young children and target better connections with the criminal justice system
CRIME	1. Provide resources for families lacking money, education, etc. to succeed 2. Allow volunteer community members to aid positive criminal justice system outcomes
CRIME	1. Increase community involvement with the criminal justice system's prosecutors and judges 2. Alert community to changes in crime trends and get their support against Opioids
CRIME	1. Try to discover root causes of crimes being committed 2. Have transparent discussions with offenders to develop prevention strategies
CRIME	1. Hire more specialized civilians to support police department objectives 2. Have a police department Chief of Staff to support process efficiency
CRIME	1. Increase the mileage rate and hire more police officers

	2.	More city-owned businesses; create ordinance requiring buildings be occupied
CRIME	1. 2.	More police presence, better lightening, and use technology to target crime Weekday curfew for juveniles and work with juvenile judge for new solutions
CRIME	1. 2.	Re-open the police district centers and build relationships with Police Chief Create community advisory boards, community tribunals when appropriate
POVERTY	1. 2.	Engage youth and help families Create more jobs and make sentencing rehabilitative
POVERTY	1. 2.	Engage Job Corp and Albany Tech for education/work-competency issues Create more job opportunities
POVERTY	1. 2.	City Government and Education Entities should collaborate on attacking this epidemic Various community advisory boards
POVERTY	1. 2.	More collaboration between DFACS and the Criminal Justice System Utilize benefits of faith-based community
POVERTY	1. 2.	Engage Dougherty County School System to address student success, support, and graduation rates More programs to assist adults with becoming work-ready
POVERTY	1. 2.	Promote a better local school system Implement youth development programs
POVERTY	1. 2.	Create a multi-socioeconomic community coalition Identify useful social service programs for progress
POVERTY	1. 2.	Workforce ready programs are a must Get support from Social Services
POVERTY	1. 2.	Social Services and Police Department Collaborations Target Opioid and drug use in impoverished communities
POVERTY	1. 2.	Education and job readiness Diverse community advisory boards and coalitions
POVERTY	1. 2.	More mentoring programs to help children succeed in school Support 4C Academy
POVERTY	1. 2.	Program "I CARE" Create other City coalitions
OTHER	1. 2. 3.	Reduce healthcare burden Push for more jobs Get APD fully-staffed
OTHER	1. 2.	Collaboration among school system, law enforcement, higher education More workforce development programs
OTHER	1. 2.	Intervention and education programs Target the poverty-promoting mindset and utilize social services
OTHER	1.	Address handling of ad valorem tax and make shrewd decisions that will save money and benefit the way money is dispersed in Albany.
QUALITY OF LIFE	1. 2. 3.	Target poor public perception of the City Target neighborhood outreach, neighborhood lighting, revitalize communities, target Opioid and drug use Use technology to help better our community

Vitalness of Community Collaboration

Very	Not Very	In-Between	Total Responses
26	0	4	30

The chart above shows that 87% of the respondents reported that community collaboration is vital to dealing with community issues. Thirteen percent of respondents reported being "in-between" on their perception of the importance of community collaboration. No respondent reported "not very" regarding the importance of community collaboration.

Commission Meeting Attendance

Never	1 Per Year	2-6 Per Year	7+ Per Year	Total Responses
8	5	6	11	30

The chart above shows that 27% of the respondents reported that they never attended Albany Commission meetings, 17% of the respondents reported that they attended 1 Commission meeting per year, 20% of the respondents reported that they attended 2-6 Commission meetings per year, 37% of respondents reported that they attended 7 or more Commission meetings per year.

Feedback to Commission

Never	Sometimes	Often	Regularly	Total Responses
9	11	2	8	30

The chart above shows that 30% of the respondents reported that they never gave feedback to commissioners after Commission meetings, 37% of the respondents reported that they sometimes gave feedback to commissioners, 7% of the respondents reported that they often gave feedback to commissioners, 27% of the respondents reported that they regularly gave feedback to commissioners.

Positive Perception of Albany Police Department

Yes	No	In-Between	Total Responses
21	1	8	30

The chart above shows that 70% of the respondents reported that they had a positive perception of the Albany Police Department, 3% of the respondents reported that they had a negative perception, and 27% of the respondents reported that they were "in-between" on their thoughts about their perception of the Department.

Recommendations for Attraction, Recruitment, Retention of Quality Police Officers

Recommendations for Attraction, Recruitment, Retention	Recommendations for Attraction, Recruitment, Retention (continued)

Better pay and benefits, management development, accountability for officer development	Competitive pay, opportunities for advancement, extend vacation time, professional development, opportunities to decompress
Increased pay	Job shadowing for high school and college graduates who are potential candidates for employment
Make Albany a better place to live, pay and benefits, work environment, supportive management	Better pay
Better pay/benefits, a professional DA's Office that works with police officers when developing a case	Incentive pay
Better pay, benefits, equipment, training, bonuses, rewards, promotions	Better pay
Incentives to live and work in Albany, quality of life activities for millennials	Property tax increase to offer better pay
Partnerships with realty companies/property owners for discounts, tuition assistance, opportunities for professional development	Study needs of police so that you can develop an appropriate marketing strategy
Better pay, advancement opportunities, support with use of technology	Continue to support police officers' accomplishments
Better pay, community support, community engagement and involvement, listen to police officers' ideas	Increase morale through respect
In-house officer mentorship programs	Community support and positive feedback
Good benefits	Better pay and training

Pay for education, better pay overall, increased respect from members of City of Albany administration	Training and competitive salaries
Better pay, housing allowances, training, more vacation time	Competitive salaries
Flexible schedules and more time off	Better pay and benefits
Incentive pay for special deeds/actions	Longer vacation periods

Perception of Importance of Police Chief-Community Connection

Very	Not Very	In-Between	Total Responses
27	0	3	30

The chart above shows that 90% of the respondents reported that they perceive it to be very important for the Police Chief to have a connection with the thoughts and ideas of community members, and 10% reported that they were "in-between" on their perception of the importance of the Police Chief needing to connect with the thoughts and ideas of community members. No respondent reported "not very" regarding the importance of a Police-Chief-community connection.

Perception of Importance of Judges-Community Connection

Very	Not Very	In-Between	Total Responses
23	1	6	30

The chart above shows that 77% percent of the respondents reported that they perceive it to be very important for judges to have a connection with the thoughts and ideas

of community members, 3% reported that this connection was not very important, and 20% reported that they were "in-between" on the perceived importance of the need for judges to connect with the thoughts and ideas of community members.

Perception of Importance of Prosecutors-Community Connection

Very	Not Very	In-Between	Total Responses
24	1	5	30

The chart above shows that 80% of the respondents reported that they perceive it to be very important for prosecutors to have a connection with the thoughts and ideas of community members, 17% reported that they were "in-between" on the importance of prosecutors' need to connect with the thoughts and ideas of community members, and 3% of the respondents reported "not very" regarding the need for a prosecutor-community connection.

Perception of Importance of Police Chief, Prosecutor, Judges Innovation

Very	Not Very	In-Between	Total Responses
30	0	0	30

The chart above shows that 100% of the respondents reported that they perceive it to be very important for the Police Chief, judges, and prosecutors to use innovative strategies to address crime and community issues. No respondent reported "not very" or "in-between" regarding the perception of the importance of innovation for this group.

Perception of Importance of Technology for Addressing Community Concerns

Very	Not Very	In-Between	Total Responses
26	0	4	30

The chart above shows that 87% of the respondents reported that they perceive technology to be important for addressing crime and community concerns, and 13% of the respondents reported that they were "in-between" on the importance of using technology to address community concerns. No respondent reported "not very" regarding the perception of the importance of technology.

Perception of Value of the Safe City Coalition

Very	Not Very	In-Between	Total Responses
28	0	2	30

The chart above shows that 93% of the respondents reported that they perceived there to be a great value in having a Safe City Coalition, and 7% of the respondents reported that they were "in-between" on their perception about the value of the Coalition. No one reported "not very" regarding the perceived value of having a Safe City Coalition.

PERCEPTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the Perceptions and Perspectives data analysis reveal that most respondents who participated in the survey perceived crime to be the greatest problem for the Albany community. Further, respondents reported that they perceive poverty to contribute to the presence of crime and other community issues. Most of the respondents perceived a strong need for the Police Chief, prosecutors, and judges to connect with their community. Further, the respondents perceived that individual and community partnerships and collaborations (with the criminal justice system and social service organizations) could reverse negative community problems and provide a competent and capable support network for combatting barriers to a real and perceived threat of safety.

At a high rate, respondents reported a need to address education, jobs, and a transformative community mindset through the implementation of programs that could assist children and their families. Some of these programs, already offered locally, have been recommended to be expanded to provide a better outreach effort. All respondents reporting perceive there to be a need for the Police Chief, prosecutors, and judges to engage in innovative practices to effectively address crime and community issues. Further, the use of technology is viewed by most respondents as having a positive impact on crime reporting, crime prevention, and the address of community concerns.

Although most respondents reported a positive perception of the Albany Police Department, several strategies were offered and recommended to promote the Department's ability to attract and retain qualified, professional, and ethical police officers. Comments regarding attracting quality officers were related to internal and external support, better pay,

and better benefits. Most respondents reported a perceived value in having a Safe City Coalition.

DATA OUTCOME

After reviewing and analyzing meeting notes, comments, questions, discussions, and survey data from the members of the Safe City Coalition and visitors – five specific focus area targets (or The Five Focus Areas) were identified for the strategic plan. The Five Focus Areas are as follows:

Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Social Services

Focus Area 2: Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

Focus Area 3: Leveraging Technology

Focus Area 4: Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

Focus Area 5: Increasing Community Involvement

Albany's concern for these issues is not unique. The opinions and sentiments reported by the Safe City Coalition are reflective of national opinion polls regarding similar areas of concern. For example, although the prevalence of Opioid-related cases in Albany has prompted local healthcare and social service forums (to raise community awareness), Opioid addiction has presented a national challenge. The Opioid phenomenon has reached such a critical level nationally that the President of the United States, Donald Trump, declared the Opioid epidemic a "national public health emergency," and vowed to release federal dollars in support of efforts focused on treatment and eradication.

Additionally, gun-related violence is also not just a local phenomenon. The City of

Chicago (IL) is close to reporting its 600th homicide after a continuation of gun-related violence and fatal outcomes. By the printing of this strategic plan, Chicago may very well have surpassed its 600th homicide.

Albany's concerns and efforts are consistent with national trends. However, the designations of "the most dangerous city in Georgia" and "the 7th worse city to live in (in America)" reflect how socioeconomic factors have been compounded on top of one another and contributed to a rise in community crime.

SECTION 6:
FOCUS GROUPS

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS OVERVIEW

Focus groups are small groups of individuals who are guided in discussion by a facilitator. Focus groups capture opinions about specific topics to direct future action. For the SCSP, focus groups were utilized to engage diverse groups of citizens (from various backgrounds) and capture their views on community safety and ideas for improvement. During the focus groups, a facilitated discussion plan was executed, and qualitative feedback was offered by community stakeholders. This increased the Safe City Coalition Strategic Plan's potential to be one that would be effective and relevant for addressing the unique and diverse needs of the City of Albany. Individuals were selected for the focus groups by commission appointment, SCC members' recommendations, recommendations from the Mayor and Chief of Police, and the result of individuals volunteering because of their interest in lending their voice to the SCSP effort.

Once a focus group convened, the process began with the facilitator explaining: the purpose, background, relevant crime trends, the Mayor's call to action, the Safe City Coalition, and the Mayor's expectation of a strategic plan to address crime and community issues. This was followed by a session in which the facilitator engaged the focus groups to promote honest feedback, give community members a voice, and create real strategies that can be implemented to address community concerns.

The focus groups provided the opportunity for participants to get an understanding of the background information associated with the motivations, reasons, and trends in citizen perception. Qualitative research methods were used to capture individual experiences,

attitudes, and opinions. The findings provided a basis for strategic recommendations. Section

6 of the SCSP describes the results from eight focus groups.

SAFE CITY COALITION
FOCUS GROUP 1

FOCUS GROUP 1 – SAFE CITY COALITION MEMBERS

Focus Group 1 was comprised of members from the Safe City Coalition. They were: Aaron Favors – President of the Country Club Estates Neighborhood Watch, John Fields – Chief of Police, Albany State University Police Department, Michael Fowler – Dougherty County Coroner. Tom Gieryic – Owner of Gieryic's Automotive Services, Kenneth Johnson – Assistant Chief of Police, Dougherty County Police Department, Ben Roberts – Public Information Officer for Phoebe Putney Health System, Diane Rogers – Executive Director of Liberty House of Albany, Inc. Recommendations from Focus Group 1 are organized and divided up by their connection to The Five Focus Areas.

Focus Group 1 Feedback

Increasing Access to Social Services

1. To increase the opportunity for widespread recognition of social services available to the public, social services resources should be posted on Channel 16, at the Goodwill Career Center, and posted any other place in the community where there is high traffic and/or the opportunity for high visibility.

2. The Albany Police Department should partner with social service organizations and use the Law Enforcement Community Center to host social services workshops.

Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

1. The Albany Police Department should send representatives to visit other law enforcement departments where recruitment efforts are highly effective. This would give the Department an opportunity to consider new strategies to meet their recruitment goals.

2. Offer moving allowances for quality police officers willing to relocate to Albany.

3. Offer housing allowances to offset police officer cost of living expenses.

4. Encourage businesses to offer exclusive discounts to demonstrate appreciation for police officers' service to the community.

5. Create a Safe City Southwest Georgia Taskforce that has members from the Regional Youth Detention Center, surrounding police departments, and surrounding social service agencies to holistically address community issues and share information.

Leveraging Technology

1. 311 needs to be staffed beyond 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

2. Install a city-wide camera system to capture more criminal activity.

3. Encourage citizen homeowners to purchase home security systems. The more coverage, the better. Citizens can work with the Albany Police Department and share helpful footage captured on home systems.

Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

1. Create more separate court structures to deal with various community issues. For example, Domestic Violence and other courts are used this way. These courts promote specialization and consistency of judges, fairness, treatment customization, and better outcomes. Appropriate social services entities could partner with these courts for sentencing recommendations, treatment strategies, and more.

2. Increase the number of court personnel who would be available to help create customized and creative rehabilitation plans for first-time offenders.

3. Sentencing outcomes for domestic violence offenders can include the offender assisting with social services and police department prevention efforts – to promote personal rehabilitation and positive community impact.

Increased Community Involvement

1. Develop partnerships between the Albany Police Department and businesses. Businesses can be counted on to financially support efforts targeted at building police-community relations.

2. Have creative events to foster goodwill between members of the Albany Police Department and citizens such as: charity basketball games or other recreational events or community outings.

3. Have a volunteer day at the Albany Police Department where organizations who need volunteers can expose police officers and the community to opportunities for community service.

4. Always call the media to highlight the good works the Albany Police Department is doing.

5. Law Enforcement should conduct regular community forums at the Law Enforcement Center and Government Center.

6. Create a city-wide youth advisory team or taskforce that includes school officials, school police, Albany Police Department, and Social Services. The group will meet with law enforcement on a regular basis to discuss crime trends, prevention, and strategies.

7. Place a drop box outside of the Albany Police Department, set-up a website, or create a P.O. Box or designated mailing address for anonymous reporting of crime.

8. Develop a Clergy sub-committee of the Safe City Coalition, to reach populations law enforcement may not necessarily have access to.

9. The Albany Police Department should be more visible in schools to build positive relationships with students and to encourage and support pre-recruitment efforts of students who may have an interest in law enforcement. The Albany Police Department's higher visibility in schools will enhance respect for law enforcement, reduce fear, and increase cooperation between youth and police. Police officers could participate in field

day activities, teach character education curriculums, serve lunch, pass out treats or tokens to students, and conduct other creative activities.

10. Increase fun interaction between police and citizens to develop positive relationships.

11. Allow police officers to implement public relations activities like giving out t-shirts, wristbands, or other tokens to community members (from their police cars) while they are riding their beats.

12. Schools should have youth advisory boards especially at the junior high school and high school levels. These groups should meet regularly with Albany Police Department and School Resource Officers to share information. Students selected should not only include the best and brightest, but also students who are at-risk or vulnerable to crime and systemic issues.

13. Develop innovative ways the Albany Police Department can partner with families. For example, families who have troubled teens could be connected to members of the Community Relations Unit who could offer mentoring support for young people (who may be headed off-course for law-abiding behavior).

CITIZEN FOCUS GROUPS
FOCUS GROUPS 2 - 6

FOCUS GROUP 2 - CITIZENS

Focus Group 2 consisted of six individuals ranging in age from 41 to 61. These citizens were from various professions and backgrounds and had various skill diversities. The purpose of this focus group was to collect citizens' perceptions of safety concerns and collect recommendations relevant to The Five Focus Areas.

Group Race Characteristics

RACE	NUMBER
African-American	2
Asian	1
Hispanic	1
White	2

Group Age Characteristics

AGE	NUMBER
41	1
44	1
46	1
59	1
61	2

Community Affiliation

BACKGROUND	NUMBER
Blue Collar	3
Homemaker	1
Retired	1
White Collar	1

Sex

SEX	NUMBER
Male	3
Female	3

Focus Group 2 Feedback

1. It is important to involve the community's voice in decisions and efforts that focus on community issues. Alerts can be sent out via the emergency call system or other city-wide network to notify residents of important meetings.

2. There is a significant gap between the community and the Albany Police Department. If this gap is closed, then the community has a better chance of targeting and reversing negative crime trends. It is recommended to establish and utilize police substations so that the police and community can be more connected to one another. Substations would encourage and enhance police-community relationships by encouraging police outreach and community responsiveness.

3. There is a greater need for police presence. A better marketing plan should be developed to attract the best police officers. This will increase the number of police officers available for patrol. Update applicant screening practices to incorporate citizen interviews, social media analysis, and other strategies to ensure that the Albany Police Department is hiring professionals who consistently use good judgment.

4. When police hiring pools are low, create duties that non-sworn personnel can do to empower the Department to perform effectively during periods of shortage. Hire civilians with professional skills and competencies to support the effectiveness of law enforcement. This could include former military, accountants, and educators, and this is a strategy currently being used by state and federal law enforcement agencies across the U.S.

5. The Albany Police Department should use diverse technological resources to save time and effort and make the Department more effective.

6. Gang-related activity is a problem plaguing many neighborhoods. The Albany Police Department should establish ways for neighborhood residents to anonymously report neighborhood crime. Dissention can develop between neighbors when one neighbor reports observed activity of another neighbor. Police officers should respond and investigate what was reported to them without exposing the person or persons who reported. Additionally, if the reporting neighbor (or other neighbor nearby) has a camera system, the police officer can secure footage to confirm what was reported (after responding to the call).

7. Police officers and civilians trained in dealing with gang activity should be placed in the high schools on an undercover basis. Many of the focus group members reported that their children have witnessed gang and drug activities at school. This is a safety issue for the school that may exceed the expertise of the Dougherty County School System Police Department.

8. Develop an education and jobs task force to combat the negative consequences unemployment and poverty have on crime.

9. Develop enrichment programs that will help young people manage negative consequences of poverty, low parental activity, and poor home environment.

10. The Albany Police Department should partner with various social service agencies to approach behavioral and mental health problems such as Opioid and other drug addictions, anger issues, and other problems.

11. The City of Albany should do an assessment to determine which communities have security lights that are out, and be sure to repair those lights as soon as possible (especially in alleys and along access streets). When citizens report that lights are out, those calls should be handled with a sense of urgency and not apathy.

12. It is important for prosecutors to use creative ways to engage the communities they serve. It is important that prosecutors put themselves in position to better engage the community. Hire prosecutors who have a heart for people and for their community, and who don't mind participating in community outreach activities.

13. Judges should consider holding town hall meetings so that they can hear from their community and better understand community issues. This will help them make informed sentencing decisions. The Justice While Black Town Hall held at Albany State University was beneficial and an excellent example of how judges and other officials can and should engage the communities they serve.

14. Community members, prosecutors, and judges can form some type of community taskforce to bridge the gap between them.

15. The Neighborhood Watch Program needs to be revisited and revamped, and there should be a liaison in the Albany Police Department whose specific job it is to foster positive police and community relations ("24/7").

16. There should be various community advisory boards that have diverse expertise that can work with City government in times of need. There should be more than just a Safe City Coalition. Instead, there should be other coalitions, advisory boards, and groups to tackle various community topics and issues.

FOCUS GROUP 3 - CITIZENS

Focus Group 3 consisted of six individuals ranging in age from 28 to 71. These citizens were from various professions and backgrounds and had various skill diversities. The purpose of this focus group was to collect citizens' perceptions of safety concerns and collect recommendations relevant to The Five Focus Areas.

Group Race Characteristics

RACE	NUMBER
African-American	4
White	2

Community Affiliation

BACKGROUND	NUMBER
Blue Collar	2
Retired	1
White Collar	3

Group Age Characteristics

AGE	NUMBER
28	1
33	1
42	1
59	1
67	1
71	1

Sex

SEX	NUMBER
Male	3
Female	3

Focus Group 3 Feedback

1. Police officers should always be professional and show that they care about the citizens in the community they serve.

2. The Albany Police Department should have a full-time person who is available to address citizen concerns and implement citizen ideas.

3. Individuals are concerned about the social distance between prosecutors, judges and community members. It was recommended that some type of collaborative group be created to decrease the distance between these groups.

4. In some neighborhoods, when code violations are not handled expeditiously, criminals tend to believe that these areas are "good" for participating in crimes.

5. The City of Albany needs an ordinance that is actively enforced that prevents cars from being parked on the grass and hidden between houses.

6. It is a good idea to combine Code Enforcement with the Albany Police Department to more effectively handle code violations.

7. The City of Albany government structure should be transparent. One way to approach this would be to have a day annually where citizens have access to City departments and service providers. This would be a day where interactions could lead to the enhancement of services offered and community trust.

8. The Albany Police Department should partner with social services agencies to decrease incidences of domestic violence. Information should be shared at community forums, civic meetings, in schools, and in businesses. Numerous establishments in the

community should provide a visual display of items, literature, or campaign materials to market the message that Albany is against Domestic Violence.

9. Use social media for crime-fighting. Some neighborhoods have a Neighborhood Watch Facebook page, and this contributes to their ability to share information and protect one another. Some beat police officers are members of neighborhood group pages.

10. An incentive should be provided to individuals who have home security camera systems because the footage these systems record can potentially help police officers solve crimes.

11. Since certain types of businesses are required to have and maintain security systems, someone should be tasked with contacting all such businesses and ensuring that they have operable equipment in use.

12. The criminal justice system should work toward creating better restorative justice strategies so that ex-offenders will have a greater opportunity to succeed once leaving prison. There needs to be someone responsible for creating customized re-entry plans. People creating these plans should have at the minimum a Masters' Degree in a related field. This position should be housed in the Community Supervision Office.

13. It is important to develop creative ways to address police professionalism. Create ways that will give police officers constant reminders of the importance of professionalism.

14. There should be a system in place to track the movements of people before and after they have committed crimes.

FOCUS GROUP 4 – PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATION

Focus Group 4 consisted of nine individuals ranging in age from 41 to 69. These citizens were from various professions and backgrounds and had various skill diversities. The purpose of this focus group was to collect citizens' perceptions of safety concerns and collect recommendations relevant to the Five Focus Areas.

Group Race Characteristics

RACE	NUMBER
African-American	9

Group Age Characteristics

AGE	NUMBER
41	1
44	1
45	2
60	1
63	1
67	1
69	1
No Response	1

Community Affiliation

BACKGROUND	NUMBER
Retired Educator	2
Educator	4
Funeral Services	1
Non-Profit	1
Nursing	1

Sex

SEX	NUMBER
Male	0
Female	9

Focus Group 4 Feedback

1. Community involvement is very important for building a safe community. Members of the community have areas of expertise, experiences, and ideas that can be utilized to assist efforts toward a safe community. Community members often have outreach capabilities that criminal justice agents do not have.

2. Improving street lights and following up on repairing lights, in areas where lights have gone out, would create safer neighborhoods for residents and protect them from violent and property crime.

3. The Albany Police Department should remain abreast of technology it can use to simplify its processes and assist with crime-fighting. Community members should have an app that can be used for on-demand reporting.

4. It is important for the Albany Police Department to sincerely respond to citizens' concerns about police misconduct. This should be handled in a timely and professional manner and not be brushed off, pushed to the side, forgotten, or mishandled.

5. Quality police officers can only be targeted through good pay, benefits, and incentives. The Albany Police Department should ask its current members about what would promote their longevity in the Department. Once the Albany Police Department better understands this, it can work to implement some of the officers' recommendations and even recognize the police officers who suggested policy/practice-changing ideas.

6. The Albany Police Department and various social services entities should establish a relationship or taskforce that works together to aggressively target community behavior issues.

7. A more defined partnership needs to be developed between businesses and the Albany Police Department to empower businesses to implement safe practices and protect their customers. This would also give businesses a voice to make recommendations on how to address their safety concerns.

8. Criminal justice officials such as the police chief, prosecutors, and judges should hold regular town hall meetings to address their communities. This would allow two-way dialogue and feedback on numerous issues, as well as provide clarification about policies and practices. The town hall could be televised (live) with a call-in number available to those who cannot be present (to ask their questions). This would maximize the opportunity for more community members to participate and join the discussion at hand.

9. There needs to be a sincere and effective marketing plan targeting perception of the City's quality of life. Billboards should be creatively used, and literature should be placed at the Albany Mall and anywhere else people interact with their community and surroundings. Part of the marketing strategy should be displaying how devoted law enforcement is to its community (police, prosecutors, judges, probation, etc.) and how the community cares about its police officers.

10. A city-wide camera system should be used to promote the Albany Police Department's opportunity to be proactive and have more eyes and ears in places they cannot be. This

would also help police reactive efforts for solving crime that has occurred. However, the only cameras in neighborhoods should be home security systems.

11. The Albany Police Department needs to continue to ramp up its use of its Facebook page for solving crimes. It should aggressively push out messages to the masses to promote a community mindset against crime.

12. The Albany Police Department should use its Facebook page to periodically display being engaged in community service, visiting schools, and even in fun activities.

FOCUS GROUP 5 – COLLEGE STUDENTS

Focus Group 5 consisted of ten university and technical college students ranging in age from 18 to 22. The purpose of this focus group was to provide insight on college students' perceptions of safety concerns and collect recommendations relevant to The Five Focus Areas.

Group Race Characteristics

RACE	NUMBER
African-American	5
White	4
Hispanic	1

Group Age Characteristics

AGE	NUMBER
18	2
19	1
20	1
21	3
22	3

Classification and Major

BACKGROUND	NUMBER
Freshman Law Enforcement Technology Major	1
Sophomore Law Enforcement Technology Major	1
Sophomore Psychology Major	1
Junior Computer Science Major	1
Senior Criminal Justice Major	1
Junior Criminal Justice Major	1
Sophomore Social Work Major	1
Junior Social Work Major	1
Senior Sociology Major	1
Senior Sociology Major	1

Sex

SEX	NUMBER
Male	4
Female	6

Focus Group 5 Feedback

1. Police officer presence seems to be on the decline. When members of this focus group are off-campus and out in the city, they would feel safer if there was more police presence near shopping centers and restaurants.

2. Some police officers display aggressive attitudes toward students. This causes students to feel unimportant and as if police officers do not care about how students are treated. All community members should be treated with respect regardless of age.

3. The most prevalent crime-related issue for local college students is drug and alcohol abuse and gun-violence. These problems can be combatted through better monitoring of dormitories and increased reporting.

4. Gun-laws need to be revisited or at least college campuses need to work with the Albany Police Department to balance upholding the campus carry law with campus safety. There was a recent incident on campus where someone fired a gun near a dormitory.

5. Access to local campuses is too easy for outsiders. Campus checkpoint stations are not usually staffed, and this creates a safety issue for students (regarding the legitimacy and validity of who is coming onto campuses). People coming onto campuses should be documented like what is done at many other colleges in college-town communities.

6. Members of the criminal justice system should visit campuses and hold forums for students. This would allow questions to be asked and answers to be given, regarding student concerns related to justice issues and campus safety.

7. The Albany Police Department should use modern technology to make a positive impact on the reduction of crime.

8. Poverty seems to be an issue in Albany, and that is what is leading to frustration and crime. Focus group members have been involved in incidents where they were aggressively approached by vagrants, pan-handlers, and people asking for money or work. This is scary.

9. Some students on campuses have mental health issues. It would be helpful for social services agencies to partner with the local campuses to provide information about resources, awareness, and support.

10. The Albany Police Department should create a partnership council that contains students, faculty, campus police, and members of the various local criminal justice agencies. This could be a taskforce that meets regularly to address campus safety and quality of life issues being reported by members of the campus community.

FOCUS GROUP 6 – HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Focus Group 6 consisted of seven high school students ranging in age from 15 to 18. They were students from Dougherty, Monroe, and Westover High Schools, and from Sherwood Christian Academy. The purpose of this focus group was to provide insight on high school students' perceptions of safety concerns, and collect recommendations relevant to The Five Focus Areas.

Group Race Characteristics

RACE	NUMBER
African-American	4
White	2
Bi-Racial	1

Classification

CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER
Sophomore (10th Grade)	3
Junior (11TH Grade)	2
Senior (12th Grade)	2

Group Age Characteristics

AGE	NUMBER
18	1
17	1
16	4
15	1

Sex

SEX	NUMBER
Male	4
Female	3

Focus Group 6 Feedback

1. Albany (GA) youth should have the opportunity to participate in activities that will enhance their understanding of what the Albany Police Department does. This will help young people to reject negative media depictions of the Department. The goal is for youth to have real-world experiences of police department phenomenon, learn proper police procedures, gain an understanding of their rights, and have positive interaction with the Albany Police Department.

2. Young people should be invited to tour the Albany Police Department so that they can get an understanding of how various units work. This may help young people to develop a respect for and interest in law enforcement and give them ideas about future careers.

3. Young people should be invited to participate in community service projects and activities with police officers. This will encourage positive relationships, build community pride, and promote a service-minded attitude among both youth and police officers.

4. Opportunities for young people to engage members of the Albany Police Department should be posted on Facebook, Channel 16, the City of Albany Website, and be disseminated in schools.

5. Gang-related activity among youth in high schools is rising. The Albany Police Department needs to visit high schools more and explain to students the criminal consequences of their actions so that they can make better choices. Additionally, parents need to be involved in these meetings/sessions so that they can support their child's positive behavior. Also, consider using scare tactics to encourage parental

involvement.

6. Teachers and school officials need to have an anonymous, non-retaliatory way to "snitch"

on students they observe participating in gang-related activity. Sometimes school

administrators want to keep things quiet about their school, so teachers are

incapacitated when they really need the freedom to act.

7. Schools should implement a mentor program where community leaders, college

professors, and others can support the success of young people who would otherwise

fall victim to an environment where goal-setting and law-abiding behavior are not

necessarily encouraged.

8. The Albany Police Department and schools need to partner more on attacking the

problem of bullying and peer pressure.

9. A taskforce should be developed that contains students, teachers, school

administrators, and police officers. Persons selected should be trustworthy individuals

who troubled students feel comfortable reporting dangerous situations (and other

issues) to. People selected for their school's taskforce should be vetted very carefully.

10. The Albany Police Department should partner with social service agencies to promote

access to psychological, behavioral, abuse, and family support for students in need.

11. The Albany Police Department should partner with the Foster Care system to link good

people with children who need safe homes. The Department should conduct a

campaign to encourage businesses to offer flexible work schedules to parents who will

join the Foster Care effort. Classes for people who want to be Foster Parents could be offered free at the Law Enforcement Center.

12. School resource officers need training in soft skills and communication with young people.

13. We are too scared to report crimes that we see at school for fear of retaliation.

14. We would feel safer at school with the presence of Albany Police Department officers visiting schools and classes, having a way to anonymously report criminal activity at school, training reviews for school resource officers, and lunchroom visits by Albany Police Department officers.

LAW ENFORCEMENT
FOCUS GROUPS
FOCUS GROUPS 7 AND 8

ACTIVE AND FORMER/RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS

Law enforcement effectiveness is at the heart of public safety and order maintenance. Community growth and advancement depend on the various roles police officers play in promoting sustainable development. Law enforcement effectiveness contributes to community safety, property protection, and a better quality of life.

Two focus groups of police officers: 1) active and 2) former and retired were engaged to promote a better understanding of issues that create barriers to law enforcement effectiveness. Further, qualitative research methods were used to capture individual experiences, perceptions, and context, and to interact with the group. These focus groups provided the ability to get an understanding of the background information necessary to promote law enforcement effectiveness. The findings provide an understanding and basis for strategy recommendations. The following pages present recommendations from these focus groups.

FOCUS GROUP 7 – ACTIVE POLICE OFFICERS

Focus Group 7 consisted of 5 active duty police officers. The purpose of this focus group was to provide insight, promote understanding of police-related issues that create barriers to law enforcement effectiveness, and generate strategies to enhance police officer satisfaction, reduce job stress, increase retention, and promote longevity.

Group Race Characteristics

RACE	NUMBER
African-American	2
White	1
Asian	1
Hispanic	1

Division Assignment

ASSIGNMENT	NUMBER
Investigations	2
Uniform	2
Support Services	1

RANK	NUMBER
Patrolman	1
Corporal	3
Captain	1

Focus Group 7 Feedback

Perceived Problems

1. Lack of department-wide knowledge about the processes and practices of specialized units. This creates difficulty when work is requested from the unit.

Rank

Strategy:

Specialized units should create very detailed and specific forms to alleviate issues related to work requests.

2. Supervisor micromanagement of trained police officers.

Sex

SEX	NUMBER
Male	3
Female	2

Time in Service

RANK	NUMBER OF YEARS
Patrolman	3
Corporal	15
Corporal	22
Corporal	10
Captain	25

Strategy:

Set effective work policies. Allow police officers reasonable timeframes to demonstrate their competency, and conduct inquiries only after reasonable response timeframes have passed.

3. Interview hiring boards are incomplete without police officer presence.

Strategy: Police patrol officers, sergeants, and lieutenants should be added to the board to ensure communication and understanding of police practices and evaluation of interviewee feedback.

4. The Albany Police Department is short on staffing, and this reduces time available for problem-solving across the Department.

   Strategy: Expand the Crime Analysis Unit and hire more civilians who can study crime patterns and trends. This will promote, increase, and assist police officer proactivity.

5. Police supervisors do not resolve problems well.

   Strategy: Implement a way to review resolution practices and create more standardized ways to address similar Department issues.

6. There are a few issues of peers not getting along well.

   Strategy: Develop practices that will promote employee cooperation.

7. Some citizens have poor perceptions of the police.

   Strategy: Encourage police officers to create ways to leave a positive impression. For example: One police officer shared how he responded to a home where a child was acting-out. Upon arrival, the police officer inquired of the child why he was behaving poorly. The child indicated that he was hungry and there was no food at home. The police officer went to a local fast food restaurant and purchased the child a meal. Not only did that resolve the problem, but years later, when the police officer responded to a separate call involving someone else, he encountered the "child" who was now an adult. The young man told the police officer how he (the police officer) had changed his life (the day the police officer purchased the food for the young person) and perception of the police. The young man went on to describe how he begun behaving positively and was currently in college doing well. He told the police officer that he would never

forget the police officer's act of kindness. A seemingly small act can change the course of a life.

Job Satisfaction

All focus group police officers reported that they are highly satisfied with their jobs.

Pay and Benefits

The Albany Police Department should create a team of police officers and supervisors who can work with the Chief of Police to create an attractive pay and benefits package.

Stress

1. The Albany Police Department must develop ways to create a better sense of comradery between police officers and civilian personnel.
2. The Albany Police Department must develop ways to help police officers combat the negative experiences of the job.
3. The Albany Police Department must research, develop, and share with police officers – coping strategies to support police officers' ability to develop resiliency.

Advancement and Promotion

1. Offer advancement and promotion opportunities for police officers who receive specialized certifications.
2. Transfers and promotions should be based on past and present police officer performance. Therefore, each division supervisor should maintain an accountability chart that tracks his/her division's police officers' activities. This chart should be

regularly updated and maintained and utilized during promotion, advancement, and transfer decisions.

3. There should be an alternative advancement structure to work in tandem with the current structure to offer alternative ways for police officer progress.

Other Recommendations Related to The Five Focus Areas

1. Longevity pay should be offered for police officers who stay in employ over the five-year mark. After five years, longevity pay should continue to be awarded every two to three years of employ after the initial five years.

2. The Albany Police Department should aggressively target criminal justice, psychology, sociology, and social work majors in their freshman year of college. A bridge program should create an opportunity for these students to volunteer at the Department. This volunteerism should expose students to various work assignments and promote an interest in the law enforcement profession. Once students have developed an interest, there should be a departmental commitment to supporting them and mentoring them to successful hire and retention.

3. The Albany Police Department should periodically conduct needs assessment studies to ensure members' voices are heard and concerns are being consistently addressed.

4. The Albany Police Department should develop creative ways to prevent police officers from leaving. Often, morale and other issues create frustration that prompts a police officer to consider leaving. Always be willing to consider actions that can be taken to retain the police officer.

5. There should be a way to address the shortage of promotion and advancement options.

6. A reenlistment bonus should be offered to any police officer who left the Department with a good record and on good terms (and now desires to return).

7. There should be a police officer peer group that regularly meets with the Chief of Police to discuss matters of importance that concern the troops.

8. When police officers create practices that are successful for proactivity, strategic action, or long-range department planning, there should be a process for how they can submit their ideas. Whether their ideas are implemented or not, police officers should receive recognition or acknowledgement for their critical-thinking and problem-solving activities.

FOCUS GROUP 8 – FORMER AND RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS

Focus Group 8 consisted of eight individuals ranging in age from 58 to 65 who are former or retired police officers. The purpose of this focus group was to provide insight on issues related to job satisfaction and to help better understand strategies that can be put into action to enhance police officer satisfaction, reduce job stress, increase retention, and promote longevity.

Group Race Characteristics

RACE	NUMBER
African-American	5
White	3

Age

AGE	NUMBER
58	1
61	2
63	3
64	1
65	1

Unit Assignment

LAST UNIT ASSIGNMENT	NUMBER
Traffic	2
Patrol	3
Support Services	1
Investigations	2

Sex

SEX	NUMBER
Male	5
Female	3

Focus Group 8 Feedback

1. Police officers typically leave employ or take early retirement for better pay, benefits, and opportunity for promotion. Create ways to implement regular cost of living adjustments, retirement perks, and new promotion opportunities.

2. Police officers leave to resolve issues related to shift work and scheduling that often conflict with family obligations. Develop a plan where the Department can be more flexible in its handling of these issues.

3. Some police officers leave because of job-related stress and/or burnout. Create ways to deal with this by being creative with work assignments, schedules, and custom treatment plans.

4. There is mistrust between supervisors and subordinates, and it is important to create avenues where they can get to know each other on a more personal level.

5. The wisdom and experience of retired police officers could still benefit the Department. Specialized volunteer opportunities should be created for retired and past personnel.

6. There must be a return to the Community-Oriented Policing philosophy, and bring back the role of "Officer Friendly" to strengthen police-community relations.

7. Citizens should be treated like crime-fighting partners. They are the eyes and ears of law enforcement.

8. Since law enforcement is now equipped with technological crime-fighting tools to promote law enforcement effectiveness, it should use them. The days of long hand-written reports and tickets and antiquated practices are a thing of the past. The Albany Police Department should endeavor to invest in modern resources to enhance the success of its efforts.

9. Employee recognition is very valuable to morale building in police departments. There should always be consistent and recurring ways to acknowledge demonstration of superior work.

10. There are many undiagnosed cases of mental illness and other social services related crises in the Albany community. It is important that police officers consistently document and refer individuals for social services. Police officers can keep literature on-hand to disseminate when there is a suspected need to share a social services resource. In this sense, police officers can be a first line of defense.

11. The Albany Police Department, prosecutors, and judges can work cohesively to develop highly effective sentencing/treatment/restorative justice plans for defendants. This could be via a group that meets regularly to target specific types of offenses. Social Services could also have a member represented on this group.

SECTION 7:
SAFE CITY COALITION MEMBER INTERVIEW

An interview was conducted with a member of the Safe City Coalition. Pastor Samuel Sneed, Jr. provided an extensive response to the task of developing strategic recommendations for the Safe City Strategic Plan. Recommendations from Pastor Sneed are organized and divided up by their connection to The Five Focus Areas.

Increasing Access to Social Services

1. Establish a partnership between the Albany Police Department and Social Services to enhance referral efforts for social services.

2. The Albany Police Department can partner with Social Services to facilitate a connection between retirees (and empty-nesters) and juvenile delinquents (and other youth) who are missing structure, discipline, foundational information, and other needs that would allow them to be successful. Retirees and empty-nesters provide a unique opportunity to serve youth in these categories.

3. The Albany Police Department and social services entities should partner and regularly share information. The Community Relations Unit of the Albany Police Department should have weekly contact with local social services agencies to assess community needs. When these needs are collectively addressed crime is positively impacted.

Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

1. Recruit at colleges.

2. Recruit at military installations.

3. Recruit at the high schools during students' junior and senior years.

4. Demonstrate to police officers that their pay and benefits are being seriously considered.

Leveraging Technology

1. Use the Albany Police Department website as a mechanism to report crimes and upload pictures for real-time reporting of crimes happening.
2. Create various avenues for community reporting using technology.
3. Utilize camera systems to deal with the negative connotations and consequences of "snitches get stitches" (a perception that deters community reporting of crimes witnessed).

Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

1. Utilize community tribunals to deal with issues in neighborhoods. This would allow for community-based responses that would prevent attaching the stigma associated with having a police record, to persons associated with criminal behavior. This approach keeps people out of the system and keeps the system from being overwhelmed. Some communities near Atlanta use this model of sentencing and it has proved successful.
2. Since we have access to data that explains the competencies, education-level, socio-economic-level, and other characteristics of offenders who emerge from our community, judges and prosecutors can develop innovative strategies that promote effective sentences and sentencing recommendations. These would be more informed and strategic decisions that promote restorative justice.

3. Judges and prosecutors should provide feedback to social services agencies regarding how offender characteristics have impacted their crimes. Social services tools can then be developed and utilized to begin a focused effort for targeting these sociological issues.

4. Judges should sentence non-violent offenders to unique community service duties. Prosecutors and judges can partner with churches and other community groups to develop placement ideas and ideas on how offenders can serve their community as they work towards rehabilitation.

Increasing Community Involvement

1. Although the school system police department is present in the schools, the Albany Police Department should increase its visibility in schools to build community relationships, change negative perceptions, develop partnerships, and establish community outreach efforts (with one of our community's most vulnerable populations).

2. Develop an incentive plan for employers who agree to hire ex-offenders.

3. Encourage community service organizations, such as fraternities and sororities, to engage students and encourage positive behaviors. These groups often have financial resources available from their national offices to be used for local impact. The mission of these organizations often involves community social action.

4. Thoughtfully undertake ways to incentivize reporting of crime.

5. Utilize the Bicycle Patrol in neighborhoods to encourage police-community engagement.

6. Create a mind-transforming marketing strategy and put a slogan on it for community buy-in. The slogan can be put on T-shirts and wristbands and police officers can pass

these items out in the neighborhoods they serve. Example slogan: "Crime – Not on my watch" or "You don't have to be a hero to do something heroic" (meaning report crime, but don't get hurt trying to engage a criminal."

7. Work with churches to aggressively target issues like Domestic Violence. Develop creative ways churches can partner with the Albany Police Department and social services agencies to actively engage in Domestic Violence prevention

8. Cadets awaiting their time to go to the academy can be assigned to walk neighborhoods and participate in community engagement.

9. Create ways to develop structure in neighborhoods that have low community pride. For example, Keep Albany-Dougherty Beautiful can initiate clean-up projects in identified neighborhoods. Volunteer groups can go into these communities and work with the youth to plant gardens and undertake other projects.

SECTION 8:
COMMUNITY
TOWN HALL

A town hall meeting format was utilized to engage a diverse group of citizens from various backgrounds. The discussion focused on citizen views of community safety and ideas for improvement. Further, citizens were given an opportunity to provide qualitative feedback regarding strategic ways to address the accomplishment of the five identified target focus areas. This open meeting format, spear-headed by a local community organization in partnership with the Albany Police Department, provided an opportunity for widespread brainstorming. It also empowered citizens to have a greater opportunity to take part in the development of the Safe City Strategic Plan. The town hall enhanced personal involvement in decisions that will impact them and their families. The town hall format proved effective for collecting community input. Qualitative research methods were used to capture individual experiences, perceptions, and context, and to interact with the group.

Once the town hall convened, the process began with the facilitator explaining: the purpose, background, relevant crime trends, the Mayor's call to action, the Safe City Coalition, and the Mayor's expectation of a strategic plan to address crime and community issues. This was followed by a session in which the facilitator engaged the town hall to promote honest feedback, give community members a voice, and create real strategies that can be implemented to address community concerns. Recommendations from the town hall are organized and divided up by their connection to The Five Focus Areas.

TOWN HALL FLYER

ALBANY (GA) ALUMNAE CHAPTER, DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC. *presents*

A SOCIAL ACTION EVENT: COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

THE ALBANY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Discussion Topics

Criminal Justice System and Community Partnerships

Law Enforcement Effectiveness

Fighting the Opioid Epidemic

Criminal Justice System Innovation

Please bring creative strategy ideas for these topic areas.

Location: Albany Police Department Law Enforcement Center
Time: 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Date: November 15, 2017
Who: <u>YOU</u> and Other Concerned Citizens of Albany, GA

Thank you for your support, participation, and concern for our community!

The following are recommendations that were presented at the Community Town Hall.

Increasing Access to Social Services

1. Post social services resources on Channel 16, the City of Albany website, Albany Police Department's Facebook Page, and on the message boards of local businesses.

2. The Albany Police Department Community Relations Unit should partner with healthcare providers and social services agencies to develop initiatives that will raise awareness about and combat the Opioid epidemic. This includes determining ways and developing plans for federal dollars to be channeled to Albany (GA).

3. Hire more police officers with Social Work Degrees because they will be able to identify people in the community who need referrals and they will be effective referral generators.

4. Encourage police officers to do community service work at social services entities to enhance their understanding of available social services resources. This will enhance their ability to make appropriate referral recommendations. This will also allow members of the Albany Police Department to be servant-leaders and lead the way in efforts to promote a community mindset geared toward service.

5. Facilitate a connection or bridge between public service organizations and social services agencies so that public service organizations can help to fill service gaps created by overwhelming social services caseloads.

6. Show citizens how to use safety Apps to combat Domestic Violence and other prevalent social services issues.

Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

1. Increase opportunities for police officer professionalism training.

2. Increase base salary pay to attract a better police officer.

3. Create alternative promotion opportunities using a special career ladder for alternative ways to advance.

4. Institute longevity pay for police officers who demonstrate loyalty to the Department. Determine increments of service where longevity pay can continue to be instituted.

5. To address burnout and boredom, create alternative work schedules that will allow police officers to enjoy temporary assignments and cross-training.

6. Put a mirror up in the Albany Police Department that police officers can walk by every day. Over the mirror put a caption up that asks the question, "Do you measure up to law enforcement standards"? This will encourage police officers to do a daily self-evaluation of their efforts and activities.

7. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to help promote a better image of Albany, GA despite negative news reporting.

8. Offer a student loan debt pay-off program for police officers who will commit to a designated amount of time with the Department.

Leveraging Technology

1. The City of Albany should institute a city-wide camera system to expand its efforts to identify crime.

2. Provide an incentive for homeowners to purchase security systems.

3. Beat officers should be added to the Facebook page of the neighborhoods they serve so that they can receive updates as neighborhood residents receive or report updates.

4. A specialized reporting app should be utilized to allow citizens to anonymously report crime. This will increase community-wide reporting.

Increasing Community Involvement

1. Be vigilant about offering support to neighborhoods who want to start Neighborhood Watch organizations.

2. Create neighborhood calling posts to keep citizens informed of suspicious activities.

3. Help neighborhood watch groups identify and secure meeting locations.

4. Encourage neighborhood residents to select a watch captain or leader for neighborhood efforts.

5. Return to the Community-Oriented Policing philosophy where police officers get to know the people living in their beat areas.

6. Create a marketing strategy that displays how much the Albany Police Department is concerned about its residents and its residents about them.

7. Create a youth taskforce or advisory group utilizing children who live in at-risk communities. Let them engage in community service, expose them to law enforcement, and create (in them) an interest in law enforcement. Schools can help with recommendations of students.

8. Create a new vision for community centers in which community service organizations can share in providing valuable services to segments of the community who need

distinct types of assistance. This could include serving free meals, tutoring, teaching how to develop business plans, teaching skills such as crocheting, etc. This center could be a one stop shop to address various issues and help people to help themselves.

9. Have the Albany Police Department begin to conduct community outreach weekends. These will be times that police can collectively focus their efforts on interaction in neighborhoods. These will be times communities can expect to see their beat officers and interact with them.

10. A team of diverse criminal justice system members should work with the school system to provide character education and training. Incentives should be given to students for completion of positive behavior assignments given.

11. Criminal justice members/agents need to make more regular appearances during parent-teacher nights or during other events that draw large crowds to schools.

Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

1. Write letters of concern to prosecutors and judges to encourage their investigation of local doctors and pharmacists who are contributing to the Opioid epidemic problem.

2. Encourage judges and prosecutors to hold community town hall events to address their constituents.

3. Consider the community prosecution strategy where prosecutors work more in the community with the citizens they serve, and where prosecutors have an opportunity to better understand community crime concerns.

4. The court system should hire additional staff who can devote time to more customized rehabilitation plans that are effective and meet the needs of defendants. These could

be social services workers who recommend and facilitate job placement, education services, or other services deemed valuable for a specific case.

SAFE CITY COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

RESPONSES BY FOCUS AREA

As previously noted, Safe City Town Hall participants provided several recommendations to be considered for the Safe City Strategic Plan. Nine percent of their recommendations were for how technology can be leveraged in our community. Sixteen percent of responses were related to increasing access to social services, and another 16% offered recommendations for prosecutorial and judiciary innovation. Twenty-five percent of responses were related to promoting law enforcement effectiveness, and 34% of responses were ideas for increasing community involvement. The below chart displays these statistics.

Safe City Town Hall Responses

- Increasing Access to Social Services
- Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness
- Leveraging Technology
- Increasing Community Involvement
- Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

16% 16% 25% 9% 34%
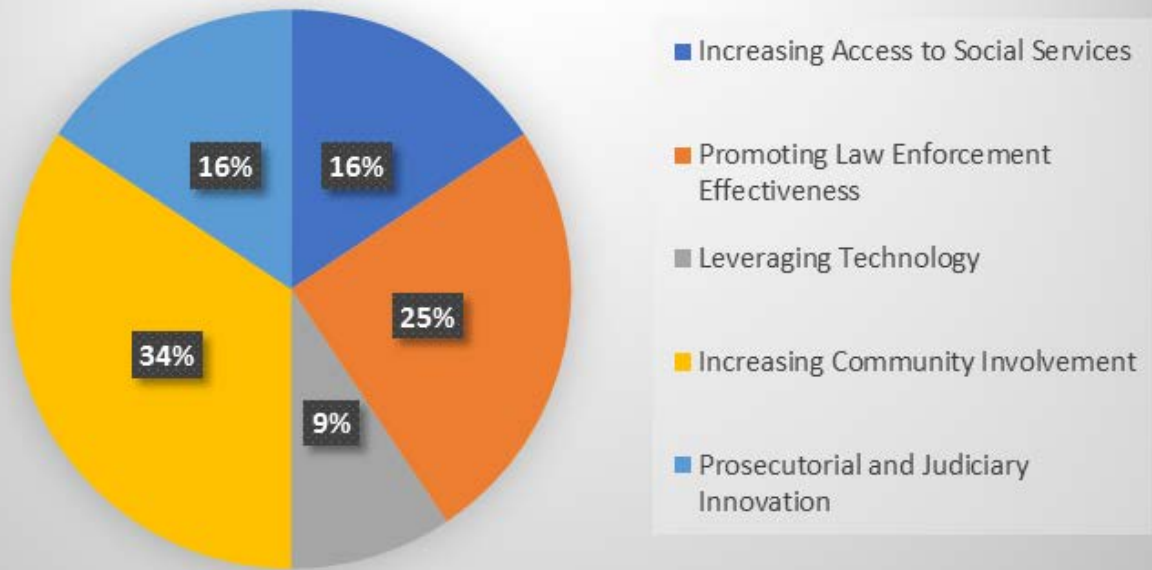
SECTION 9:
POLICE JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY

POLICE JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

A job satisfaction survey was disseminated to members of the Albany Police Department to capture opinions about job satisfaction and strategies for improvement and retention. The following pages display the results.

Note: Third party data entry of original survey into statistics program accounts for spelling, capitalization, and inconsistency issues that may be observed in the tables located under the graphs.

QUESTION 1: Please rate your overall satisfaction with working at the Albany Police Department.

Level of Satisfaction

Category	Count
Very Satisfied	22
Satisfied	38
Dissatisfied	3
Very Dissatisfied	0
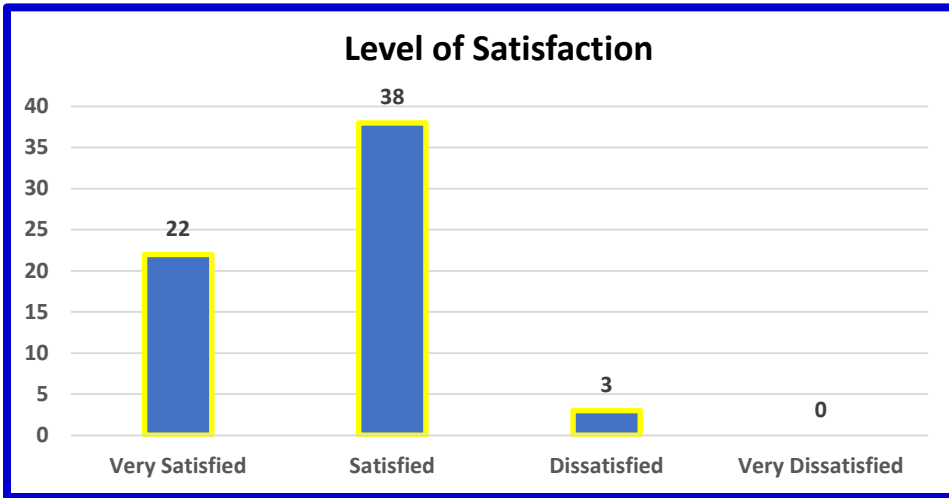
Very Satisfied	22	34.92%
Satisfied	38	60.32%
Dissatisfied	3	4.76%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0.00%

QUESTION 2: How supportive are you of the direction that top management is taking this organization?

Support of Mangement Decisions

Category	Count
Very Supportive	19
Supportive	31
Moderately Supportive	11
Not Supportive At All	2
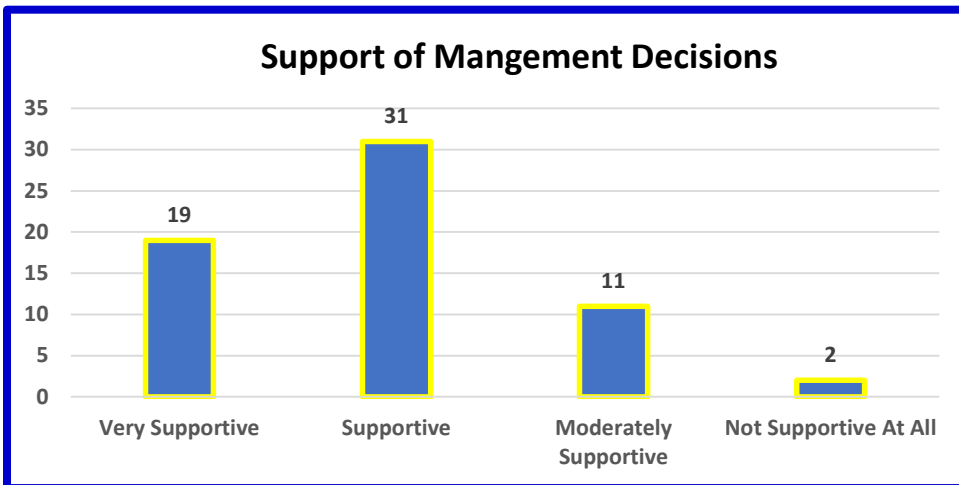
Very Supportive	19	30.16%
Supportive	31	49.21%
Moderately Supportive	11	17.46%
Not Supportive at all	2	3.17%

QUESTION 3: How well does your department communicate your job responsibilities to you clearly?

Department's Communication of Job Responsibilities

Category	Count
Very Well	15
Well	31
Moderately Well	14
Not Well at All	3
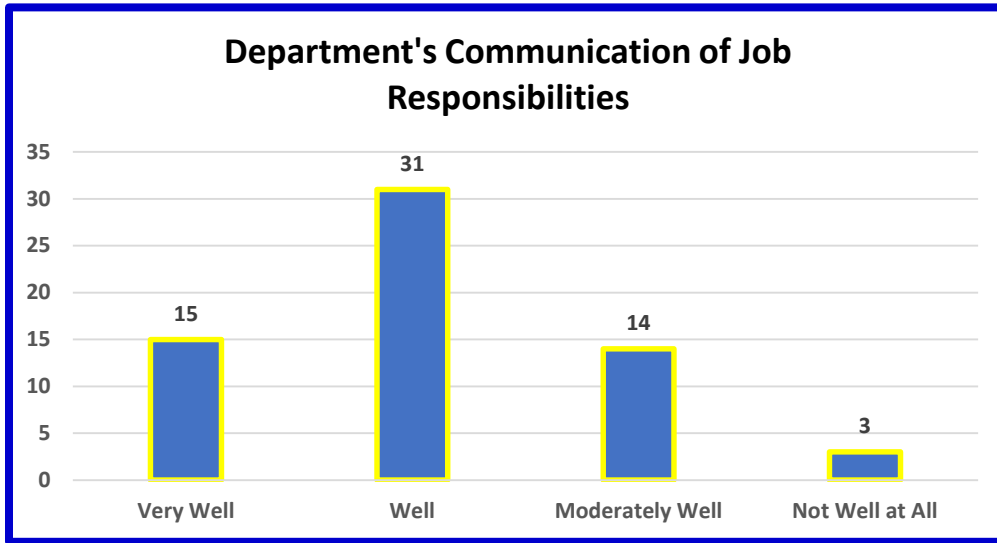
Response	Count	Percentage
Very Well	15	23.81%
Well	31	49.21%
Moderately Well	14	22.22%
Not well at all	3	4.76%

QUESTION 4: How well does your department train and equip you adequately for your job?

Department Adequately Trains and Equips for Job
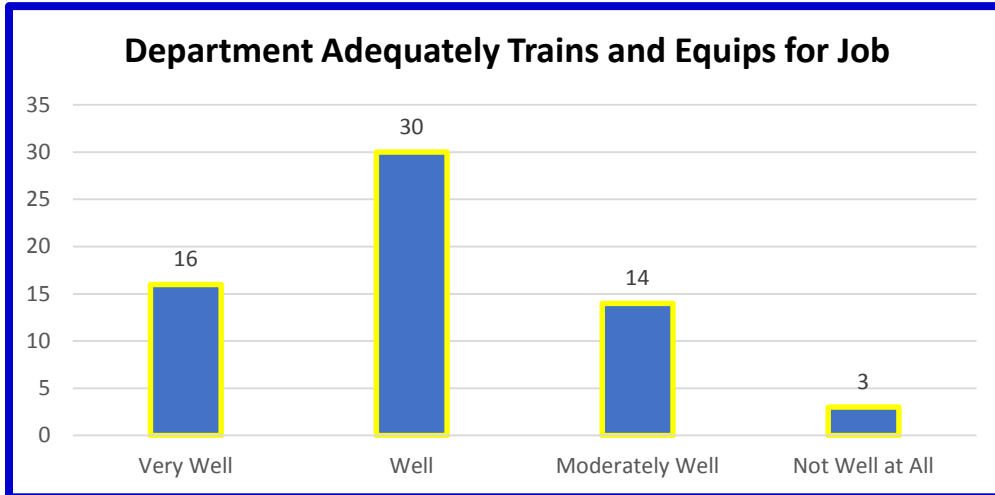
Answer	Count	Percentage
Very Well	16	25.40%
Well	30	47.62%
Moderately Well	14	22.22%
Not Well at all	3	4.76%

QUESTION 5: Does your department have enough officers to adequately police the community?

Sufficient Police Staffing
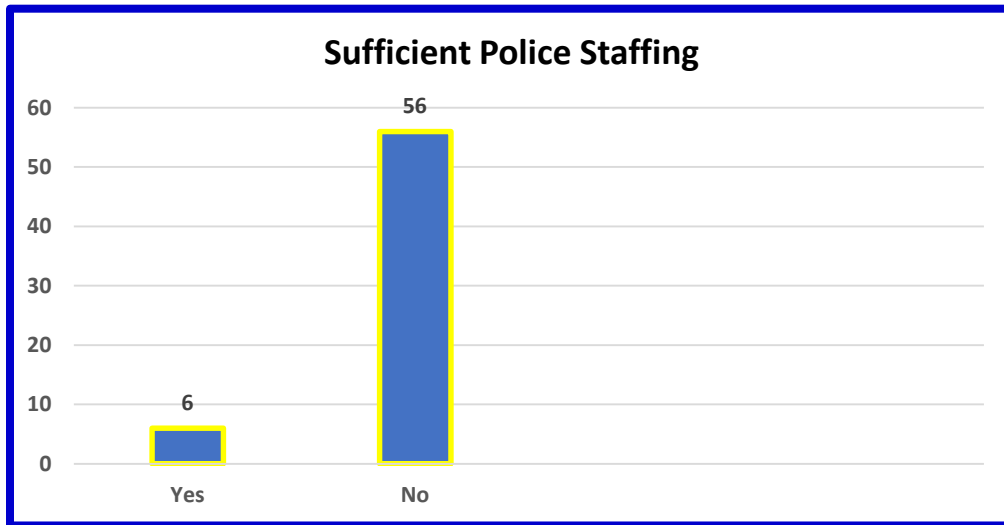
Yes	6	9.68%
No	56	90.32%

QUESTION 6: How often are employees in your department asked for their input on decisions that will affect them?

Interest in Employee Feedback
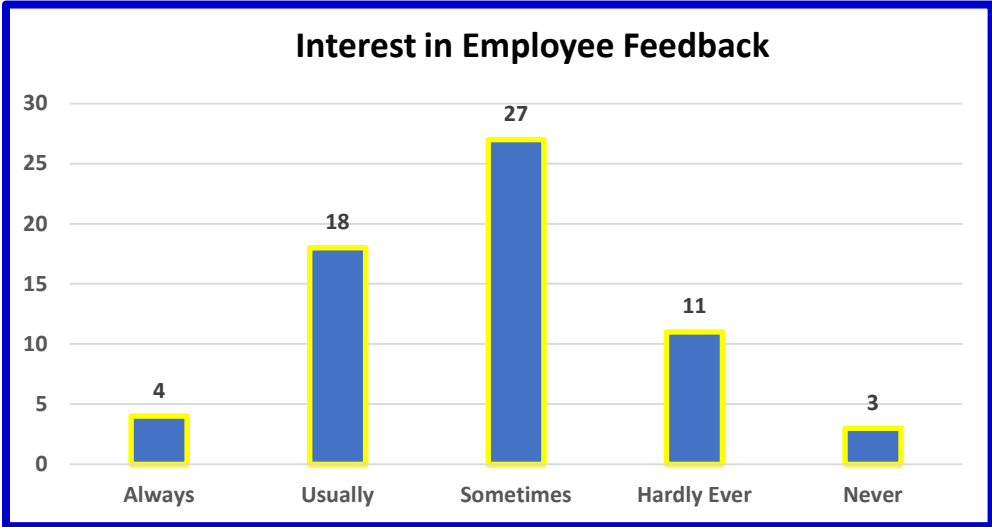
	Count	Percent
Always	4	6.35%
Usually	18	28.57%
Sometimes	27	42.86%
Hardly ever	11	17.46%
Never	3	4.76%

QUESTION 7: How often does your supervisor treat the officers he or she supervises with respect?

Respectful Treatment by Supervisors
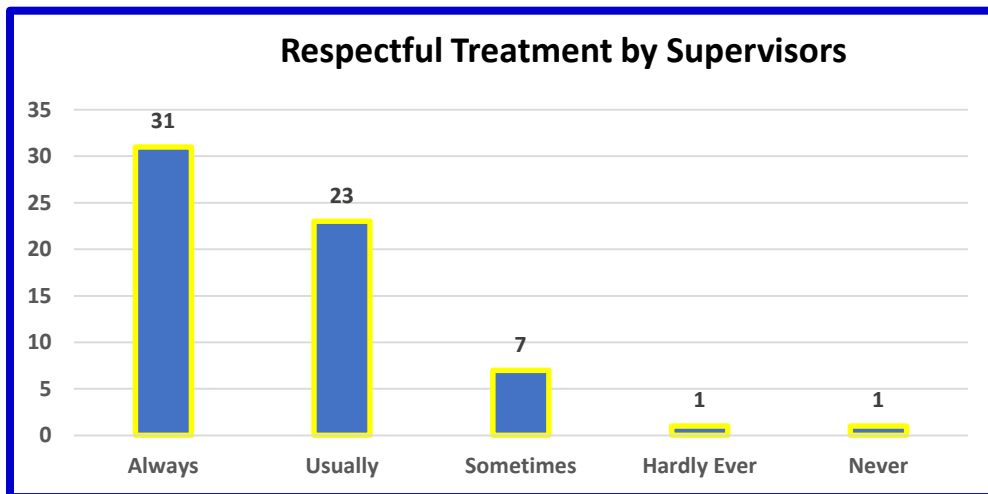
Response	Count	Percentage
Always	31	49.21%
Usually	23	36.51%
Sometimes	7	11.11%
Hardly ever	1	1.59%
Never	1	1.59%

QUESTION 8: Is there an officer you have been assigned to for ongoing success mentoring?

Success Mentoring
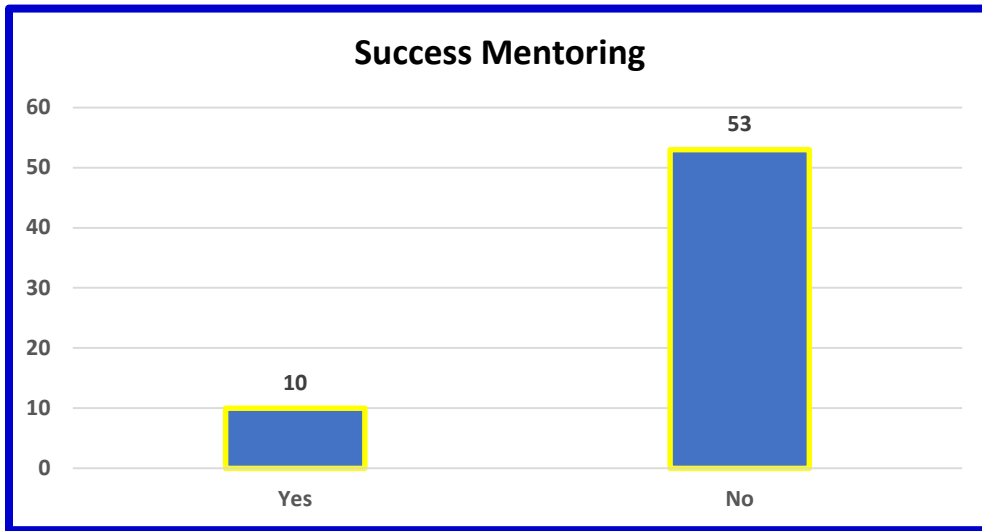
Yes	10	15.87%
No	53	84.13%

QUESTION 9: When it comes to decisions about assignments and promotions, which comes closest to describing how things work in your department?

Assignment Fairness: Race
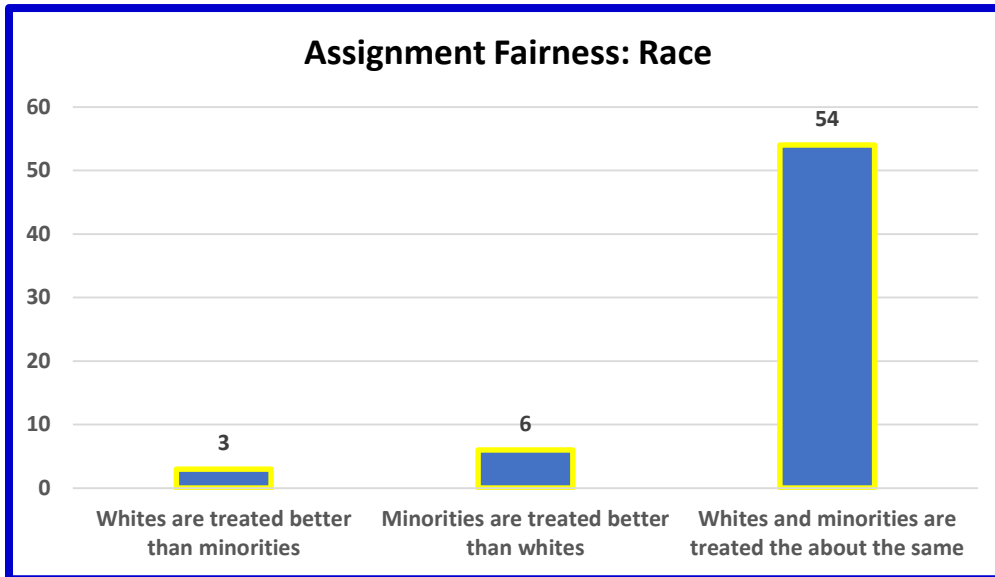
Whites are treated better than minorities	3	4.76%
Minorities are treated better than whites	6	9.52%
Whites and minorities are treated about the same	54	85.71%

QUESTION 10: When it comes to decisions about assignments and promotions, which comes closest to describing how things work in your department?

Assignment Fairness: Sex
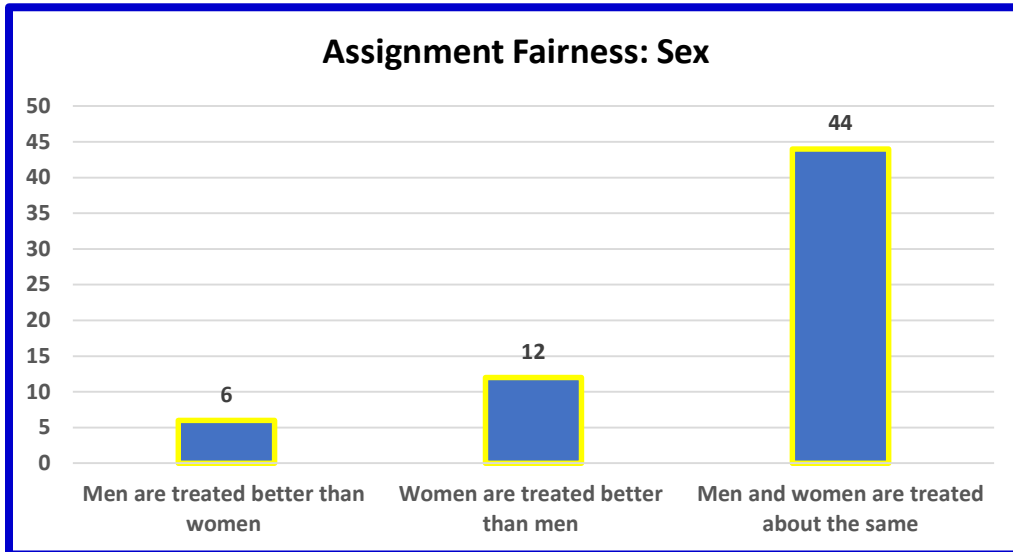
Men are treated better than women.	6	9.68%
Women are treated better than men.	12	19.35%
Men and women are treated about the same.	44	70.97%

QUESTION 11: How often, if at all, does your work as a law enforcement officer make you feel angry, frustrated, or burned out?

Frequency of Feelings of Anger, Frustration, Burnout
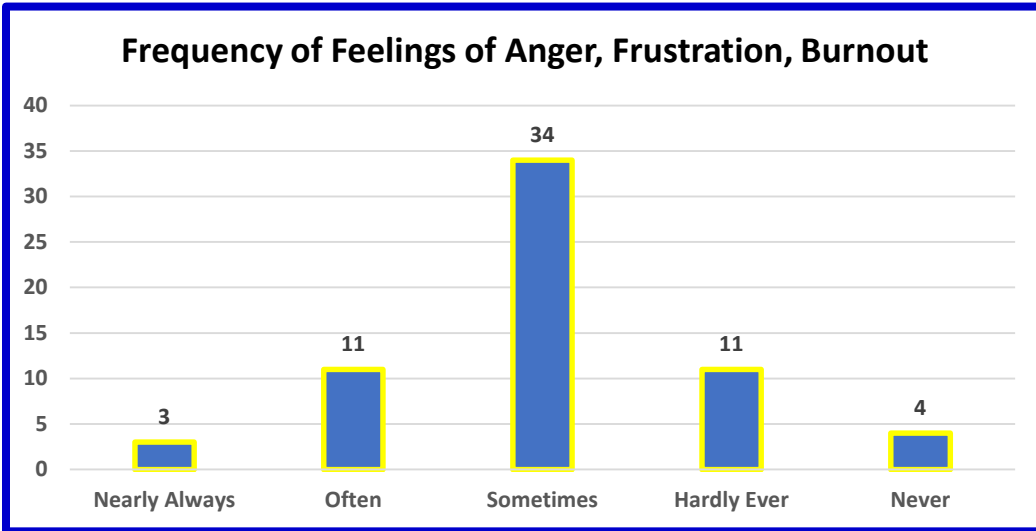
	Count	Percent
Nearly always	3	4.76%
Often	11	17.46%
Sometimes	34	53.97%
Hardly ever	11	17.46%
Never	4	6.35%

QUESTION 12: In the PAST MONTH, while you were on duty, have you been thanked by a community member for your police service?

Shown Community Appreciation
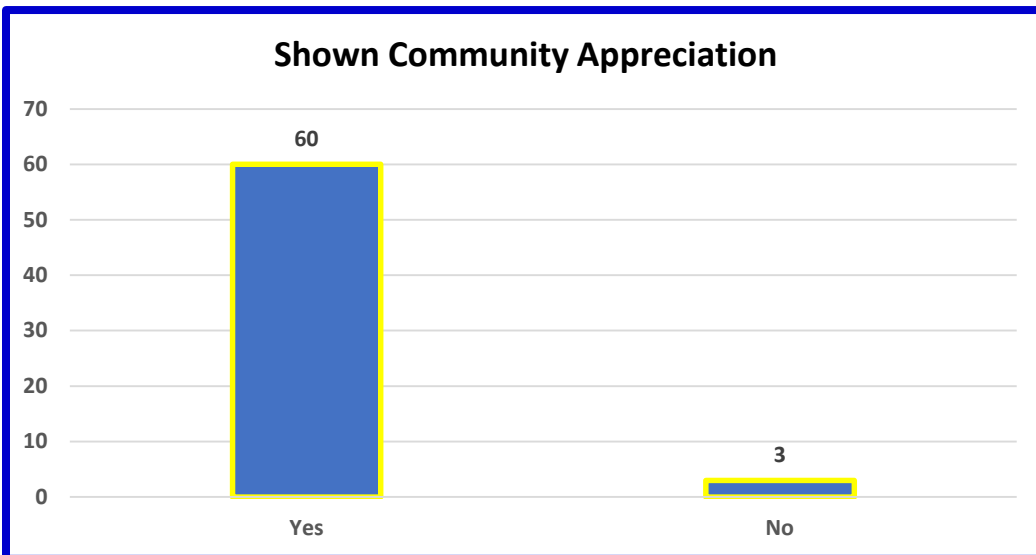
	Count	Percent
Yes	60	95.24%
No	3	4.76%

QUESTION 13: For minor mistakes, the Department helps officers with coaching and counseling rather than punishment.

Counseling and Coaching for Mistakes Made
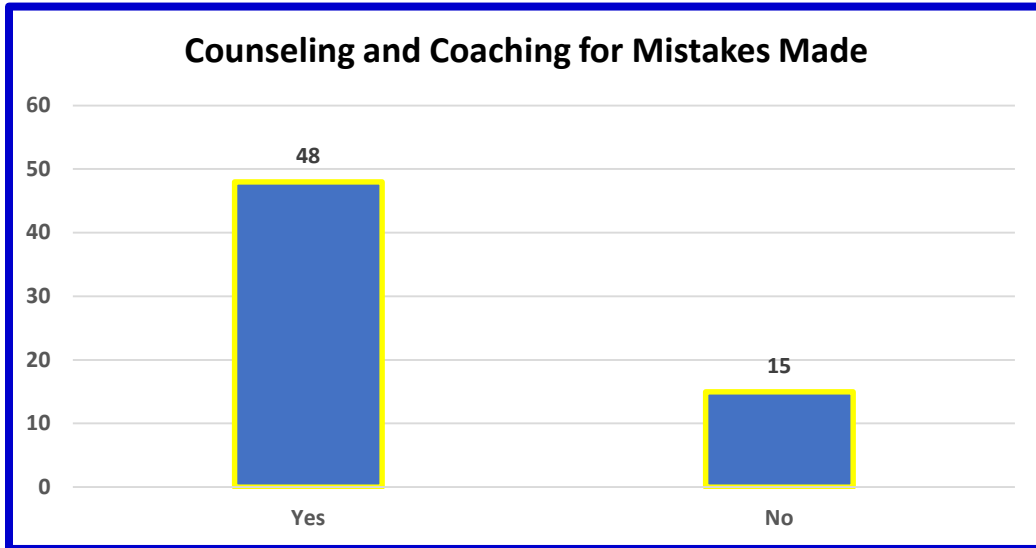
Yes	48	76.19%
No	15	23.81%

QUESTION 14: How well does your department recognize the accomplishments of its officers?

Recognition of Police Officer Accomplishments
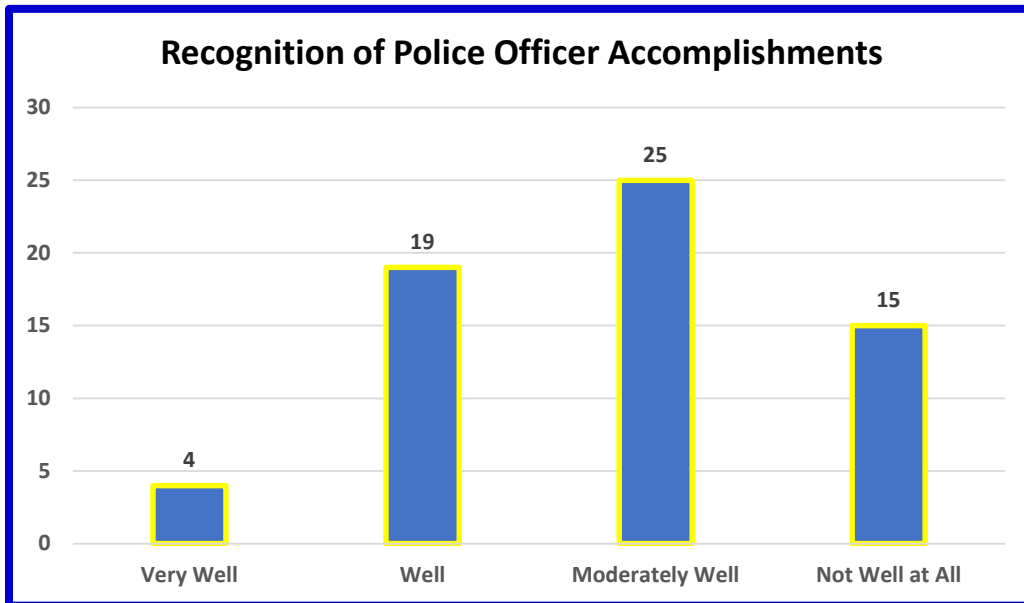
Very well	4	6.35%
Well	19	30.16%
Moderately well	25	39.68%
Not well at all	15	23.81%

QUESTION 15: Are you satisfied with the pay, incentives, and benefits package your department offers?

Satisfaction with Pay, Incentives, Benefits
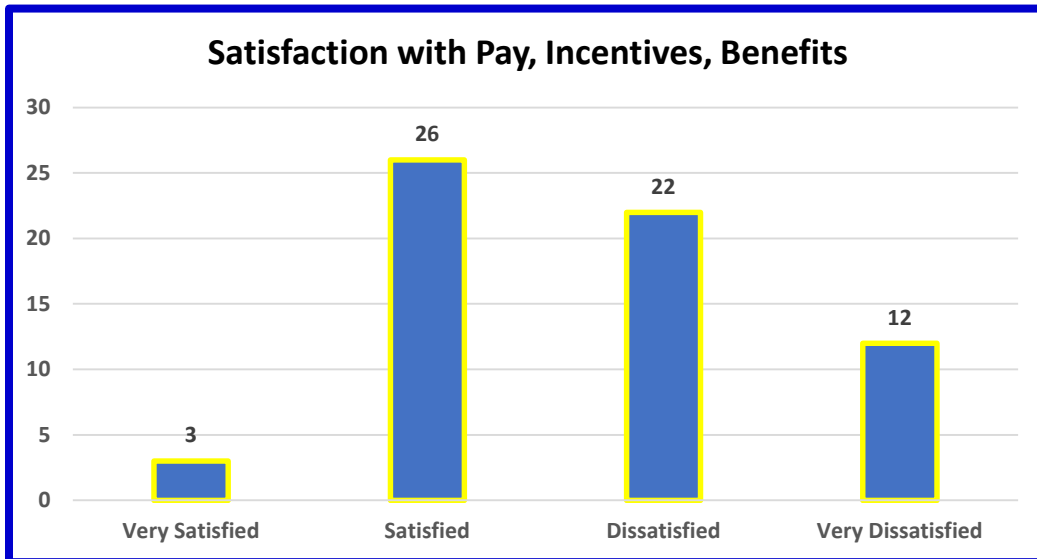
	Count	Percentage
Very satisfied	3	4.76%
Satified **(Satisfied)**	26	41.27%
Dissatisfied	22	34.92%
Very dissatisfied	12	19.05%

Question #16   **Short Answer**

What suggestions can you offer that would ensure your longevity working in the field of law enforcement?	53 Answered

Recognize those officers when they do something good and treat them as an equal. The department need to put officers in areas where they are qualified .Overall, treat each officer the same and with respect. We are all one FAMILY and need to work together to make this a better department.

Since I have been here, retention of officers has been a problem. It is expected to have a moderate turnover rate here because law enforcement is not for everyone. However, the manner in which people are treated is a contributing factor for them leaving. As a supervisor it is important to be fair, approachable, and consistent, but several supervisors lacks those qualities.

I suggest better pay for the officers as well as more consistency when it comes to promotions. I also would suggest that supervisors be held accountable more than they are for their role in this department. I also think that should be no difference when it comes to discipline based on an officer's rank or time they have at this department. There should be more respect when it comes to the supervisors and the officers.

Contiue to treat people with respect and dignity and always try to ask for feedback and input on things at their level; show concern and compassion for them

That the budget reflect a requested increase in pay for officers. Even a small increase would be appreciated, and a sign to the troops that the command has their back. Even if such a request is denied by the City manager or Council, the troops would know that someone is fighting for them, I dont know if they feel like anyone is at the moment.

Opportunities for growth and advancement. Ensuring that there is a consistent method of doing growth and development.

more incentives that help make life easier for employees. Money helps a lot but there are things that could be done that would not cost the city much more than time and effort that would help and show the employees of the city/police department they are thought about.

The pay needs to be increased. We need more officers.

The department should consider experience more than college degrees or college credit hours.

An occasional cost of living or pay increase, I understand pay isn't always an answer, but please understand that no one is trying to get rich in this profession, we are just trying to keep up with the other increasing costs withing our community.

It's not the pay. It will never be the pay. It will always be how well we work together with each other and how well we serve the community. The pay is the reward that comes behind it.

Raise in pay and incentives like other states and municipalities.

Just to continue to learn and gain as much experience as I possibly can in every area of this craft. To hopefully become a part of management and positively effect the department and the personnel.

Chances for Advancement Pay Incentives or steps to reach the $50,972.48 annually listed in the position salary cap.

Departments needs major help. The old supervisors needs to be gone. Stop overlooking your senior officers due to personal opinions.

Better recognition and promotion of the officers that actually work instead of the ones that do the bare minimum. I would like to see things to be on a more consistent level between the different shifts.

every first responder should get paid more for what they do in this city. So my only suggestions would be more money.

I think more needs to be done between the city manager and our department to ensure that we take care of our officers with better pay and an increase in overall benefits. I also think that the city needs to take a closer look at the retirement requirements of all first res-ponders with adjustments of age and time served in the department instead of just doing 30 years to get full retirement.

There should be more coaching and leadership training for further development in the promotional process before the next level. There is still disparity of pay for mid-level supervisors and management and their is no increase unless there is is promotion.

N/A

can't think of any at the moment

SUMMARY OF POLICE JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY DATA

The current survey was disseminated to the entire population of the Albany Police Department. Sixty-three members of the Albany Police Department participated in the survey, providing both quantitative and qualitative responses to survey questions. In some cases, some police officers omitted answering some of the questions posed. The survey data provides an opportunity to better understand the opinions of police officers regarding their experiences at the Albany (GA) Police Department and with the Albany (GA) community.

Most police officers who responded to the survey reported being satisfied with their job (60.32%). Most police officers responding reported their support for the direction of police department management (49.21%). Most police officers responding reported that the Albany Police Department does well in its communication of job responsibilities to its employees (49.21%). Most police officers responding reported that the Department does well with training and equipping its personnel for the jobs they do (47.62%). Most police officers responding reported that "no" the Department does not have enough police officers to adequately police the Albany (GA) community (90.32%). Most police officers responding reported that they are sometimes asked for their input on department decisions (42.86%). Most police officers responding reported that they are always treated with respect by their supervisors (49.21%). Most police officers responding reported that there are no ongoing efforts to provide success mentoring for police officers (84.13%). Most police officers responding reported that whites and minorities receive about the same treatment in the Department (85.71%). Most police officers responding reported that men and women are treated about the same in the Department (70.97%). Most police officers responding reported

that their job sometimes causes them to feel anger, frustration, or burnout (53.97%). Most police officers responding reported "yes" they have been thanked in the past month by a member of their community for their service (95.24%). Most police officers reporting indicated "yes" they receive counseling and coaching for minor mistakes as opposed to punishment (76.19%). Most police officers responding reported that the Albany Police Department does moderately well in its efforts to recognize police officers' accomplishments (39.68%). Most police officers responding reported that they are satisfied with their pay, incentives, and benefits (41.27%).

While the survey results are very informative, it is noteworthy to consider reasons for low police officer participation in the survey. The Albany Police Department has 150+ police officers under its employ. Of that number, only 63 police officer members responded to the survey – a mechanism designed to maximize the potential for their voices to be heard, concerns to be addressed, and changes to be implemented. While there is no clear explanation for low police officer participation in the survey, the following factors could have contributed to the decision to participate: 1) The Albany Police Department conducted a survey of its members approximately two years ago. There could be the sense from the Department police officers "that should have been sufficient" or there could be a sense that there are no visible outcomes demonstrating that the previous survey was used to develop tangible strategies. 2) Police officers' shift work schedules, work overload, vacation and sick leave outages, Department activities, or the fact that this survey was based on voluntary participation – could have contributed to low reporting.

The results of the police job satisfaction survey suggest that generally police officers

employed with the Albany (GA) Police Department are satisfied with their job and the administrative practices of the Department. However, the survey does reveal areas that the Albany Police Department can target to increase the level of satisfaction reported by its police officers. Additionally, the survey provided an opportunity for police officers to submit open-ended comments and feedback to Department superiors which is critical for providing the Police Chief and his staff with an understanding of police officers' opinions on ways to progress the Department. The current survey should be used to support recommendations for action strategies, practices, and policies that will contribute to high police officer satisfaction.

SECTION 10:

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH REPORT, ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

To enhance the Safe City Strategic Plan effort, Dr. Pamela Pitman Brown, Assistant Sociology Professor at Albany State University was asked to participate and contribute a sociological research report to the SCSP. The following pages provide details of her findings.

SAFE CITY STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS AREAS: PROMOTIONS FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

In October 2017, Albany Mayor Dorothy Hubbard proposed the Safe City Coalition to look at crimes being committed and to investigate how the City can use technology and other community assets to prevent crimes. A finding from the initial study indicates that all five areas of focus will require community participation, including community businesses. Five specific focus area targets have been identified for the strategic plan. The Five Focus Areas are:

Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Social Services

Focus Area 2: Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

Focus Area 3: Leveraging Technology

Focus Area 4: Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

Focus Area 5: Increasing Community Involvement

Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Social Services

Increasing access to social services is a key component to alleviation of drug/Opioid addiction, hunger, homelessness, and other societal ills that often are problematic within medium to large cities. Participation and encouragement of the community specific to the social reciprocity is greatly needed for the Safe City initiative to work for its older, poor, and disabled residents, as well as those caring for these individuals. The community needs an increase of knowledge of social services available for all residents of Albany, but specifically focused on the distribution of information to those over the age of 60 or their caregivers, who may need social services, but are not aware of the availability to service their need. Albany has both public/government access and religious based social services, which can be utilized in increasing access.

Public or government access social services include:

- Veterans Services Department
  Veterans Service Department: Located at 1303 W. Broad in Albany, and serves Dougherty, Lee, Terrell, and Worth Counties. Services offered include:
  Benefits Assistance to veterans and their families, as well as assistance in locating educational opportunities, nursing facilities, burial assistance, and offer services specific to Women Veterans including counseling for military sexual trauma.

- Southwest Georgia Community Action Council, Inc.
  Head Start: Within Dougherty and Lee County there are nine (9) Head Start programs, with several operating as Early Head Start Program. Early Head Start Programs serve prenatal to age 3, pregnant women, and their families. Head Start programs, which are available for children ages 3 to 5, are through the Office of the Administration for Children and Families (https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/about). The Neighborhood Service Center Dougherty Office is located at 317 West First Avenue in Albany.

- Dougherty County Health Department
  WIC: Available to low to moderate income pregnant women, recently delivered women, breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk. Fathers can also bring their children to apply for WIC. Individuals may apply for WIC if they are working or unemployed. Note that guardians who are low income and who are

the sole provider of children under age five are also eligible for assistance. This is particularly important in an area where there are high incidences of incarceration of parents or drug addiction. Many grandparents/caregivers are unaware of the social services that are available to them as well.

Diabetes Education and Assistance: SHAPP and Diabetes Program – Provides joint management of qualified patients. Hypertension Treatment Management includes blood pressure monitoring, medications, motivation, and clinical laboratory testing. The Diabetes Control Program provides monitoring for diabetic adult patients. Medication, education, nutrition classes and laboratory services are provided for diagnosed individuals. Diabetic retinopathy screening is also available through the program.

Flu Vaccines

- SOWEGA Council on Aging: SOWEGA-COA offers numerous services for senior adults.
- ❖ Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)
- ❖ Albany Alzheimer's Caregivers Time Out (ACTO)
- ❖ Community Care Services (CCSP)
- ❖ Elder Abuse Prevention Elder Legal Assistance Program
- ❖ Family Caregiver Program
- ❖ Homemaker Services
- ❖ Georgia Cares
- ❖ Health Fairs
- ❖ Meals-on-Wheels
- ❖ Ombudsman
- ❖ Senior Centers/Nutritional Centers
- ❖ Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- ❖ Rural Senior Wellness Program

Religious based social services include:

- ❖ Lutheran Services of Georgia located in Albany offers foster care services. Lutheran Services of Georgia offers other services in cities across the state, but only foster care service is available in Albany.
- ❖ Flint River Habitat for Humanity offers assistance for homeownership, Veteran homeownership, and home repair for Veterans.

Recommendations for participation and community education

Recommendations for participation and community education of the services available can take place in forums such as:

Veterans Organizations
Houses of worship
Clubs/Organizations
Town Hall Meetings

Sociological Perspective of Increasing Access to Social Services

From a sociological perspective, individual problems are often rooted within the society. Issues such as homelessness, drug addiction, and unemployment often lead to more crime and from sociological perspectives, these are public issues as the structure within the community or society may have altered the individuals' abilities to have a home, not use drugs or have gainful employment. For a more positive perception to be noted of the City of Albany, we need to let people know that we understand that there are some issues that are frankly not their fault nor the fault of the City. The moving of industry is often not something that a city can counter thus, the loss of jobs, the loss of tax revenue is no one individual's fault. To encourage people to understand and know how social programs can benefit them personally or a family member, the more the individual perceives that society is assisting them – and that the City cares about them.

However, there is a pervasive thought that "those services" are for people "not like me," whatever "not like me" means. The services are for them and we need to encourage the providers and the citizens to take part in social services available.

Focus Area 2: Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

As respondents to the Perceptions and Perspectives Survey indicated, generally, there is a positive perception of the Albany Police Department. The strategies offered by the Coalition were to promote the Albany Police Department's ability to attract and retain personnel.

One strategy that would be considered an effective use of resources within the Albany area is to utilize the numerous local college/university programs to attract new talent to the area, or to keep the local talent in Albany.   Additional strategies include creating partnerships with local universities, community businesses, organizations, and municipalities within the Greater Albany area and Dougherty County in order to train quality, local talent in the field.

Partnership with Albany State University Criminal Justice Department www.asurams.edu

 There are three choices of criminal justice degrees and a certificate:

- Associate of Applied Science
- Bachelors of Science
- Masters of Science (Online)
- Criminal Justice Management Certificate

There are also:

- Paralegal/Legal Assistant Criminal Justice Certificate
- Associate of Applied Science degree in Paralegal/Legal Assistant Studies.

Partnership with Troy State University-Albany Campus Criminal Justice Department www.troy.edu

Similar to Albany State University's Criminal Justice Department, there are various CJ degrees and certificates.

- Associate of Science in General Education: Criminal Justice (Online)
- Bachelor of Science: Criminal Justice (Online)
- Masters of Science: Criminal Justice (Online)
- Graduate Level Certificate: Cybersecurity (Online)

Partnership with Albany Technical College www.albanytech.edu

The Public Safety Division at ATC has several degrees, which would enhance the ability to recruit and retain local talent.

- The Cyber Crime Investigation Degree Program
- Law Enforcement Technology Diploma (Online)
- Law Enforcement Technology Associate Degree (Online)

Collaboration between the Universities and the City of Albany

Numerous options are available for collaboration between the City of Albany and the local colleges and universities. Firstly, the City of Albany itself can construct reciprocation agreements with the universities/colleges in the area. This could be in forms of reduced tuition for those willing to work within the Albany/Dougherty County area, and partnering with the universities to do so.

Troy University has partnerships created with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, Escambia County (FL) Sheriff's Office, the Georgia Department of Corrections, Hillsborough (FL) County Sheriff's Office, Lakeland (FL) Police Department, McIntosh County (GA), Peace Officers Association of Georgia, South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, and with other entities (Troy University, 2017). It would behoove the City of Albany to enter into a similar partnership construct with each of the local universities, in order to assist local law enforcement in obtaining higher education and training, as well as assisting residents of the local community to attend one of the criminal justice programs as well. While the Albany Police Department could enter into such a partnership, it appears that if the partnership is constructed with the City of Albany, there would be more value-added benefits for the entire City and not just the Department.

Higher Income for Officers who complete Associate, Bachelors, Masters Degrees

Additionally, many departments offer not only the ability to earn a higher degree in Criminal Justice but also offer bonuses, or an increase in pay once the degree has been

obtained. Usually, the increase begins at the B.S. or B.A. level with a 5% to 10% increase in pay once the officer has earned the undergraduate degree. At the Master's level, there is often an opportunity for the officer to move up in rank which then increases their pay as well. If a move in rank is not available then there is usually an increase in pay, again at the 5% to 10% range.

Homeownership

Retention of highly trained officers was listed as a concern for the Coalition. Retention does not always translate into increased income, or access to higher education. Thus, another option includes promotion of homeownership for police officers. Research indicates that increasing police patrols within the community are an effective and inexpensive option for curbing crime, or even promoting the concept of crime prevention. Having police officers live in neighborhoods in the City is beneficial for numerous reasons. Residents like to see police cars in their neighborhoods; they like to know that police cars are parked near their homes and businesses. Visibility is important in increasing the perception of safety.

The FHA Officer Next Door Program and the Good Neighbor Next Door Program offer homes for law enforcement and other community helpers through The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subsidization, offering homes at a 50% discount off the appraised value, with a very low down-payment of $100. While these homes are often limited in certain areas, Albany and Dougherty County do have properties for sale through HUD. The list changes often as properties become available.

Various programs have been implemented in other cities and municipalities. The City of Chattanooga has created a homeownership program using a homeownership fund

(Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise), which allows police officers $10,000 toward the purchase of their first home within the city limits. Homes in other designated areas (which would need to be specific to each city), are allowed up to $20,000. Chattanooga began with a $250,000 start up from their general fund (Bardoner, 2012). While this might not be financially feasible for Albany, there are other options to begin the program. Some cities offer assistance with closing costs on police officers' home purchases, others may partner with a local bank for a reduced mortgage rate, or a reduced down payment.

There are also other programs such as Everyday Hero Housing Assistance Fund (EHHAF, 2017) which is offered in all 50 states. The program is not limited to police officers, but includes firefighters, teachers, doctors, nurses, and social workers. There is also a program specific to Military Heroes (MHAF, 2017), which also would assist those police officers who have served in the military.

Sociological Perspective of Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

From a sociological perspective, community relations typically increase as officers live amongst the residents. If your neighbor is an officer, you are more likely to consider contacting the authorities if you see something out of the ordinary. You are also more likely to have better interactions with officers. Officers are also more likely to consider the residents as neighbors and people in need of their assistance. It is social reciprocity and cohesiveness when officers also live within the communities they serve, which is why many departments have residency requirements for their officers. The City of Houston (TX) provides a Residency Incentive Program, which assists officers in purchasing homes and moving into qualified

neighborhoods. Additionally, there are monetary incentives during years one, two and three of the residency (Houston Texas Government, 2015).

Focus Area 3: Leveraging Technology

Another strategy is to utilize businesses and residents, as well as city officials to maximize safeness and minimize theft and other criminal activities within the city. The concept of public-private sharing of information is critical within maintaining safeness and the perception of safeness.

Video Surveillance Equipment

The critical use of technology in both solving crime and in maintaining safeness and the perception of safeness is the use of video cameras. Public surveillance technology helped solve the Boston Marathon bombing as the perpetrators were caught on city surveillance. The best use of surveillance technology is an integrated approach using public and private systems. While many private companies, stores, restaurants, have surveillance equipment, there are numerous issues in reliance upon their technology. Firstly, many systems, while once working and considered "new" technology is now outdated and had not been replace by the digital systems, which allow higher resolution images. Secondly, the employees have not been trained in using the systems that are in place. New digital systems require training. This includes the use of body cameras on local police and also will be followed up via the focus on technological uses and suggestions.

The suggestions for leverage of technology in keeping Albany a safer city is a joint effort between the city, the police, and the marketplace. Options that may be available are as follows:

- Incorporating security businesses (the marketplace) into the plan. An example is to invite security businesses in Albany/Dougherty County area to participate by donating time to the city for reviews of businesses (private companies, stores, restaurants) current security systems. This is a win-win for the City of Albany, the security industry, and the police department.

- The security business can offer steep discounts toward the purchase of newer equipment, installation, and assistance for those who participate in the upgrade. Security businesses participating in the Safe City program would enjoy free advertising on the City's website as a contributor to making Albany a safe city.

- The next step would be encouraging private home owners or apartment owners to also upgrade or add surveillance to their homes. Many individuals are unaware of what can be done for little money in protecting their home/property. Additionally, many are not aware of the discounts available to them on their homeowner's policies.

- The City can also look into grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Federal Urban Area Security Initiatives (UASI, 2017) for assistance in upgrading any public systems, including facial recognition software.

Previous research indicates that the public expects private business surveillance video to assist law enforcement in identifying suspects and solve crimes. A majority of those surveyed also indicated that businesses should be responsible for maintenance and functionality of the equipment (Dolak, 2013).

Sociological Perspective of Leveraging Technology

From a sociological perspective, many people are fearful of surveillance equipment, and are concerned that there will be an invasion into their privacy, such as equipment that focuses on their home windows, or their backyards. This is one of the reasons why it is important to involve the citizens. This will help City authorities to allay citizen fears. Additionally, the City can ask that personal/home and businesses register their cameras with the police department, knowing that the footage will only be asked for if there is a need of an investigation. Philadelphia has such a program aptly called SafeCam: Private Cameras for Public Safety (Philadelphia Police Department, 2015).

Focus Area 4: Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is one aspect to reducing recidivism by personalizing the crime. Both the victim and the offenders are encouraged to meet and mediate a restitution agreement. Of course, some crimes are more amenable to a restorative justice solution than others. However, the solution does allow for offenders to recognize, admit, and work toward taking ownership of the harm they have caused, by making amends. It also seeks to reintegrated offenders into society, as well as allowing victims to seek amends rather than having to move through a civil system to force payment from the victim.

Some advocates of the restorative approach have noted that the process works well for youthful offenders, and for those who are seeking redress for low level offenses, such as petty theft, public intoxication, disorderly conduct, trespass, vandalism, or other low-level misdemeanors. Depending on the age of the offender and the level of crime, restorative justice can be used as a deterrent for more serious criminal behavior.

Community Service vs. Incarceration

Community service rather than incarceration is also used within sensible justice and restorative justice. The community service can be a sanction that links that service to the offence, and is a positive for the community, but suggests responsibility for the offence on the offender. As prison populations are rising, and the costs of housing inmates accelerates, community service can alleviate overcrowding and costs of housing forced upon the tax payers. Additionally, when considering the increase in female incarceration, imprisonment often takes away the primary caretaker of children, forcing other state/local agencies to care for the children, again at tax payer expense. Limited research has been conducted on community service and recidivism. There are also those who believe that restorative justice and community service are not one in the same as the victim is overlooked within community service. Thus, a victimless crime or a community crime (such as tagging, or destruction of property) might be better served by completing community service.

Ban the Box Movement

It is estimated that nearly 70 million people within the United States have some type of criminal record and that close to 700,000 returns to the community after serving time in the prison system. Finding a job is difficult enough without having to explain or reveal your incarceration records, or any arrest. While having a job does not mean that an individual will not remain out of the criminal justice system, unemployment and the stress that accompanies it might push someone to engage in illegal acts for a financial benefit to their family.

The State of Georgia determined in 2015 to utilize Ban the Box, with regard to hiring state employees, with Governor Nathan Deal signing the Executive Order in 2015. While Albany, Atlanta, Augusta, Cherokee County, Fulton County, Macon-Bibb County, and Columbus all have moved to "Ban the Box" with regard to city employment, perhaps it is time to stress how "banning the box" can benefit employers and future employees in the city, within private business.

Minor Drug Offenses: Victimless crime (Marijuana)

In 2017, the Atlanta City Council voted unanimously to decriminalize marijuana. This move allows possess for one ounce or less of marijuana to a $75 fine. Other cities across the United States have also decriminalized the personal use/possession of marijuana to no more than a civil citation. Washington, D.C. allows legalization for adults 21+ to possess less than 2 ounces. Pittsburg has made possession of less than an ounce punishable with a $25 fine, yet those caught smoking in public and in possession of less than an ounce are punished with a $100 fine. Kansas City lowered fines to $25 and removed jail time for possess of 35 grams or less. Note that one ounce of marijuana is considered 28.45 grams. States such as Mississippi and North Carolina moved to no jail time for possession of small amounts of marijuana in the 1970s.

Atlanta Police Chief Erika Shields noted that reducing the penalties for having small amounts of marijuana will allow police officers to focus on eliminating violent crimes instead of petty crimes. Clarkston, Georgia has also approved lower fines and eliminated jail time on one ounce or less.

Sociological Perspective of Prosecutorial and Judicial Innovation

From a sociological perspective, the NAACP has taken a stance on decreasing penalties for low-level marijuana possession. They also cite that marijuana arrest are political and racially biased in order to use selective law enforcement, increasing the possibility of arresting persons of color (specifically black/African American or Hispanics), more than whites. As Reverend Al Sharpton noted in a keynote address at the Cannabis World Congress & business Expo in 2017:

- The National Action Network look at this as a Civil Rights, a Human Rights, and a decriminalization issue... We cannot talk about civil rights and fair housing and fair immigration without addressing the criminalization of marijuana.
- We're tired of seeing young black and Latino people disproportionately go to jail for possessing weed in small amounts, while the culprits that broke the economy walk away unscathed with no criminal indictments or prosecution.
- Why do I support it? Because blacks and Latinos account for about a third of the population in New York, yet 85% of the people arrested for marijuana possession are black and Latino. Because possession of marijuana is at the top of the misdemeanor arrests in the state of New York. A lot of people do not understand that there are consequences that are almost unthinkable. You can lose your residence in city housing if you have a marijuana conviction. You can be held and detained by Immigration if you have a marijuana conviction. You can be denied employment if you have a marijuana conviction. You can be refused admission to certain colleges if you have a marijuana conviction. This disproportionately impacts people of color. (Bloom, 2018).

Focus Area 5: Increasing Community Involvement

Community involvement or community buy-in of Safe City is a key component of any city-wide project. Not only do the citizens of Albany have to step-up but the faith community, the businesses, the schools, higher education, and the corporations will have to as well to make this a successful plan.

• Business and Retail Organizations
- Local retailers and businesses
- Property management / property developers
- Private security teams

• Civic & Community Organizations
- Mayor/city council/city manager
- County commissioners/county manager
- Local business associations (e.g., chambers of commerce)
- Surrounding neighborhood associations (e.g., neighborhood watch)
- Key community organizations (e.g., Rotary, Lion's Club)

• Faith Community
- Local churches, synagogues

Much of the information previously presented addresses the integration and buy in of these groups. Ultimately it is up to each of us to push forward and encourage everyone to embrace the city-wide project.

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SECTION 11:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR FOCUS AREAS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0 Increasing Access to Social Services

Social services entities provide a transformative bridge between city government and the community. It is important for citizens to have an opportunity to connect with organizations that have programs to address societal needs. Enhancing the City of Albany's ability to have direct outreach to agencies and entities that can effectively serve the needs of the citizens, empowers city government with a mechanism to informally address a vast number of social ills before formal introduction into the criminal justice system is required.

Whether it is bridging the gap between reintegrating offenders and employment, or offering viable resource connections to those living in poverty, city government needs social services providers to help them problem-solve and address a broad range of community phenomena before they become community problems. The City of Albany wants to ensure community sentiments of safety and public order maintenance. Albany also wants to create a

gateway to city growth and economic progress. By empowering a city government to proactively address a broad range of need-based issues, a community is given the tools it needs to utilize methods that allow it to customize responses for individual needs. This will promote community safety, economic development, social justice, and a stronger sense of community.

Albany has numerous social services entities that provide many needed services to its citizens. These agencies address a myriad of social ills that contribute to the safety concerns of the City. As the City expands and promotes the use of these services in a strategic way, and as it identifies and implements new social services to address needs not currently being met, there will be a better opportunity for a structured social services response plan from the City government that will provide practical ways to promote safety, save money, restore and change lives, and effectively address community needs.

2.0 Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness

Police departments across America struggle with ways to attract, recruit, and retain service-minded professionals with a heart for what they do. A recent study by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Analysis Center suggests that law enforcement has about a 14% attrition rate. If the City of Albany is going to continue to promote, encourage, and ensure community safety, it is important to understand and address the reasons for police officer attrition. As law enforcement attrition impacts the numbers of individuals available for police work, communities are faced with a dwindling pool of qualified police officers available for robust patrol visibility, proactive policing techniques, and state-of-the-art investigatory practices that contribute to citizens' feelings of safety.

There are three main challenges at the heart of the police administrator's difficulty to attain and maintain sufficient police officer staffing levels. The first challenge is developing a marketing strategy that will motivate individuals to consider joining the ranks of the law enforcement profession and serve their communities. The second challenge is creating a mechanism that will allow police agencies to get the exposure needed to the people needed and desired for the goals and objectives police departments are committed to reaching. The third challenge is developing a catch-all plan that will promote longevity through the implementation of a solid benefits package, resource guide, and support plan that will be appealing enough to sustain an individual in the law enforcement profession until retirement.

Family needs, shift work, job activities, stress, personal issues, desires, and financial pressures create disparities between police officers' expectations and their reality. Sometimes, police officers join agencies with an inadequate or faulty sense of understanding of the job's nature. Additionally, persons recruited and hired, may not possess the appropriate combination of soft and technical skills a police agency needs to fulfill its mission. These are traits or qualities like creative thinking, problem-solving, communication, attitude, leadership, diligence, work ethic, team-spirit, competency, education, and motivation. These are some of the reasons various bodies of academic research reveal, for why police officers voluntarily and involuntarily leave employ within the first five years of service and even within the first two years of service.

Many of these issues can be addressed early in the recruiting process. Therefore, not only is it important to create a thoughtful hiring plan, but it is also important to select the appropriate individuals to handle matters of recruitment. This will promote a police

department's ability to consider and choose individuals wisely, properly educate recruits, and provide recruits with resources that will ensure their longevity and success. It is important that police officers have an on-the-job support system in place to encourage their growth, progress, and commitment. It is also important that they are given a resource packet that will promote their ability to advance in policing and navigate living and thriving in Albany.

Numerous research accounts police officers reporting feelings of under-appreciation and low recognition from superiors for the work they do. It is imperative that the Albany Police Department ensures that it is using various methods to ensure it creates a nurturing environment that generates meaningful programs for its employees' accomplishments to be recognized, and this can combat frustrations of the job.

According to the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, there is no prevailing theory for why police officers leave employ. However, research suggests that five main influences seem to impact their decisions: 1) better opportunities; (2) actual and potential compensation; (3) personal characteristics and demographic factors; (4) organizational health, policy, and culture; and (5) employee needs.

Law Enforcement effectiveness is at the core of a city's ability to fight gun and Domestic Violence, healthcare epidemics, crime issues, and create a sense of safety among community residents. Further, law enforcement provides one of the most visible assurances that someone is monitoring and available to respond to criminal activities and other events that threaten community safety.

3.0 Leveraging Technology

The International Association of Chiefs of Police has recognized that technology has a

promising opportunity to address, prevent, and eradicate crime and enhance police efforts to ensure community safety. Technology has the transformative potential to change the way officers protect and serve their communities and fight and solve crime. These technologies make it possible for departments to use social media, drones, eye glasses, mobile scanners, street lights, biometrics, tablets and smartphones, and GPS for the business of ensuring community safety. The City of Albany will benefit from embracing contemporary crime-fighting tools.

Police Magazine reports that increasingly, police officers are expected to problem-solve complicated challenges, and technology helps them to adapt because of the inclusion of innovative tools that allow police officers to serve their communities. Therefore, the value created by technology rivals the reported disadvantages and gives police a better platform to serve their communities. Technology can help police officers reduce the negative impact of challenges created by the changing demands of the police job.

The Center for Evidence-based Crime Policy has determined that many innovations used by police have advanced the profession and been important for developing effective strategies, improving police ability to solve Part I and II crimes, and enhance community safety. Similarly, the Government Technology Journal reported that this array of technology has advanced the police opportunity to remain ahead of criminals and wrongdoers.

For these reasons, technology is becoming more appealing and regularly intertwined into daily police operations for various units of law enforcement. This enhances the profession's ability to prepare and provide law enforcement practices that are highly skilled enforcement and investigatory efforts that address the rapidly evolving demands of the field.

4.0 Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

Research presented by Harvard University reports that prosecutors who direct their efforts toward quality of life, problem-solving, crime prevention, building community partnerships, and incorporating the priorities of local residents into their mission, as opposed to simply prosecuting cases, have noticed some positive outcomes and benefits. This approach, known as community-oriented prosecution or the Community Prosecution philosophy has promoted prosecutorial innovation and led to: 1) more efficient case processing due to greater citizen cooperation, 2) increased and effective interaction between citizens, prosecutors, and police officers, greater community justice, and 3) a better quality of life for community residents.

The prosecutorial power that arises from their legal authority, political influence, access to resources, and professional prowess makes them crucial figures in the effort to control crime and promote public safety. When prosecutors demonstrate that they are personally invested in the communities they serve, citizens feel a greater sense that equal justice is being dispersed across all agencies involved in the criminal justice system. Citizens become empowered to engage their criminal justice agencies and processes and more motivated to accept greater responsibility for participating in crime and safety management.

Harvard University reports that the innovative strategies arising out of the community prosecution ideology has helped many communities to achieve lower crime rates and incidences

of social disorder, and this has contributed to a better quality of life and safer community for all.   Judiciary innovation involves judges becoming the catalysts for groundbreaking ways to

increase civil justice and community safety. The Judiciary must keep its finger on the pulse of society and be sensitive to changes in community concerns and needs and issues that might impact the court system. Subsequently, the Judiciary must institute practices and policies that allow it to be adaptable, proactive, and responsive to the digital society, mainstream movements and societal shifts, and make the necessary updates along the way.

The Judges Journal, a body of work produced by the American Bar Association Judicial Division, suggests that some of the most important Judiciary innovation is needed in the areas of judicial decision-making, responding to security concerns, and assuming leadership roles because these categories have a direct impact on whether or not a community will be able to achieve the perception of safety it desires.

The Center for Justice Innovation believes that the Judiciary should be involved in 1) ensuring that the criminal justice system does not fail nor victimize the public, 2) that it does not retreat from the community, and 3) that it becomes empowered to embrace and serve the community in which it operates. For these reasons, Center for Justice Contributor Phil Bowen acknowledges that "Communities are at the heart of the criminal justice system and we need to make sure that national laws and national priorities can be delivered at a local level – and that national priorities are informed by, and can respond to, the needs of local communities."

 Both the judiciary and prosecutors have unique access into the sociological factors that contribute to a person's proclivity toward crime. Sharing this information and judiciary and prosecutor perspectives with social services, law enforcement, and the community could greatly enhance problem-solving efforts to eradicate persistent crime-promoting issues. Accepting that our justice system is local and has an obligation to connect to its community,

social services, law enforcement, and other organizations in Albany, GA – will make the necessary room for needed paradigm evolutions and contemporary practices, and empower both the Judiciary and prosecutors to participate in building partnerships that create and sustain safe communities.

5.0 Increasing Community Involvement

Over the past few years, America's concern has grown for the increasing tension between police and the citizens they serve. The Associated Press Center for Public Affairs Research suggests that there is a stressful relationship between police and minority community members because of a public perception of a racial divide between law enforcement and the minority neighborhoods it serves. Further, the Center identified the cause for the divide as being instigated by police violence. A significant finding of the research was that the community believed that policy and procedure changes could reduce these tensions, including more community-oriented policing efforts.

In a survey captured by Accenture Management Consulting on citizens' perception of safety and police collaboration, respondents reported that more than technology, police departments need to develop and implement better ways to engage their communities. Respondents also reported that they would be willing to collaborate with their police departments if they were invited or needed to do so. However, some respondents reported wanting an anonymous way to contribute to the crime-fighting efforts of the police. These findings are relevant to Albany.

According to Swanson, Territo, and Taylor, authors of numerous resources for law enforcement administrators, community involvement enhances a police department's

opportunity to develop and execute customized services appropriate to the city being served. Through partnership activities, police officers and citizens can cooperatively interact and develop solutions relevant to the needs of a particular situation. Further, the more citizens feel their input is viewed welcomed and valuable, the more they feel empowered to action, and the better of an opportunity for a community to be a safe one.

SECTION 12:
FOCUS AREAS STRATEGIC
ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the strategic plan delineates the strategies recommended to address The Five Focus Areas. The strategies are explained, and relevant activities toward these ends are provided. In instances where a strategy recommendation requires an award or financial incentive, it has been assumed that the imposing agency will consider budget implications and available resources and/or innovative ways to secure the necessary financial assistance for funding.

1.0 Increasing Access to Social Services Strategies

1.1 Raise Community Awareness about Social Services

1.1.1 The City of Albany's website should be used as a resource tool for identifying community social services agencies. A tab on the City of Albany website should be identified as "Community Resources." This would be an appropriate place to list the numerous public or government, community-based, and religious social services resources that the City of Albany has available. Each individual resource should include a concise narrative of services offered, point of contact, telephone number, web address, physical address, hours of operation, emergency after-hour numbers, and other information pertinent for the reader. This information should also be added to the playlist for Channel 16, the Albany Police Department's webpage, the Albany Police Department's Facebook page, posted on the community board in Starbucks, and erected on information boards located in businesses throughout the Albany community.

1.1.2 The Albany Police Department should be a bridge between social services organizations and local institutions of higher learning to ensure these institutions receive critical information to assist them with their student support outreach for services needed.

1.1.3 The Albany Police Department should partner with social services agencies to promote access to psychological, behavioral, abuse, and family support for elementary, middle, and high school students in need.

1.1.4 Police officers should be equipped with social services (resource) literature to share when they encounter situations where they detect a person or persons could benefit from a

particular social service.

1.1.5 The Albany Police Department should hire more police officers with Social Work Degrees because they will be a first line of defense for the identification of people in the community who need social services referrals. Targeting police officers with the special degrees will enhance police officer ability to be effective referral generators.

1.1.6 The Albany Police Department should be partially utilized as an information distribution/referral center for social services. The Law Enforcement Center Community Room could house these resources in an area of the room designated by the Albany Police Department, and the room could be accessible to citizens certain hours of the day.

1.17 The Albany Police Department should partner with the Foster Care system to link good people (who are potentially interested in Foster Care) with children who need safe homes. The Department should conduct a campaign to encourage businesses to offer flexible work schedules to parents who will join the Foster Care effort. Classes for people who want to be Foster Parents could be offered free at the Law Enforcement Center.

1.2 Partner and Mobilize against the Opioid Crisis (and other substance abuse crises)

1.2.1 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services providers and host on-going community-wide information campaigns and education sessions/series that allow them to move around the community to different hosting venues.

1.2.2 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to implement a referral program where individuals can voluntarily obtain help by coming to the Department and requesting assistance without fear of arrest. Very shortly, Federal dollars will likely be available to assist jurisdictions with their Opioid-fighting efforts. This could assist with

costs associated with this recommendation.

1.2.3 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to institute drug take-back events where community members can safely turn in unwanted prescriptions and drugs without fear of arrest. During these events, drug counselors can be on hand to provide additional assistance and information. These events will also be effective in increasing public awareness.

1.2.4 The Albany Police Department should erect a lockbox for safe drug disposal where individuals can turn in unwanted prescriptions and drugs instead of throwing them in their home trash cans where children can access them or where they may reach landfills and end up in addicts' hands.

1.2.5 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to disseminate information about state laws that encourage intervention. In cases where individuals may be using Opioids or another substance, and one overdoses, some laws protect citizens from being arrested for possession or use when they call the police to save a life in the case of an overdose.

1.2.6 Greater collaboration between stakeholders such as the Albany-Dougherty Drug Unit, Albany Police Department, social services agencies, and the community will have a positive impact on eradicating Opioid and other substance abuse issues. This collaboration could mean the establishment of a substance abuse taskforce that can raise awareness about substance abuse, present community outreach events, and create a resonating cultural message opposing substance abuse.

1.2.7 The Albany Police Department Community Relations Unit should partner with healthcare

providers and social services agencies to develop initiatives that will raise awareness about and combat the Opioid epidemic. This includes assembling a team to develop a plan to attract federal dollars to Albany (GA) to fight the epidemic.

1.2.8 Community members should be encouraged to report concerns about doctors and pharmacists who are contributing to the Opioid epidemic to enhance police, prosecutors, and judges ability to investigate, arrest, charge, and convict guilty persons.

1.3 Partner and Mobilize against Domestic Violence

1.3.1 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to educate the community on eradicating Domestic Violence. This can be facilitated by sharing information at community forums, schools, businesses, civic meetings, etc. about how to safely intervene and recognize signs, and by working with community groups to have sessions to discuss this problem.

1.3.2 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to empower citizens with technology and educate them on how to download free safety apps specifically designed to discourage violence. There are many apps that support the prevention of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse.

1.3.3 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to implement a plan for businesses to become involved in fighting Domestic Violence. Businesses can implement Domestic Violence employee assistance programs that include referral services, legal assistance, and safety plans. Additionally, offices can be educated on how to maintain office spaces that contain relevant literature to educate workers on a range of topics from escape plans to reporting. Further, small businesses with few employees can hang "Stop

Domestic Violence" posters, signs, or stickers and maintain a space on counters or boards for relevant literature.

1.3.4 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to screen Domestic Violence shelter volunteers.

1.3.5 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to bring faith-based and other organizations on-board to increase support for shelter programs (financially and in other ways).

1.3.6 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social service agencies to be a drop-off point or collection site for items that would be useful for shelters such as: personal care items, clothing, food, etc.

1.3.7 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to develop a speakers' bureau to provide community presentations about Domestic Violence. These individuals can be ones who were former victims or who have loved ones who were victims.

1.3.8 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies to develop a curriculum to address positive conflict resolution. The course, seminar, or workshop could be used to educate various groups. Further, the course, seminar, or workshop could be mandated by the Court for individuals previously involved in domestic violence incidents.

1.4 Partner and Mobilize against Individual Violence

1.4.1 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies, the Dougherty County School System, the private school system, Albany Technical College, and Albany State University to bring programming into local schools and colleges to combat

inclinations toward violence. Help students develop ways to prevent violence by having them role play and practice common courtesies. Teach students how to respond in urgent situations. Have a competition for students and allow them to develop innovative "Stop the Violence" campaigns that can fall into various categories such as: ad campaigns, videos, essays, poems, app ideas, plays and more, and have winners in each of these categories. Although there may be "winners" ensure that all students involved receive incentives for their participation. Encourage community partners to assist by donating awards and/or incentives for student recognition. Encourage schools and colleges to host recognition events for the students who participated and invite the community and the media.

1.4.2 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies, talented community members, and the local movie theater to produce and present a short video discouraging violence. The video could be shown at the theater during the time used to air movie previews. The video should be especially captivating and mind transforming.

1.4.3 The Albany Police Department should partner with relevant social services agencies and local churches to help and encourage churches to develop creative ways to intertwine the "Stop the Violence" message into their various ministry activities.

1.5 Announce and Host Diverse Topics Social Services Workshops at the LEC

1.5.1 The Albany Police Department should open its doors to social services organizations and community members to share information. Each week, a different organization can utilize the Law Enforcement Center Community Room (LEC) to present topic-focused mini-workshops or hand-out literature to community members. The Mayor, City Manager, and Chief of Police can

be provided with a calendar so that they can stop by and greet citizens who take time to participate in these empowering informational sessions.

1.6 Fill Service Gaps by Utilizing Public Service-Oriented Organizations

1.6.1 The Albany Police Department should facilitate a connection or bridge between public service organizations and social services agencies so that public service organizations can help to fill service gaps created by overwhelming social services caseloads.

1.6.2 Police officers should be encouraged to do community service work at social services entities to enhance their understanding of available social services resources. This will enhance their ability to make appropriate referral recommendations. This will also empower members of the Department to be servant-leaders and lead the way in efforts to promote a community mindset geared toward service.

1.7 Establish a Connection between Albany Police Department, Social Services, and Juvenile Delinquents or At-Risk Youth

1.7.1 The Albany Police Department should partner with Social Services to facilitate the connection (or pairing) between retirees and empty-nesters and juvenile delinquents or at-risk youth. This will benefit young people who are missing structure, discipline, foundational information, and other needs that would allow them to succeed (if the needs were met).

2.0 Promoting Law Enforcement Effectiveness Strategies

2.1 Revamp and Revitalize Operation Ceasefire to Address Gun Violence

Operation Ceasefire is a violence-reduction strategy that was developed in Boston, Massachusetts in the 1990s. It is also known as the Boston Gun Project and the Boston Miracle, and it is currently known as the Group Violence Intervention. It has been implemented by jurisdictions throughout the country to promote a reduction in gun-related violence.

2.1.1 The Albany Police Department should partner with agencies like the Department of Community Supervision (probation/parole), District Attorney's Office, U.S. Attorney's Office, Albany Gang Task Force, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to create an Albany, GA version of Operation Ceasefire. This taskforce would assess the local gun-violence problem and implement intervention. The taskforce would focus enforcement efforts on chronic offenders, individuals, and groups involved in (and with the potential to be involved in) gun-related violence. The group would also create deterrence strategies based in problem-solving, identification and disruption of underlying causes of chronic problems, and law-enforcement techniques to deliver a message of swift apprehension and punishment.

2.2 Create a Southwest Georgia Safe City Crime Prevention Taskforce

2.2.1 The taskforce should be a crime-fighting collaborative effort between the Albany Police Department, the Regional Youth Detention Center, Community Supervision, surrounding police departments, and surrounding social services agencies to holistically address community

issues, share information, share intelligence, and develop protocols and strategies toward safer communities.

2.3 Hire Civilians and Volunteers for Services Not Requiring Certified Police Officers

2.3.1 To combat police officer attrition and burnout and improve productivity of police officer work, the Albany Police Department should expand the roles of current civilians and increase opportunities for civilian employment and volunteer participation. The Albany Police Department should employ non-sworn staff members and secure volunteers to assist law enforcement with handling duties and activities that do not require an individual to be a certified member of law enforcement.

2.3.2 The Albany Police Department should create Executive Staff positions for highly skilled civilians whose efforts can greatly improve police department productivity. Agencies everywhere are embracing this concept. Nationally, agencies are hiring civilian investigators to investigate a myriad of cases, monitor city cameras, and other activities. Some of the cases investigated include: traffic collisions, financial crimes, property crimes, and even crimes against persons. Additionally, many jurisdictions hire civilians and recruit volunteers to work closely with uniformed police officers in crime prevention and other community outreach efforts.

2.3.3 Establish a Crime and Intelligence Analysis Unit that consists of a group of several individuals who can help police officers translate data gleaned from police reports into actionable information about crime patterns and trends. The Unit could increase police officers' efficiency, effectiveness, problem-solving, and ability to be proactive. This would expand the outreach of department crime-fighting efforts. Further, an emphasis on intelligence-led

policing has led many agencies to employ individuals trained to collate and interpret intelligence gathered by police officers in the field. This would be an excellent job for academicians, military veterans, mathematicians, computer scientists and give them the ability to transform their experiences into serving their community through a police support job.

2.4 Consolidate the Albany Police Department and Code Enforcement

2.4.1 Consolidating the Albany Police Department and Code Enforcement would create a more efficient and streamlined agency that could more effectively serve the community. In many cases, crime evolves out of unenforced community code violations. If the two agencies were consolidated, in a sense, the "left" would know what the "right" was doing. Code Enforcement would have access to the full resources of the Albany Police Department and its investigative tools, and would be in constant communication with the Department. This would improve overall compliance with City codes and enhance the City of Albany's efforts to address and prevent the spread of blight and curtail criminal activity. This greater collaboration between the Albany Police Department and Code Enforcement would expand opportunities to make the City of Albany's neighborhoods safer.

2.5 Increase Tangible Incentives to Combat Police Officer Attrition

2.5.1 Create more strategic and customized recruitment portfolios that will appeal to the type of police officer the Albany Police Department desires to recruit. These packets of information can contain valuable information about the Albany Police Department, City of Albany, and Dougherty County. It should contain sufficient information about topics such as compensation, incentives, employee assistance programs, promotion opportunities, educational opportunities, and advancement plans. It can also contain information about nearby community interests,

entertainment venues, recreation, schools, universities, childcare, churches, restaurants, services, local organizations, and other points of interest – which are all factors considered when a potential employee decides whether to pursue employment. This portfolio can be used as an effective recruitment tool and improve police officer retention.

2.5.2 Develop innovative ways to implement job perks into the Department. Some examples are rewards for accomplishments of Department outcomes, employing the use of flexible work schedules, and providing support to officers with families.

2.5.3 Offer longevity pay for police officers who remain in employ for five or more years. At the fifth year of employ, the officer will receive a longevity pay percentage. After the initial five-year mark longevity pay percentages can increase, and police officers will continue to receive a designated amount/percentage at each future two to three-year mark.

2.5.4 Actively recruit and offer a reenlistment bonus to any police officer who left the Department with a good record and on good terms.

2.5.5 Offer a student loan debt pay-off program for police officers who will commit to a designated number of time in service years with the Department.

2.5.6 Develop partnerships with local colleges and universities. The goal would be to offset tuition costs for quality individuals who would be willing to use the benefit of their college experience to work for the Albany (GA) Police Department. The partnership would involve the City and colleges and universities creating innovate ways to offset tuition costs, thereby increasing the number of quality police officers. The institutions would benefit when the partnership program captures the interest of potential students who desire employment (relevant to their degree and personal goals) and low tuition costs.

2.5.7 Offer moving allowances for quality police officers willing to relocate to Albany.

2.5.8 Offer housing allowances to offset police officer cost of living expenses using innovative residency assistance incentive programs that allow the City of Albany to contribute funds to support police officer homeownership. Additionally, the Department should have an in-house liaison responsible for linking police officers to programs such as the FHA Officer Next Door Program and the Good Neighbor Next Door Program which offer homes for law enforcement and other community helpers through The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Further, the Everyday Hero Housing Assistance Fund provides free gift-funds to help cover home-closing costs for police officers, firefighters, teachers, and medical workers. Additionally, the Military Housing Assistance Fund provides free gifts to active duty and veterans (regarding members of the military) to expand housing opportunities and promote homeownership. The success of connecting police officers with these resources will be intertwined in a Department commitment to actively monitor availability of awards and liaising between police officers and awarding agencies.

2.5.9 Present awards for the development of good practices. When police officers create practices that are successful for proactivity, strategic action, or long-range Department planning, there should be a process in place for them to submit their ideas. Regardless of whether the idea is implemented, police officers should receive recognition or acknowledgement of their critical-thinking and problem-solving.

2.6 Give Police Officers a Voice to Combat Police Officer Attrition

2.6.1 Establish a strong employee feedback program where police officers are given the ability to lend their voice to departmental decision-making that will directly affect them.

2.6.2 Conduct periodic studies of police officers' needs and recommendations to ensure police officers' concerns are consistently being addressed. This can be a focus group and/or department survey distributed with an electronic instrument. This task can also be accomplished using a suggestion box placed in various areas of the Department (must be checked regularly).

2.6.3 Make every effort possible to retain police officers who are considering leaving. Seriously consider and address their concerns and develop creative strategies to keep them in the Department. For example, for an officer who may be experiencing burnout or frustration, offer them a flexible work schedule for the week, a day off to reenergize, or a temporary transfer.

2.6.4 Create a police officer council that meets bi-weekly or monthly with the Chief of Police. The group will be the liaison between the Chief and the troops and will keep the Department abreast of police job satisfaction-related needs and issues.

2.7 Actively Promote Police Officer Success to Positively Impact Officer Retention

2.7.1 Establish an employee mentoring program that extends well beyond the period a new hire will spend with a Field Training Officer. The mentor should be capable of supporting the police officer's ability to successfully continue on the job.

2.7.2 The Albany Police Department must ensure that it holds departmental leaders accountable, be fair and transparent in its practices, select effective supervisory staff, provide relevant training for all its members (that reflect a recognition of current social trends), and ensure that it posts its goals, objectives, and missions in visible places throughout the Department (in effort to hold all members accountable to them).

2.8 Create Bridge Programs with Local Institutions

2.8.1 Target criminal justice, psychology, sociology, and social work majors at local institutions of higher learning and create a bridge program that exposes students to various work assignments in law enforcement. Students should then be supported and encouraged into the field after which they will be mentored to increase their likelihood for success. Volunteering can even begin as early as high school.

2.9 Create a Partnership with Local Businesses

2.9.1 The Albany Police Department Community Relations Unit should conduct monthly meetings with business owners to discuss trends, crime patterns, and recommendations. There should be an agenda for each meeting, and businesses should have a way to send in suggestions for the agenda. Give business owners the opportunity to provide valuable feedback. This initiative should be open to all businesses (and more than a few businesses should be participating) and this relationship should be consistently fostered and promoted via all information outlet sources available – to maximize the potential for successful participation and collaboration.

2.9.2 Periodically check business camera systems. Since certain types of local businesses are required to maintain security camera systems, have a designated individual to conduct yearly inspections to ensure that business equipment is operable. For businesses that are not required to have such equipment, explain the advantages of having the equipment and encourage them to add this component to their business.

2.9.3 The Albany Police Department should embrace the support of businesses and other community entities interested in and willing to support Department efforts.

2.10 Address Advancement and Promotion

2.10.1 There are only so many promotion opportunities available before a police department could potentially become "top-heavy." However, advancement and promotion opportunities are among the causes good police officers leave police departments – leaving departments inexperienced and understaffed. Therefore, alternative promotion options should be made available. Police officer longevity, unique experience, and certification are ways to advance the career of a police officer without creating a top-heavy organization. Create categories such as: police officer 1, career-track police officer, intermediate police officer, senior police officer, master police officer, police officer with distinction, and/or other unique categories that police officers could achieve while they await promotions along the traditional rank structure.

2.10.2 Promotions – which equate to a police officer having a wider reach, more visibility, and greater impact – should be based on past and present police officer performance. Therefore, each division supervisor should maintain an accountability chart that tracks his/her division's police officers' activities. This chart should be regularly updated and maintained and utilized during promotion, advancement, and transfer decisions.

2.11 Address Citizen Perception of Police Officer Professionalism

2.11.1 A positive perception of police activities, encounters, and interactions reduces trust issues arising from citizens' poor perception of police. It is important that police officers are not only given appropriate training to enhance professionalism, but it is also important that police officers are given daily reminders of the importance of professionalism. Police officers should also be given tips to help regularly implement and improve professionalism. This could come in the form of daily email reminders from supervisors and reminders at muster meetings.

2.11.2 Utilize citizen complaint reports to create teachable department-wide moments. Teleprompters can be erected throughout the Department, and role play video of citizen engagement, professionalism, and community-oriented policing activities/strategies can consistently play to keep commitment to professionalism high.

2.11.3 Promptly and professionally address citizen concerns and complaints of police officers' activities. There should be a standardized feedback process/form that is provided to citizens to ensure a professional and transparent process for responding to their concern/complaints.

2.11.4 Work with the Chamber of Commerce to help promote a better image of Albany despite negative news reporting. Negative media attention should be continuously counteracted by positive image marketing.

2.11.5 Each police officer should have a tour of duty in Support Services and especially at the front desk where contact is regularly made with citizens. This should take place before the police officer is released from field training. This could tentatively happen while the police officer is a cadet awaiting transfer to the Police Academy – or upon immediate return. This would enhance the police officer's ability to hone the communication, attitude, and behavioral skills necessary for the component of law enforcement work that requires positive citizen interaction and engagement.

2.11.6 Encourage police officers to evaluate their own conduct. Place mirrors near exit doors that police officers must use before entering their cars for duty. Over the mirrors, have a caption that asks the question, "Do you measure up to law enforcement standards?" This will encourage police officers to do a daily self-evaluation of their efforts and activities each time they leave the building to begin their shifts.

2.12.7 Encourage police officers to leave positive lasting impressions.

2.12 Reassess and Revamp Recruitment Efforts

2.12.1 Create a smooth return-policy for returning police officers. Quality police officers leave police departments for several reasons. Some of these reasons may involve spousal job transfer, family medical circumstances, etc. For police officers who leave under honorable circumstances and with a good record, create customized incentive plans and reenlistment bonuses to facilitate their smooth transition back into the Department.

2.12.2 The Albany Police Department should send representatives to visit other law enforcement departments where recruitment and other efforts are highly effective. This would give the Department an opportunity to study new methods and consider new strategies for achieving their recruitment and other departmental goals.

2.12.3 Collaborate with military Transition Assistance offices to recruit service members who are leaving or considering leaving active duty.

2.12.4 Collaborate with military Veterans' Affairs Offices to recruit veterans for police service.

2.12.5 Recruit at the Albany Mall to capture a wide diversity of individuals, including visitors from out of town.

2.13 Establish Staple Employee Bonding Events

2.13.1 To create a more harmonious workforce, establish various annual events in which police officers and their families can participate and bond with other police officers and their families. Each year, police officers and their families can look forward to, for example: the APD Family Picnic, APD Thanksgiving Social, APD Christmas Social, APD Valentines' Day Social, etc. These times of fellowship will promote goodwill and increased morale.

2.14 Keep Retirees and Former Members Connected to the Department

2.14.1 Create a Police Officer or Civilian Emeritus Status for members who devote five or more years of service. These members could fill critical voids in the Department while offering their valuable experience and expertise to ongoing Department efforts. They could have set regular volunteer hours in units where they were previously assigned, and they can assist with relevant special detail efforts. Incentivize their participation with invitations to Department events, access to gifts given to current members, and other perks that would not create a financial strain on the Department. This initiative will increase the productivity and professionalism of the Department.

2.14.2 A Retiree & Former Employee Dinner/Luncheon should be something held annually to honor and show appreciation for the contribution of former members. The event could be held near holiday periods to make it more memorable. Criteria for attendance could be at least 5 years of service. Invitees could receive custom printed invitations, tokens, and an annual photo.

3.0 Leveraging Technology Strategies

3.1 Enhance Lighting to Create a Safer Environment

3.1.1 The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services suggests that good street lighting is widely perceived as effective for crime prevention efforts. Citizens living in neighborhoods with persistent crime issues often demand better lighting. Research has confirmed that improved lighting contributes to fewer incidences of crime. Solar street lights and LED street lights are both examples of ways communities can deal with the challenge of lightening and save money on energy and repairs. Solar lights use solar energy from the sun by storing the energy during the day time. LED lights have bulbs with 15-year life spans and therefore can be changed less frequently. It is important that cities choosing to implement either of these light alternatives carefully consider the features of each to ensure that an informed decision is made.

3.2 Implement and Strategically Institute a City-Wide Camera System

3.2.1 The Office of Homeland Security, and the Federal Urban Area Security Initiative have awarded federal grants to cities desiring to reduce crime by implementing a camera system program. A delicate line exists between crime-fighting and intrusion into civil liberties. While cameras can be an excellent crime deterrent and investigatory tool, it is necessary to deploy them in a way that offsets privacy concerns. Therefore, if the City of Albany decides to expand its current camera system program, it must use caution in the number of cameras it employs, be strategic with the location of set-up, and be deliberate with how cameras are monitored. It is recommended that citizens be involved in the implementation process by explaining the surveillance system to them and getting their input. This will promote community acceptance.

Keep costs low by starting with a small camera program that can be expanded over time. Another way to keep costs low is to utilize community volunteers to monitor the cameras. Since cameras are a crime prevention, clearance, and prosecution tool, it is important that detectives and prosecutors are trained on how to get the most out of implementing cameras into their work practices.

3.3 Partner with Citizens on Use of Home Security Systems for Crime-Fighting

3.3.1 The Albany Police Department should utilize resources that are already in place. There are numerous citizens who maintain home security camera systems. A list can be compiled of who those individuals are as well as locations and specific details about the systems. Further, the Albany Police Department Crime Analyst can plot these locations on a map. During proactive or reactive efforts, these locations can be plotted alongside crime data for the enhancement of efforts. Citizens can be offered an incentive to partner with the Albany Police Department to expand the crime-fighting reach. Incentives do not have to be very expensive, rather high in perceived value. Many modern systems allow for the capture and email of video clips. These video clips can be emailed directly to patrol officers or investigators and empower police efforts. This strategy will leverage technology, promote citizen involvement, combat Domestic Violence, enhance technology cost savings, increase crime prevention, and deter neighborhood crime. Additionally, this strategy will combat concerns regarding violation of privacy/civil liberties, yet empower neighborhoods to be more proactive against property and other crimes. The City of Philadelphia (PA) has such a program in place. It is called SafeCam: Private Cameras for Public Safety.

3.4 Promote Citizens' Use of 311 and Other Crime-fighting Applications

3.4.1 The 311 app and other similar apps are excellent tools for empowering citizens to report and prevent crime. However, it is not widely understood, used, or promoted. Promoting the use of this valuable service would assist both City Government and the Albany Police Department by giving them access to a vast network of eyes and ears.

3.5 Implement a License-plate Reader System

3.5.1 License-plate readers are used by law enforcement to find stolen vehicles and track and locate suspects and law violators by scanning passing traffic. Readers are affixed to utility poles, freeway overpasses, and police cars with the capacity to scan 1,800 plates a minute across four lanes of traffic for speeds up to 150 mph. The scans are stored in databases that can be searched by license plate number. The database will produce all photo sightings of vehicles of interest and provide time and location information for each sighting.

3.6 Neighborhood Watch Groups Should "Friend" Their Beat Officers

3.6.1 Beat officers should be added to the Facebook page of the neighborhoods they serve so that they can receive updates as neighborhood residents receive updates.

4.0 PROSECUTORIAL & JUDICIARY INNOVATION STRATEGIES

4.1 Establish a Community Prosecution Unit to Increase Citizen Involvement

4.1.1 Create a Community Prosecution Unit to deal with City quality of life issues. Prosecutors, city attorneys, county attorneys, code enforcement officers, police officers, public health officials, social services agencies, and citizens can partner for this effort. A community prosecutor can interact with community groups such as schools, businesses, and churches to increase citizen involvement in crime prevention and reporting and eradication of quality of life issues. This would create greater collaboration with the District Attorney's Office, demonstrate willingness to work with citizens, enhance successful prosecution of cases made by law enforcement, positively impact community perceptions of safety, and contribute to positive community perceptions of the criminal justice system.

4.2 Establish Community Prosecution Offices to Expand Community Outreach

4.2.1 Establish Community Prosecution Offices. These offices will house prosecutors and be located in police substations (see community involvement strategies, Strategy 1 for explanation of police substations). Then the prosecutor can market the enhanced capacity of the District Attorney's Office to problem-solve and display willingness to work with citizens and include citizens' priorities into prosecutorial goals and objectives.

4.3 Create Greater Roles for and Hire Civilians

4.3.1 Implement Executive Staff positions for persons who are not lawyers. Some of their activities in the Prosecutor's office could include crime prevention, public health, public safety,

service delivery, court liaison, community outreach, grant writing and administration, and more. This will enhance the opportunity for greater collaboration, critical-thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.   Additionally, these civilians can be community-level office staff or paralegals who operate out of community-level offices (police substations) and work closely with

police and citizens in the various police districts to which they are assigned. They will address Domestic Violence, Opioid, and other drug and quality of life concerns. Further, these individuals can screen and file cases for prosecutors, giving attention to cases important to neighborhoods. They can gather neighborhood impact statements and police reports and contact citizens and neighborhood watch groups.

4.4 Create More Specialized Court Structures

4.4.1 Transfer cases from general jurisdiction courts to a specialized court of limited jurisdiction that can better problem-solve similar cases, improve case management, judicial efficiency, uniformity of application of the law, more equitable outcomes for offenders, and more therapeutic or rehabilitative outcomes for offenders. A type of specialty court would include for example: a Veterans Court that would strictly deal with cases involving members and former members of the military whose transgressions with the law could be related issues stemming from their military service.

4.5 Develop Customized and Alternative Restorative Justice and Sentencing Resolutions

4.5.1 The court system should work collaboratively with its community to create restorative justice strategies that will give ex-offenders greater opportunities to succeed once leaving prison. Hire judicial liaisons to work between the Judiciary, District Attorney's Office, Police,

Social Services, Educational Systems, and the community to establish procedures to keep ex-offenders from succumbing to the negative experience of returning to neighborhoods that conflict with rehabilitation. Further, liaisons can be responsible for facilitating the ability to create restorative justice plans that are both effective for ex-offenders and responsive to community needs. This would promote a greater more structured collaboration between the Judiciary and other vital criminal justice agencies and community entities, provide better resolutions, positively impact community perceptions, and contribute to a safe community.

This recommendation may require hiring additional staff who can devote time to developing customized rehabilitation plans that are effective and meet the needs of ex-offenders. These could be social services workers who recommend and facilitate job placement, education services, or other service deemed valuable for specific outcomes.

4.5.2 Pursue alternative sentencing programs such as Albany Works. Albany Works is a collaborative program between the City of Albany and the City of Albany Municipal Court. The goal of Albany Works is to link ex-offenders to community resources and services toward a life of self-sufficiency, using personal action plans, accountability coaches, and community service assignments. The program is structured to provide alternatives to fines and incarceration for individuals who have committed misdemeanor offenses, and promote positive future behavior. Ultimately, the community should feel good about hiring ex-offenders.

4.6 Convene Annual Judicial Summits

4.6.1 Convening Judiciary-Community Summits would give judges the opportunity to be available to the public they serve, empowering them to address citizen concerns, create community buy-in, and synergize innovative ideas. The summit should have various

components and breakout sessions with certain aspects being facilitated by a moderator. These summits could be the catalyst for the development of new policy and legislation to promote the Judiciary's ability to assign more citizen-prioritized and involved sentencing outcomes.

4.7 Create Campus Safety Zones for Albany State University and Albany Technical College

4.7.1 The campus (gun) carry legislation creates a challenge for students' perception of safety. The Albany Police Department should work with prosecutors, judges, campus police, and students to balance the gun-carry law with campus safety and perception of safety. Creating campus safety zones would be one way to address this. In certain areas on campuses, times of day, etc. guns would be prohibited. These would be the areas and times of day students would not have to worry about the threat of a firearm being in their midst.

INCREASING COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT

Community involvement is a significant part of the Safe City Strategic Plan. A successful Safe City initiative will emphasize partnerships between community stakeholders. Because of a recognition of the significance of community involvement, a foreword to the strategies for this section has been written by a retired Community Relations Unit Supervisor and District Commander (for the Albany (GA) Police Department).

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

In striving towards a stronger and safer community, it is important to recognize that promoting high-levels of community engagement may literally save lives and reduce crimes. It has been my personal experience that community-oriented policing works very effectively.

In 2005, when I was assigned the role of District Commander for the east side of Albany (GA), the east side of Albany was beleaguered by high crime rates. I was approached by then Interim Police Chief Bob Boren, who indicated to me that he needed to affect a positive change in the crime statistics for this area (District 4). I was immediately transferred to the District, and upon taking command of the District, I was determined that my focus would have to begin with the organizational challenges within the District (before I could make significant impact on the crime rate). After meeting with each sworn and civilian employee (who were assigned to my District) I focused on changing the mindset and negative stigma of being assigned to East Albany.

Building a more effective District 4 meant changing the organizational culture to one which would inspire loyalty, pride, commitment, and a relentless sense of purpose among the patrol officers and civilian workers. Further, it would mean changing the District's image and perception to promote community buy-in. I focused on implementing community-oriented policing strategies. This philosophy, once fully integrated into my District, would ultimately prove to enhance the trust-based interactions between my officers and civilians, and the citizens we served. This helped restore and enhance the publics' confidence in us, dissolve a public mindset of "fear of crime," and helped us reduce crime in District 4.

The expressed importance of the Community-Oriented Policing philosophy, enabled us to use problem-solving techniques from a partnership standpoint. It also enhanced the District's ability to demonstrate effective leadership and planning skills to improve productivity and customer service. In 2005, our District crime statistics displayed the following reductions in Violent Crime (-6.84%) and Property Crime (-10.66%). Our overall crime rate decreased by 10.29%.

Lt. Kenn Singleton

INCREASING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

5.1 Establish Storefront Police Substations

5.1.1 It is time to return to an earlier philosophy of policing where police and citizens engaged more frequently in cooperative problem-solving. It's time to put the "community" back into community-policing. The Albany Police Department closed its Community-Policing District Centers. Yet, these centers were valuable because they placed law enforcement in close-proximity to the neighborhoods they served. Citizens walked into those centers and engaged familiar police officers and exchanged information. The centers were established because of the perceived value they added to the community. However, over time, they become resource draining operations, and this was related to the fact that there was no well-established plan to maintain them efficiently. It is recommended that even if the City does not utilize large buildings for decentralized law enforcement activities, the City of Albany should consider what is being done in many other jurisdictions, and establish storefront substations.

In some jurisdictions, police departments have storefront operations in plazas and malls. Often, agreements are achieved where local malls and plazas willingly provide law enforcement with a workspace for a police substation, and often community residents will donate items to furnish the stations as well as volunteer service hours. This provides an effective and low-cost solution to getting police officers out of their patrol cars and into their communities, and it empowers residents to join crime-fighting activities.

In Ventura, California police are finding the storefront methodology to be highly effective because the storefronts are "the physical manifestation of the community-policing formula." These storefront operations are valuable in many ways, allowing police to be

accessible to residents who want to stop by to discuss neighborhood issues, report crimes or ask for information about topics such as Domestic Violence, after-school programs, and other topics. These locations also provide a safe place where Neighborhood Watch and other community groups can meet.

5.2 Revamp, Reprise, and Reignite the Community Policing Coordinator Position

5.2.1 Although the Albany Police Department discontinued this position, it had a great deal of perceived value. This person was an articulate and charismatic police officer who was responsible for serving as a liaison between individuals, community groups, businesses, and the Albany Police Department. The individual holding this position developed, coordinated, and maintained safety awareness programs and crime prevention operations. Today, he or she could be responsible for maintaining the Department's social media channels and website, handling public inquiries, and performing other tasks considered necessary for adequately responding to community affairs.

Although the Albany Police Department has a Community Relations Unit, the perception is that it only does projects and is not consistently engaged in community problem-solving. The Community-Policing Coordinator position is tangible. Citizens will be able to put a face on a person they can call whose 24/7 job it is to enhance citizen engagement and close the gap between the Albany Police Department and the community it serves. This person would be a consistent standard in the goal toward better police-community relations. The person hired for this position should be someone with strong supervisory skills to select, prepare, and motivate office and program volunteers and establish community trust, while maintaining an excellent

rapport with other law enforcement, community organizations, and media outlets. He or she would be the iconic and memorable "Officer Friendly."

5.3 Encourage Police Officers to be 24-Hour Community-Policing Ambassadors

 5.3.1 Have a volunteer day at the Albany Police Department where organizations who need volunteers can expose police officers and the community to opportunities for community service.

5.3.2 Create a friendly competition in the Department between police officers to see who can log the most "off-duty" community-policing hours. The Albany Police Department can create a checklist of activities in which officers can engage. The officer can keep up with and check-off his or her activities. For example, one check-off for the police officer could be that the police officer wore his or her police uniform to church to enhance citizens' sense of safety. At the end of the contest, the Police Chief can designate an independent party to tabulate and review the lists police officers have submitted. Once a winner has been named, he or she will get a title and some type of award, and then the next contest can begin. To make it even more interesting, citizens could sign-off on the police officers' check sheets agreeing that the police officers are legitimately engaging in the activities reported.

5.4 Create a Captivating Community-Wide and Community-Focused Marketing Plan

5.4.1 Creating a community-wide marketing plan would enhance community-oriented policing, promote a sense of citizen ownership and participation in crime-fighting efforts, and galvanize support for law enforcement. This would include instituting innovative public service announcements for television and radio, strategically developing and positioning billboards, recording engaging videos for Facebook, and generating stylish paraphernalia citizens can

wear and simultaneously demonstrate their support for the Albany Police Department. The sale of these items could generate money for community projects, student scholarships, or other noble purposes.

5.4.2 Promote police officers' ability to participate in public relations activities like giving out t-shirts, wristbands, or other treats to community members (from their police cars) while they are out riding their beats.

5.5 Conduct Periodic Topic-Focused Community Forums

5.5.1 Criminal justice officials should hold collaborative community forums to include a myriad of appointed and elected local, state, regional, and national officials. These forums would allow these groups to address communities, allow two-way dialogue and feedback on numerous issues, and provide clarification about policies and practices. The community forums could be televised live with a call-in number available to those who cannot be present (to ask their questions). This would maximize the opportunity for more community members to participate and join the discussion at hand.

5.5.2 Conducting monthly, quarterly, or yearly topic-focused community forums would enhance police-community partnerships and relationships, positively impact reporting of crime, empower all parties to fight crime, reduce/eradicate crime issues, and create a better Albany.

5.6 Embrace Faith-Based Communities as Partners

5.6.1 Embracing faith-based organizations as partners for addressing societal ills that contribute to crime can reduce and eradicate factors that promote crime.

5.7 Utilize Community Faith-Based Leaders to Create a Chaplains Council

5.7.1 Chaplains can be called upon to assist the Albany Police Department with support for

victims during tragedy, death notifications, crisis response, visiting sick or injured personnel, grief counseling for the Albany Police Department's members and their families, deliver invocations or benedictions for public ceremonies, and be available to serve inside the police department in other valuable ways.

5.8 Expand and Revise the Role of Community Advisory Boards

5.8.1 A proven method for engaging and involving the community is through the development and use of community advisory boards. Community advisory boards are comprised of citizens who work with city government to achieve outcomes beneficial to the community at-large. These boards allow for the exchange of ideas, formal problem-solving, and critical-thinking which leads to increased communications and better outcomes. While this is not a new idea, the current recommendation encourages the development of more boards with more specific roles. Historically, law enforcement agencies have utilized a single community advisory board. The result was that all members responded to all "things" regardless of whether an individual possessed the experience, background, skill-set, or relevance to problem-solving the issue at hand. Therefore, the current recommendation seeks to improve and update to this strategy.

The City of Albany should establish community advisory boards that have subject matter expertise. For the purposes of this strategic plan, expertise does not necessarily apply to an educational status or attainment rather, it refers to knowledge a person has gained through social, political, cultural, public, or economic interactions, observations, or experiences that would make his or her input beneficial to addressing diverse issues.

For example, if the City of Albany is having an issue with teen violence it may consider developing a youth advisory council. This council would be made up of individuals who have

similar perspectives, ages, and outlooks of those involved in the incidences. This would promote the development of a relevant criminal justice system response. The youth advisory council would be able to provide law enforcement with an understanding of the dynamics that are causing and contributing to the problem. Each community advisory board established should have a name that binds it to the overall mission, signifying a unified approach to the Safe City Initiative. In the case of the youth community advisory board, a relevant name would be:

Safe City Coalition Youth Advisory Council. Other potential councils are: Safe City Social Services Advisory Council, Safe City Pastors Advisory Council, Safe City Citizens Advisory Council, Safe City Educators Advisory Council, Safe City Collegiate Advisory Council, Safe City Law Enforcement Advisory Council, Safe City Homeless Assistance Advisory Council, Safe City Business Owners Advisory Council, Safe City Club Owners Advisory Council, Safe City Ward Advisory Council (each City Ward can have a council to address concerns for their ward), Safe City Legislative Advisory Council, Safe City Attorneys' Advisory Council, Safe City Drug Safety Advisory Council, Safe City Child Safety Advisory Council, Safe City Technology Advisory Council, Safe City Social Services Advisory Council, Safe City Media Advisory Council, Safe City Elderly Protection Advisory Council, Safe City Event Planning Advisory Council, Safe City Workforce Advisory Council, Safe City Poverty Advisory Council, etc.

The sky is the limit. It is apparent that these groups possess a great deal of potential for shaping a better Albany. These groups have a unique perspective and breadth and depth of experience that can be vital to problem-solving and decision-making. To increase the opportunity for the advisory councils to be effective, each council should be no greater than 12

members and not less than 5 members, and can contain both active and retired-active individuals. These community advisory boards should be designed in such a way that they are easily accessible and highly responsive when public safety concerns arise that could benefit from their support and guidance.

5.9 Utilize Social Media

5.9.1 We live in a digital world where accessing social media has become a daily routine and mainstream method of communication. This can be advantageous for law enforcement and other members of city government. This strategy highly recommends that the Mayor's Office, City Manager's Office, and Police Department maintain active Facebook and Twitter accounts. A person should be designated in each entity to build substantial "friend" and "follower" lists on behalf of the previously mentioned departments. Individuals should also be designated to transcribe posts by the department administrators. These social media outlets can be used to disseminate heartfelt messages, communicate hope and reassurance, display humor and humanity, enhance crime-fighting, create social awareness, and generate community support.

6.1 Develop Ways to Engage and Protect the Community's Youth

6.1.1 Albany (GA) youth should have the opportunity to participate in activities that will enhance their understanding of what the Albany Police Department does. This will help young people to reject negative media depictions of the Department. The goal is for youth to have real-world experiences of police department phenomenon, learn proper police procedures, gain an understanding of their rights, and have positive interaction with the Department.

6.1.2 Youth should be invited to tour the Albany Police Department so that they can get an understanding of how various units work. This may help young people to develop an interest in law enforcement and give them ideas about future careers.

6.1.3 Youth should be invited to participate in community service projects and activities with police officers. This will encourage positive relationships, build community pride, and promote a service-minded attitude among both youth and police officers.

6.1.4 Opportunities for youth to engage members of the Albany Police Department should be posted on Facebook, Channel 16, the City of Albany Website, and be disseminated in schools.

6.1.5 A "Danger Alert" taskforce should be developed that contains students, teachers, school administrators, and police officers. Persons selected should be trustworthy individuals who troubled students feel comfortable reporting dangerous situations (and other issues) to. People selected for their school's taskforce should be vetted very carefully. The Albany Police Department Community Relations Unit could manage/support this program.

6.1.6 Gang activity among youth in high schools is rising. The Albany Police Department needs to visit high schools more and explain to students the criminal consequences of their actions so that they can make good choices for their future and for the benefit of a safe school environment. Additionally, parents need to be involved in those meetings/sessions so that they can support their children's' positive behavior. Work on creative ways to increase parental involvement because this is an important key to the success of gang-activity reduction among youth. Further, police officers and civilians trained in gangs should be placed in the high schools on an undercover basis. Many of the focus group members reported that their children have witnessed gang and drug activity at school by known gang members. This is a safety

issue for schools.

6.1.7 Develop mechanisms for teachers and school officials who need anonymous ways to report criminal activities occurring in schools.

6.1.8 Help schools implement a mentoring program where community leaders, college professors, and others can support the success of young people who would otherwise fall victim to an environment where goal-setting and law-abiding behavior is not necessarily encouraged.

6.1.9 The Albany Police Department and schools need to partner more on attacking the problem of bullying and peer pressure.

6.1.10 The Albany Police Department should increase its visibility in schools. This will build positive relationships with students and encourage and support pre-recruitment efforts of students interested in law enforcement. The police department's higher visibility in schools will also enhance respect for law enforcement, reduce fear, and increase cooperation between youth and police. Police officers could participate in field day activities, teach character education curriculums, serve lunch, pass out treats to students, and engage in other creative activities.

6.1.11 Schools should have youth advisory boards especially at the junior high school and high school level. These groups should meet regularly with members of the Albany Police Department and Dougherty County School Police. The purpose is to share information about school activities, experiences, and concerns. Students selected should not only include the best and brightest, but also students who are at-risk or vulnerable to crime and systemic issues. These should be problem-solving advisory boards that operate in each school. The

Albany Police Department Community Relations Unit could manage this program.

6.1.12 Develop innovative ways the Albany Police Department can partner with families. For example, families who have troubled teens could be connected to the Albany Police Department Community Relations Unit who could offer mentoring support for young people who may be headed off-course for conventional behavior toward criminal behavior.

6.1.13 Create a program where students in local schools can develop ideas for deterring unconventional behavior by their peers. Provide incentives and community-wide recognition of all participating students.

6.2 Revitalize Community-Mindedness through Volunteer Service

6.2.1 A great deal can be gleaned from community service. Experts suggest that community service provides both physical and mental benefits, interrupting tension and increasing joy. It saves city resources, allowing the money saved to be put toward community improvements. Volunteering creates partnerships between people who might not otherwise become acquainted and it encourages personal and professional growth. However, one of the greatest benefits of volunteering is the strength that it provides for the community at-large by giving individuals the opportunity to be contributors instead of takers. Further, community service encourages more civically responsible societal members who can see the difference they are making.

Currently, the City of Albany Police Department hosts a Citizen's Police Academy. During that time, police and citizens spend time exchanging information. The program lasts a few weeks, which contributes to law enforcement's opportunity to get to know the citizens in the academy. The current recommendation (regarding volunteerism) involves expanding the

availability of police to utilize the services of volunteers, and build this pool from persons who successfully complete the academy. Volunteering is a valuable community service that has both an intrinsic and extrinsic reward. To promote the potential for a robust volunteer program, it is imperative to establish some incentives to increase the longevity and success of the program.

6.2.2 The City of Albany should create a new vision for community centers. This task involves community service organizations, faith-based organizations, and others sharing in the offering of free services to segments of the community who need several types of assistance. Activities could not only include serving free meals, but tutoring assistance, business plan development assistance, and teaching technical and art skills.

Local colleges and universities could have designated days to use areas of the community centers to aid individuals desiring to fill out admission forms, financial aid, and other pertinent paperwork (that can be overwhelming). Further, institutions could teach skills such as how to fill out job applications, interviewing skills, etc.

6.3 Host an Annual Community Appreciation Day

6.3.1 Invite the community to visit the Law Enforcement Center and other government offices for a day of guided tours and refreshments along the way. Have scheduled times and locations for meet and greets with city officials. Present a series of short presentations involving critical or "most asked questions" in an effort to empower citizens' ability to be more responsive to various affairs and city government business dealings. An exciting time to host such an event would be during the Christmas holiday season when city government offices are already decked with the sights, sounds, and smells of the holiday. City employees could compete for

the "best dressed" cubicle or office and this would encourage buy-in from City of Albany

employees and help to make the appreciation day a success. At noon, the City Manager, Chief

of Police, or Mayor could host a luncheon at the Civic Center where community members could

purchase inexpensive lunch tickets and listen to a "State of the Police Department, City, etc."

address from a key city leader (or from all three).

6.4 Host Community Outreach Weekends

6.4.1 The Albany Police Department should begin to conduct community outreach weekends.

These will be times that police can collectively focus their efforts on interaction in

neighborhoods, meeting neighborhood residents, developing ideas for service projects, and

more. Bike, mounted, and motorcycle patrols will be valuable assets to such activities.

SECTION 13: IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS AND TASKS

Utilize Community Assets

The City of Albany has assets that can be used to promote and sustain a safe community. Some of these assets are: 1) citizens with skills, knowledge, talents, and diverse experiences 2) community organizations and institutions, 3) social services, 4) municipal services, and 5) businesses. Implementation of the strategies delineated in this strategic plan will require the use of these assets, relationships between individuals, relationships between individuals and city government, relationships between city government and organizations, and relationships between organizations. Collaboration provides decision-makers with access to community assets. As these assets interact, synergy is generated and the opportunity to meet the needs of citizens increases exponentially. Therefore, the implementation of this strategic plan will require the City of Albany government to generate support, identify its assets, bring them together, and allow them to work collaboratively on the strategy recommendations contained herein.

Once community assets are identified, plan recommendations and tasks should be strategically assigned, and individuals with common abilities should be paired to work on projects together. Strategically pairing skills and expertise will increase the opportunity for successful accomplishment of the plan recommendations. Additionally, it is important to carefully consider the dynamics of the collaborative group because a project can benefit from those who can serve as a bridge to needed resources.

Key Roles

The roles individuals and organizations play contribute to whether a strategic plan will

be successful. As the City of Albany implements this plan, it must ensure that it identifies 1) who will provide leadership for the long-term strategy, 2) who will provide data, technical information, resources, skills, prepare reports, and engage in other professional services or activities, 3) who will liaise between the driving organization and the plan organization, and who will organize community participation, and 4) who will manage contractual or financial obligations.

Identify Funding Sources

Conduct research to determine access to funding sources. There are many sources of state and federal funding that may benefit the implementation of a strategy that requires financial resources. Search for creative ways to obtain funding. Sometimes, community partnerships increase the opportunity to be eligible for funds. In other cases, when one organization is not eligible for funds from a source, they can access funds by collaborating with an agency that is eligible, and this can be an alternative way to meet funding objectives.

Create a Positive Environment

Establish a culture that encourages a connection to the accomplishment of the strategic plan recommendations. Empower participants to focus on going from vision to reality and identify ways to acknowledge successes. This will promote parties involved to make accomplishment of the recommendations a priority.

Management Structure

Establish a management structure for the accomplishment of your strategic plan recommendations. This will include identifying lines of authority, establishing meeting schedules, creating a timeline of events, and ensuring a pathway for open communication

across assets (people, services) involved in the plan.

Utilize a Progress Timetable

Create a progress timetable that includes critical milestones, benchmarks, or specific results-oriented time frames, and a consideration of your organization's structure and culture. Leave room for flexibility to adapt for the need to make changes. There are technology systems that can be used so that information and notifications can be easily disseminated to participating members.

Enhance the Opportunity for Success

The goal for your strategic plan is to see it in action. Therefore, it is important to keep your eyes on the prize. To increase your ability to make this a working plan, remember to align your budget to your goals, build relevant departments' annual goals around the strategic plan, utilize your assets and create a management structure, closely monitor plan progress, continue to fine-tune, streamline, adjust your processes and objectives, and build support for your plan.

Safe City Coalition Work Group Plans

Following the Safe City Coalition Focus Group meeting discussed in Section 6 of the SCSP, Safe City Coalition Work Groups were assembled by Chief Michael Persley. Dr. Marlene Ramsey disseminated assignments to each Work Group based upon specific recommendations from the Focus Group, to create plans to implement the recommendations. The plans provided by the Safe City Coalition Work Groups could be a potentially relevant starting point for strategic plan implementation. Below are four SCC Work Group plans.

Work Group Focus Area 2

Law Enforcement Effectiveness

SCC Focus Group Recommendation:

The Albany Police Department should establish a Safe City Southwest Georgia Taskforce to holistically address community issues and share information.

Work Group Members:

Chief Jackie Battle, Dougherty County Police Department

Chief Troy Conley, Dougherty County School System Police Department

Mr. Chad Warbington, Owner, Shutters Plus, Inc.

Work Group Plan:

The Safe City Southwest Georgia Regional Taskforce should include members from all surrounding counties that touch Dougherty County borders (Lee, Terrell, Worth, Calhoun, Mitchell, Worth and Baker counties). The membership of this taskforce should include community leaders that are involved in: drug prevention, providing services for at-risk youth,

job training programs, family/domestic violence intervention programs, faith-based outreach programs, and mental health programs. The meeting plan for the Taskforce should be monthly. Crime data should be reviewed, the group should be engaged in problem-solving, and updates should be provided regularly regarding key action items from previous meetings.

The Taskforce will be a data collecting, problem-solving, and recommendations board. Once ideas surface from the Taskforce, and there is collective agreement that the idea is worth pursuing, department/agency leadership will be engaged to discuss and consider the ideas from the Taskforce. Implementation and execution will solely fall on department or agency heads, and not on the membership of the Taskforce. The Taskforce only serves as a recommendations or advisory board that supports activities of city government.

A regional taskforce is a more recommended model for problem-solving than is a city taskforce. A regional taskforce would enhance the opportunity for more resources, ideas, and experiences to more widely assess what strategies work. The practical application of this type of taskforce effort would be shared experiential learning and increased community participation and collaboration.

Taskforce members would serve for two years and be appointed by leadership in their respective communities. A two-year appointment could be renewed one time which would be a total service period of four years. The chairperson for a taskforce of this nature should be someone who is not a member of law enforcement. Additionally, this person would be elected by the taskforce members after a review of members' resumes, background, etc. Further, a vice-chairperson would be elected and would serve as the chairperson for the next term. The Taskforce can also establish other officer roles and positions. Officer terms would be for 1

year. Special recognition for members, such as end of term certificates, etc. are subject to taskforce approval. The Taskforce should have minimal by-laws. These standard by-laws and procedures could be generic and include explanations of membership, leadership, meeting schedules, etc.   A comprehensive review of all recommendations, thorough vetting of ideas, consensus of the group, and buy-in to the direction of each idea is paramount. Clear mission statement, purpose, and all ideas and recommendations need to support the mission of the taskforce.

Work Group Focus Area 3

SCC Focus Group Recommendation:

Install a City-wide camera system to capture more criminal activity.

Work Group Participating Member:

Mr. Russell Gray, President, Lake Park-Merry Acres Neighborhood Association

Work Group Plan Highlights:

*Encourage more private camera use

*Tax breaks and incentive programs for home owners who purchase of home security systems

*City-determined quality benchmarks (encourages upgrading from antiquated technologies)

*Agreements with public and private cooperation to ensure the use of qualified systems

*Tiered rewards for home video use

*Extend or tie model into other Focus Areas

*Home security camera systems would save the money and provide more resources to hire and retain more police officers or to invest in resources to reduce District Attorney's caseload

Work Group Focus Area 4

Prosecutorial and Judiciary Innovation

SCC Focus Group Recommendation:

Albany-Dougherty County should create more separate court structures/specialized courts to deal with various community issues, promoting judicial consistency, fairness, treatment customization, and better outcomes.

Work Group Members:

Chief Kimberly Persley, Coordinating Chief Supervision Officer, Department of Community Supervision

Attorney Nathan Davis, City Attorney, Albany (GA)

District Attorney Gregory Edwards, District Attorney, Dougherty County

Work Group Plan:

"Traditional Courts" exist in almost every area of jurisdiction and still form an important part of the administration of justice. Courts exist to do justice, resolve disputes, to maintain rule of law, to provide for equal protection and to ensure due process of law. The courts are designed to determine whether a person has violated a criminal law and if so, recommend a sanction to the Judiciary. "Traditional Courts" handle an array of criminal offenses. On the contrast, a specialized court grants both the Judiciary and lawyers the capacity to focus solely on their legal specialties which in turns help with more efficiency and effectiveness during the preliminary and sentencing phases. Additionally, it creates a reduction in more of the time that is typically expended in consuming cases. Furthermore, specialized judges have a greater and broader understanding of issues and are better able to offer more resources that are beneficial

for the defendants as well by giving them additional and better options for resolution. "Specialty Courts" allow for criminal justice resources to be dispersed for greater use against violent and other serious criminal cases. The Judiciary, Prosecuting Attorney and the defendant have a greater opportunity to work collaboratively with the same positive desired outcome. It makes for a more positive perception from the defendant as the interactions oftentimes resemble friendly conversations partnered with praise and encouragement more than "adversarial interactions." These courts also provide a positive aspect of experience. If the offender has faith in the court, he is more likely to follow plans and steer away from future criminal activities.

Specialty Courts seek to address the primary issues that contribute to the participant's involvement in the judicial system. These issues are addressed with public safety in mind. Proper case management helps to expedite processing cases and lessen caseloads and increases dedication time to disposition for more serious crimes. Additional time can be devoted to more serious cases and to those defendants who present greater risks to the safety of our community. Additionally, this could aid in jail space being freed up, permitting the space to be used to house more serious offenders to assure they serve their full sentences.

Specialty Courts could positively affect the lives of the defendants and people directly and indirectly connected to them. Among which is the significant reduction of incarceration costs and recidivism rates of specialty court participants. According to https://www.sanmateocourt.org/courtdivisions/criminal/drug_court/benefits.php, as it relates to Drug Court, "these programs are experiencing a significant reduction in recidivism among drug court participants." Depending upon the characteristics of the population targeted and

the degree of social dysfunction e.g., employment status, family situation, medical condition, etc. they reflect, recidivism among all drug court participants in the Nation has ranged between five percent to twenty-eight percent and less than four percent for graduates.

Prosecutors and police in many of the jurisdictions which have developed drug court programs report that the Drug Court significantly enhances the credibility of the law enforcement function, provides their agencies with a more effective response to substance abuse, and is a significant alternative to the "revolving door" syndrome that has frequently resulted in the traditional case process. Defendants are no longer released back into the community and back using drugs-shortly after arrest, but rather, placed in a rigorous, court supervised treatment program which, carriers an important message to the community regarding the seriousness of illegal drug use. "In a number of jurisdictions, prosecutors and/or police agencies have contributed asset forfeiture funds to drug programs to augment available treatment resources and have campaigned with the judiciary for community support of the drug court program." Specialty Courts that are more case driven and specific, could play a major part with lower recidivism rates and better outcomes in many other areas.

Domestic Violence Courts are designed to improve victim safety and to enhance accountability of the defendant. Expansion of local specialized Domestic Violence Courts would increase the Judiciary's responsiveness to violence. Dedicating a Domestic Violence Court also sends a message to the community that violence will not be tolerated. If Domestic Violence cases are handled by the same Judiciary or prosecutors, it warrants them being able to gain more knowledge and ensure more consistency in the treatment of these cases. Furthermore, they are able to process cases more quickly and be more sensitive to the needs of victims. On

the other hand, the defendant will know that if they offend again, they are likely to appear before the same Judge and/or Prosecutor with the chance of being less able to minimize or deny the violence.

Victims are entitled to general information about the criminal justice process and notice of important case events. Because they have the right to attend court proceedings, this ensures the crime victims, their families, legal representatives and community-based victims' advocates can be present during criminal justice proceedings. The right to be heard entitles crime victims to participate actively in the criminal justice process, to express their opinions about people who have committed crimes against them, and to articulate their concerns to different criminal justice professionals. The purpose of this right is to allow victims to provide information for the court record, either as witnesses or through victim impact statements. Specialty Courts provide better opportunities for victims of crime to be fully involved in the process from the initial committal of the crime until the final disposition. Permitting the voice of victims and giving them the opportunity to be involved in the process has very positive implications for victims of crime.

In specialty courts, the Judge's approach and involvement could be much more effective than the traditional criminal case process for the significant number of offenders who seriously desire to address their "risk" and turn their lives around. Most of the Judges who take this position having dealt with criminal caseloads for many years. Additionally, specialized courts are more immediate and intensive in providing resources than what would have been provided to the typical court defendants. The defendants are placed under the court's supervision briefly after arrest and during the initial phases of the program. Their conditions

are monitored effectively where the Judge can grant consideration in decreasing in intensity. To ensure compliance and program effectiveness, evaluations and monitoring must be conducted from initiation to implementation stages. For the accountability to lead to a viable program, each team must understand its role and do its part. This includes providing feedback on and monitoring service delivery, as well as monitoring the target population, to ensure the program is on track and that adjustments can be made as necessary.

For the specialized courts to be perceived as effective problem solvers, not only the judges but the entire courts have to take on the role of problem solvers. These efforts will help to make our community safer and a better place to live. The Court must work with Prosecutors and Defense Attorneys, social service agencies, officials and the community to partner together and find creative ways to reduce criminal activity and to improve lives for all within our community. Supporting agencies need to undergo educational training on the problems of interest and research potential solutions. We need to identify a range of alternative solutions, specifically review the pros and cons to determine the most appropriate resolution. A collaborative effort must be considered regarding service delivery. Additionally, evidence based practices should be at the forefront while simultaneously considering new ideas and strategies that help to aid in Specialized Courts being more effective and efficient in problem solving.

Implementing a Specialized Court can be costly. The cost specialized courts can considerably be less than the cost of incarceration and even greater in that the defendants have an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves and become productive members of the community. There are times when resources or funding such as federal grants are available to

support a specific solution for a particular problem. It is important to get complete buy-in from all agencies within the jurisdiction prior to implementing a specialty court. In addition, resources can be found from many agencies outside of the criminal justice and treatment systems, including employment agencies and agencies that provide housing and job training. Look for what resources are already available in the community.

Dougherty County provides in-kind contributions of physical space as well as sheriff staff and state community supervision officers, who help to coordinate the Mental Health Court. The Community Service Board provides treatment and counseling with state funding. Dougherty County's Mental Health Court Judge is active in training and outreach with numerous state agencies. To maximize resources and impact, court staff meet with stakeholders and work with advocates such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness to facilitate CIT training within the community.

Specialized Courts puts judges in a better position to effectively impose and monitor specialized case management controls. This assignment will require less time to research and more time to reflect on the underlying issues of the case. They can provide direction and guidance to the team earlier in the preliminary stages of the case.

If a court is implementing a new Specialty Court, it needs to consider its intended impacts, how to measure them and identify what resources will be required. Data and reports must be collected that will be relevant to judges, court managers and practitioners. Once the need for a Specialty Court has been established, consideration should be granted for a Steering Committee.

Finally, Specialty Courts require buy-in and support of the court system, community,

law enforcement officials and political leaders. These stakeholders can assist in determining the need for the Specialty Court and can provide valuable links to community resources. It is important to establish clear and specific criteria for eligibility. The team will also need to utilize an assessment tool to determine what type of treatment participants will receive. Staff meetings will need to update team members regarding the progress, incentives for sanctions. Additionally, thinking of ahead of the effectiveness for the evaluation and performance of the program as this is a critical component for the overall success of the Specialty Court.

Work Group Focus Area 5

Increasing Community Involvement

SCC Focus Group Recommendation:

The City of Albany should work to increase fun interaction between police and citizens to develop positive relationships.

Work Group Participating Members:

Dr. Kimberly Sinclair Holmes, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Albany State University

Mrs. Mary Ligon, Owner, Mary Ligon, Etc.

Work Group Plan:

Targeted partnerships with elementary schools should be expanded to facilitate informal and formal talks between police officers and students. Have police officers play games with students, distribute ice cream and other snacks to students and deliver demos of smart police cars and body cameras. Introducing such technology would capture student interest and attention. Further, the Albany Police Department could host community-oriented policing

program content on-site at middle and high schools. For example, demonstrations of smart police cars and body cameras, coupled with discussions about appropriate communication with law enforcement – could be both interesting and enlightening and serve to develop more informed young citizens who display an understanding of and respect for law enforcement.

Police officers who are already working with youth groups should be highlighted and their ideas shared. Roundtable discussions should be held that include students and police officers. Conversation topics should include students' perceptions of law enforcement, concerns about law enforcement, and positive experiences. Further, the Albany Police Department should develop partnerships with agencies whose mission includes serving youth. This would increase the opportunity for police officers to engage and interact with young people who participate in these programs. Additionally, the Albany Police Department should expand its Citizens Police Academy to offer more opportunities for citizens of all ages to participate.

The Albany Police Department should create social media videos to share positive interactions between students and police officers, and between community members and police officers. Police officers who perform at high-levels should be selected to participate in student-focused activities and should serve as student role models.

The City of Albany should develop a series of trust-building events that are city-sponsored and/or co-sponsored by the City and Albany State University and other area institutions (to provide relationship building opportunities). This would include:
1) Speed of Trust training sessions that include police officers and citizens from Albany neighborhoods.

2) Drum Circle events where community members and police officers participate in fun activities and experiences that allow them to establish and strengthen relationships. Events could include athletic competitions where teams consist of police officers and university students (or community members and/or individuals from city-league teams, etc.). Some suggested events are Softball in the spring, Kickball in the summer, Basketball in the fall, and Pickle ball in the winter.

SECTION 14: MEASURES & OUTCOMES

It is important to gauge the effectiveness of activities recommended in this plan. Multiple points of measurement, both qualitative and quantitative, can be used to reveal successes and deficits. The current strategic plan can be evaluated through various measures. From there, improvements can be made, and a concise list of effective and proven strategies can be established for future reference and use.

Measures of success:

1. Decrease in overall violence
2. Decrease in gun-related violence
3. Decrease in domestic violence
4. Decrease in the crime rate
5. Decrease in Opioid and drug-related cases
6. Decrease in Opioid and other drug-related overdoses
7. Increase in community/coalition positive perceptions of safety
8. Increase in citizens'/coalition's satisfaction with police officers/services
9. Decreased police officer attrition
10. Improved sentencing outcomes

Other measures of success:

1. Community is engaged in regular collaboration toward a safe community
2. Community activities are proactive and preventive
3. Community exhibits a culture of safety
4. Community revisits and revises strategies and implements improvements

Evaluation Process:

1. Collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data
2. Collection and analysis of Albany Police Department Crime Reports
3. Collection and analysis of Albany-Dougherty Drug Unit Reports
4. Collection of and analysis Community Feedback
5. Collection of and analysis of Prosecutors and Judiciary Feedback
6. Collection and analysis of Diverse Court Reports
7. Collection and analysis of Social Services Reports

SECTION 15:

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Safe Communities America® model is a program of the National Safety Council. It is a well-established system for reducing injuries and deaths. It has a framework relevant to that of the Safe City Coalition initiative in that it brings concerned community members together, analyzes data related to community issues, develops plans to address those issues, employs proven methods, and designs measures to assess outcomes to make improvements.

The National Safety Council awards accreditation to communities who desire to be designated a Safe Community. The Safe City Coalition is encouraged to apply for accreditation, and receipt of accreditation would have positive benefits for citizens' perception of safety. According to the National Safety Council, the benefits to becoming a Safe Community include:

1. Increased capacity and efficiency to address injuries and safety
2. Potential for funding through partnerships
3. Community economic development opportunities
4. Awareness of public efforts to increase quality of life
5. Recognition for your community's commitment to safety

The Safe City Coalition is a highly effective way to galvanize the City of Albany's resources to support a common goal. Partnering with community members, organizations, groups, and businesses will reduce the barriers to improving community conditions. The complexity of this new dynamic organization is what will empower the City of Albany to cross boundaries, sectors, wards, and districts to sustain an interdependence that will have lasting positive implications for maintaining a Safe Albany.

The City of Albany is encouraged to continue this model of problem-solving for future community issues that may arise. The catalyst for these types of community coalitions is the identification of a problem on which to focus, a "group" to drive the effort, and stakeholders to involve. Although every day challenges will arise, it is important to forge ahead, develop positive relationships, not succumb to negative pressure or frustration, be prepared to disrupt any failures, and envision a superior solution that will have a meaningful impact for years to come.

In coalitions, although organizations may contribute their support to the effort, it is the individuals involved that actually work together to demonstrate their commitment to the initiative. Creating a shared vision with common goals that recognize the mutual needs of the group will expand trust and promote individuals to communicate better, work together effectively, commit their time, engage in partnership, step up to leadership roles, and interact in the decision-making crucial for success.

Organizations, groups, and individuals are not required to have the same credentials,

practices, backgrounds, or cultures for accomplishment or harmonious work. They simply need to be empathetic and make room for the differences that exist among them.

SECTION 17:
FUTURE RESEARCH

The Safe City Coalition and Safe City Strategic Plan have captured widespread support and interest. Both citizens and persons living outside of Albany (GA) have offered their assistance to promoting Albany to become a stronger community that is safe and one in which citizens live with a high perception of safety. The following research proposal was submitted to Dr. Marlene Ramsey with an understanding that the Safe City ideology is something that will be embedded into the fabric of Albany for years to come. Further, this research proposal, from a doctoral student who once matriculated through the Dougherty County School System, is the type of participation encouraged from the talented and resourceful community members who care about the future of Albany. Below are his recommendations for continued research of community concerns.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Examining Violence in Albany (GA), "The Good Life City": A Socio-Ecological Approach within a Historical Context

By James B. Pratt, Jr., MA

Introduction

The issue of violent crime in the South broadly and in Albany, GA. specifically, is not a new one. Historically, the South has been the most violent region in America and has remained as such today (Cash, 1941; Lee & Ousey, 2010; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Wyatt-Brown, 1982; Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2014). Seemingly exemplifying the South's historically high rates of violent crime, in 1988, the Albany Metro Area was deemed "The Murder Capital of America" given its 24.1 per 100,000 people murder rate. Yet, when observing the broader crime trends nationwide and locally, crime rates have dropped significantly since the early 90s with some arguing that "demographic shifts, improved employment opportunities, and changes in collective values" along with increased immigration and shifts in police technology have helped to influence these changes (Ouimet, 2002, p. 33; Wadsworth, 2010).

In 2016, for the first time in over a decade, Albany's homicide rate returned to above 20 per 100,000 and at this point in 2017, given the current 21 recorded homicides, the trend of a high homicide rate continues. Aware of this alarming shift, Mayor Hubbard formed the Safe City Coalition tasked with developing a strategic plan for solving Albany's violence problem. Collectively, police departments and political leaders have shifted from being "tough on crime"—with heavy focuses on aggressive policing and punitive judicial practices—to being "Smart on Crime"—using time-tested and research-based solutions to solve the existing crime problems plaguing our cities. In keeping with this perspective and to complement the Safe City Coalition's broader strategic plan, I outline a brief research agenda and design.

The Current Project

Violence is theorized and empirically shown to be associated with a multitude of factors. These include poverty (Lee, Maume, & Ousey, 2003), race and class-based discrimination and exclusion (Currie, 2017), regional culture (Lee & Bankston, 2007), and individual stress and strain (Bernburg, 2002) among others. Using a socio-ecological approach to examine violence is therefore beneficial. A socio-ecological approach captures aspects of structure, institutions, and culture in addition to the physical properties of the lived environment. In addition, a socio-ecological approach recognizes the micro-level roles of individual attitudes, health, and family structure, and the macro level influences of gun laws, social services access, and educational opportunities (See figure 1 from Beyer, Wallis, & Hamberger, 2015). Those factors and how they relate to violence are shaped by broader political and social circumstances. These circumstances form a historical context, which allows for more rounded understandings of

fluctuations in level of poverty, rates of residential mobility, as well as the influence of legal cynicism and cultural norms related to violence (Kallius, Monterescu, & Rajaram, 2016). Overall, there is a significant body of research on factors that consistently correlate with violence. How these factors interact, especially within and a across time in a place, can be beneficial for understanding violence and crime prevention moving forward.
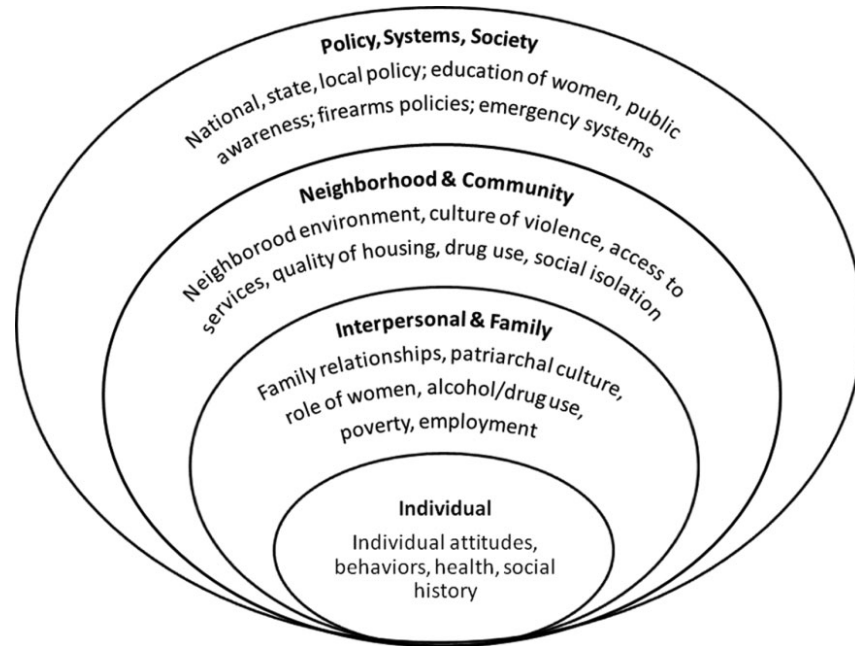

Figure 1 Conceptual model of the social and ecological factors related to violence

Goals

Given these perspectives on crime, this project focuses on these key goals and questions:

1. The first goal of this project is to better understand violence (especially domestic violence) as a local problem and the local context in which violence occurs on multiple. These questions both tap into objective and subjective/perceptual aspects and only form an initial guideline:

   a. In what contexts is violence used (e.g., disputes [domestic, drug-related, honor/pride based], in the process of other crimes)? These are generally captured through incident reports and general crime data. By further using trial data and witness reports, a more triangulated conception of violence can be gathered.
   b. How do community leaders, local media, and residents at large respond to violence immediately after its incidence? These individuals and groups help shape the dominant culture within neighborhoods and the city at large. Investigating how individuals may reinforce or diminish violent culture can

promote a better understanding of the ways in which norms and practices related to violence are created and spread.

   c. How do police respond to violence immediately after its incidence? How is violence and violent crime discussed and responded to after designated time periods (3-6 months, 1 year, 5 years)? Here it remains important to access the impact of violent victimization on the families of perpetrators and victims.

   d. How do police and judicial discretion and interactions impact criminal sentencing and the overall state of violent offenders, their families, and social ties?

2. The second goal builds on the first. Broadly, the goal is to understand the social and structural conditions of the city and considers what criminologists consider the "normal correlates of crime" from a socio-ecological perspective:

   a. What is the demographic composition of Albany?
   b. How do different demographics respond to and consider crime?
   c. How are the outcomes similar or different based on class and social status (e.g., those below the poverty line and those above)?
   d. What are resident perspectives on the law, civil rights, and the political and judicial apparatus?
   e. What are existing resources for alternative dispute resolution?
   f. How have institutions, including religious, educational, political, and economic ones, influenced (either positively or negatively) norms related to violence in their practices?

3. The final goal is to consider Albany's historical context as it relates to the previous two. Albany had been noted as the capital of the Southern Black Belt. While known for its fertile soil and history of vast crops, the Black Belt today, as noted by Veronica Womack in "Abandonment in Dixie: Underdevelopment in the Black Belt" is a region with some of the highest levels of poverty, low educational and health outcomes, crime, and a long history of racial aggression and inequality. Given the research on legacies of violence, specifically racial violence—where researchers have found a link between early rates of lynching, rates of anti-civil rights era violence, and contemporary violent crime rates (Petersen & Ward, 2015; Ward, 2015), I ask:

   a. Is there a lasting impact from the arguable failure of the civil rights movement in Albany?
   b. Are there continued class, race, and gender division stemming from the initial failure of the enforcement of the 13th, 14th, and 15th as well as the 19th amendments?
   c. How did the narrative around Albany becoming "The Murder Capital of America" impact the resident's perspectives as it concerned violence as well as broader culture?

Methodological Design and Execution

This project relies on a mixed-methodological approach by relying on descriptive and regression-based analysis of police and census data on demographics and rates of crime. The primary method of data collections will be through in-depth-interview and supplemented by surveys. Archives from newspapers and other sources and observations of collective events (e.g., town hall/neighborhood watch meetings, focus groups, city events) also contribute to the research project and provide the basis for historical context. Additionally, this project will rely on city commissioners and their relationships with individuals in their wards for purposeful and snowball sampling of key individuals.

Preliminary Recommendations and Additional Research

While there is a great deal of work to be done to uncover issues related to violence, here, I highlight a few considerations based on early observations and comparisons of other cities:

1. Alternative dispute resolution training for city officials and local leaders.
2. Integration of findings from other city coalitions and publications (while many of the insights presented in the links below may be beneficial each must be taken with the consideration of Albany's context and their impact of various communities):

    a. http://www.safecitiescoalition.org/provision-details.html
    b. https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/09/03/why-police-cant-fix-urban-americas-violent-crime-problem/?utm_term=.e12ae9e7c7c5
    c. https://www.citylab.com/equity/2013/12/how-gentrification-and-immigration-could-help-fight-crime/7824/
    d. http://www.aecf.org/resources/the-missouri-model/
    e. http://cureviolence.org/

Budgetary Considerations

1. Transcription of interviews
2. Potentially paying interviewees (gift cards, etc.)
3. Distributions of survey instrument
4. Costs associated with archive collections and data analysis

Timeline (to be included in future drafts)

Conclusion and Summary

Crime, like any epidemic, when studied with nuance and caution, can be "curable". While police may be a crucial part of the antidote, it's important to focus in part on, as Professor Maurice Jackson wrote in the Washing Post, "fixing poor education, providing more job opportunities, and eradicating income inequality in our cities. We can't rely on local police

forces to do that." (2015). By taking a socio-ecological and historical approach, Albany can better contend with this issue of violent crime through comprehensive changes and innovation. Through the exploration of violence, Albany can lead the way for similar cities throughout the Southern Black Belt and beyond struggling with the issue of violence.

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