

Salem Police Department Strategic Plan

October 2021 – Strategic Plan Survey

Summary Report

Introduction/Overview

The Salem Police Department 3-Year Strategic Plan development has been underway since June 2021. During the summer the Department established the Mission, Vision, and Values of the Department and identified three overarching Goals for the Plan: Safety, Legitimacy, and Excellence. The Department next identified three to four Objectives for each Goal.

In October 2021 the Department engaged the community for feedback on the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives through a survey. The survey introduced each proposed Objective of the plan and asked community members to rate the importance of each Objective on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being unimportant and 5 being very important. The survey also provided the opportunity for written feedback.

The survey was offered in Spanish and English. 492 community members completed the survey. 479 of the survey responses were in English and 13 were in Spanish.

Overall Themes

Throughout the survey results several themes emerged that were not specific to an objective or could be applied to multiple objectives. What follows is a summary of the overall themes with more details included in the Objective summaries.

- **Public engagement is key.** Suggestions for proactive public involvement were proposed for most of the objectives. Respondents are eager for more community engagement with the Police Department.
- **Increased transparency is needed.** People responded positively to objectives that would enhance transparency between the Department and the community.
- **More officers are needed in the community.** Across the survey, many respondents requested a greater day-to-day police presence in neighborhoods. Several respondents asked for greater 'community policing' with officers walking the neighborhoods. There were several calls for additional police hires to meet the community's needs.
- **Greater non-police support for persons in crisis.** Many community members would like to see non-police responses to people in crisis and interaction with houseless individuals. There were several references to Eugene's CAHOOTS program and Portland's Street Response Team as models for Salem.
- **Diverse voices within the department and in community discussions.** Many would like to see a police force that reflects the demographics in Salem. Respondents would like to see this same diversity represented in police Advisory Councils or other community group convened to work with the Salem Police Department.

Objective Importance

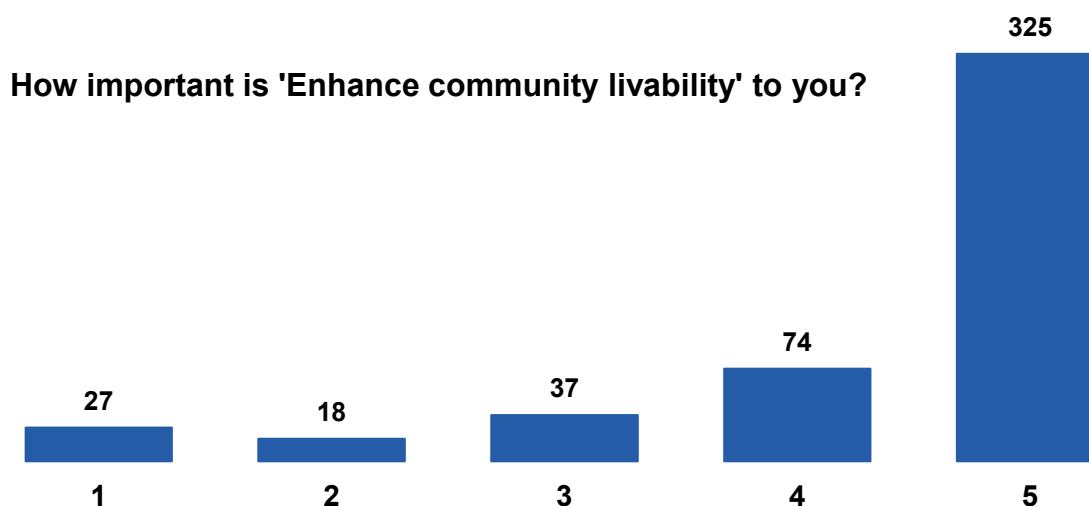
Overall, community members believe all the Strategic Plan Objectives are important. Though, there were noticeable difference in what was considered most and least important.

They Safety Objectives ranked the highest, followed by Excellence, and then Legitimacy.

Goal	Objective	% that ranked the Objective at a 4 or 5
Safety	Enhance community livability.	83%
Safety	Increase community safety efforts.	81%
Excellence	Foster a culture of excellence.	78%
Excellence	Enhance recruitment and hiring efforts.	77%
Legitimacy	Increase transparency and information-sharing.	74%
Legitimacy	Enhance police and community trust-building.	72%
Excellence	Increase employee retention and professional development opportunities.	71%
Legitimacy	Engage in informed organizational and structural change.	68%
Safety	Enhance employee safety and wellness.	66%
Excellence	Build analytical capacity.	58%

Goal: Safety

Objective: Enhance community livability.



Community members found this objective to be very important. 83% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating. This objective was rated as the most important by participants.

The houseless population was a topic of interest with more than 100 comments. Many participants believe that addressing the impacts of the houseless community is **not an SPD issue and should be addressed through community partnerships or a CAHOOTS-style program**, like in Eugene.

Homelessness should be addressed by social programs, not by the police. In fact, virtually all 'police calls' should be social worker or mental health professional calls instead.

Police should play at best a backup role in addressing behavioral issues.

Partner with A and D counselors as well as Mental health counselors. Not advocates, but trained staff for ride alongs or as an on call status for assistance and referrals for partners in the community vs arrest. Do arrest if a hold-able offense for accountability, but if other as a disturbance, get them directed to help.

I would hope you would work closely with the Homeless Alliance. And, we need a service like Cahoots in Eugene -- I do not understand why the Salem City Council stopped progress on this.

Engage with churches, community groups, including youth groups such as Young Life and Boy Scouts etc., to address community issues.

I believe that the police are often asked to do the jobs that are best left to other agencies or professionals. Addressing mental health issues and chronic homelessness are two examples of problems where the Police can deal with the symptoms, crimes, but not the root causes. Just addressing the symptom and not the problem sets up the Police for failure and undermines public trust. I encourage the department to first ask if they are

best suited for a particular task, and if not, who is or how they can leverage that other partner to support the department. I think the Police do a great job when they stay in their lane.

Several participants asked for **more traffic enforcement and quicker response** to increase livability in their communities.

More cameras or patrols at intersections - apparently red lights do not mean stop any longer.

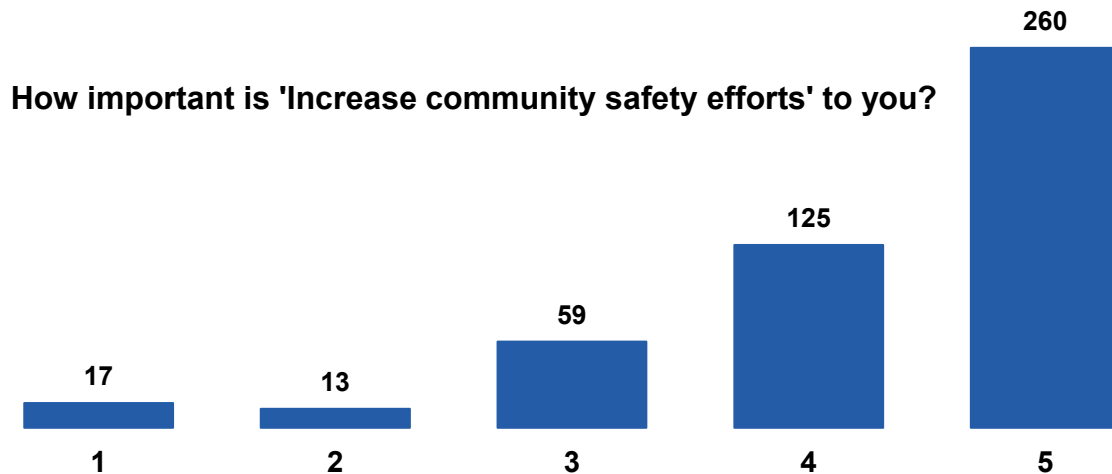
Traffic safety is important to me. I have two toddlers who love to play outside and speeders are a problem in our quite busy park neighborhood. I really would like to see a faster response to my concerns. Currently I have sent emails and left voicemails on the traffic team phone line with no results.

Traffic safety is the objective most important to me - reducing DUII, speeding, distracted driving.

It's imperative the traffic violations are ticketed. It is no longer safe to walk in our community because it is the norm that people turn at corners without using indicators, drive regularly through red lights or yellow lights, speed (obnoxiously) above the speed limit, pass/weave through traffic lanes (also without an indicator), use our streets as if they were racetracks, and on and on.

Better enforcement and citations related to street racing, reckless driving, obnoxiously loud vehicles

Objective: Increase community safety efforts.



Community members found this objective to be important. 81% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating.

Several community members recommended **police-led education in schools:**

I am truly sorry that there is no longer a SPD presence in our schools. My personal observation over many years was positive, as officers offered educational opportunities to students, staff and the community as a whole. They were valuable players for child abuse concerns that often opened the door to stop/prevent domestic violence, and their campus presence helped deter gang influence at schools and the community at large.

I would like to see Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America share their Be SMART curriculum with Salem Keizer School District and other organizations. Be SMART provides simple safety methods families can use to keep their children, and others, safe. It is not political but factual steps to keep people safe. S = secure weapons, which is now a state law.

Keep officers in schools. Develop relationships at a young age. Get to know those you serve.

Having speaker(s) address domestic violence, child abuse and gun violence awareness on preschool to K12 and colleges campus, including private employers and institution from all walks of life.

Community engagement through public meetings was also recommended:

Bring back neighborhood watch program and more staff dedicated to community safety efforts. Build a new program that works directly with Salem residents focusing on safety training, how to build neighborhood watch groups, get more people to be involved in their community.

Programs like the Salem Police Department's Citizens Police Academy helped the residents of the community understand the challenges and successes of the SPD. ... As a graduate, I would hope this communication outreach might again be made available.

It might help to provide periodic evening meetings for any citizens interested to present ideas to help keep their neighborhoods safe

In my younger days, I was someone who went to HOA, PTA etc meetings and talk to people about how 911 worked (very younger days 😊). I am in huge favor of spending time and money in all neighborhoods.

Increase community meetings in at risk communities and increase police interactions with the community.

Another theme was partnering with other organizations. This included recommendations of specific organizations to partner with for the Salem Police Department:.

Community-specific partners are integral to this, especially with prevention. I would hope that long-lasting relationships with community members and organizations are built with mutual trust to have preventative resources and proactive interventions.

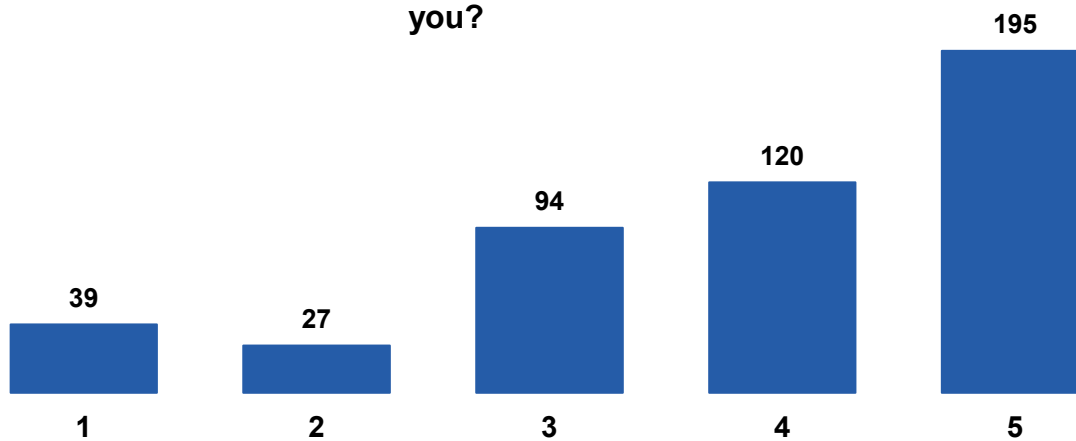
While the Police have a role to play here, I would again recommend that the department consider if they are the best organization to take on these issues or if others should lead, or if the Police can closely partner with other organizations to better support the Police in addressing not just crime, but the larger social issues that drive crime.

Team up with communities (Center for Hope and Safety, Liberty House, CSEC, Taylors house etc) in your area to learn more about how various systems impact violence in our community and how police can improve their responses and education with those populations.

Again it is important to work with community partners with expertise in child abuse and domestic violence.

Objective: Enhance employee safety and wellness.

How important is 'Enhance employee safety and wellness' to you?



Community members found this objective to be important, although less important than the other two objectives in the 'Safety' goal. 66% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating.

Many respondents **supported providing high-quality equipment for officers**, especially body cameras. However, there were **several comments against 'para-military' or 'militarization' style equipment**.

Salem PD should have the BEST most current equipment to perform their job.

Body Cameras are a must to protect our Officers from BS complaints. We should never cut corners on protective items for officers.

Get body cameras for the force to record confrontations.

Training is very important and should remain a priority. Officers need to be prepared to deal with hostile or uncooperative suspects and to be confident in applying a full range of response techniques.

What kind of "safety" equipment? We do NOT need more anti-riot/military equipment. I do support on-person cameras if officers are required to have them turned on.

Yes, wellness issues are crucial, however we do not support providing military type "safety-equipment" to SPD.

I feel we are looking rather "militarized" these days when it comes to community policing (case in point: I saw a fully armed Humvee with officers rolling down High Street in the summer of 2020, which looked truly frightening to me).

Several community members suggested that hiring **more officers in the department** could help with the Department's safety and wellness goals.

Staffing levels must increase significantly or types of calls that get a response must be curtailed. The public wants a more engaged (community policing) police dept. That cannot be done when all your officers are just going call to call 24/7.

Hire more police officers to share the workload.

Salem PD is terribly understaffed; they need more officers so they can do the job effectively and efficiently

More than 80 participants wrote in **in favor of increased training and wellness programs** at the SPD. Some participants believe that wellness activities should be the responsibility of the individual officer and not a part of the Department's official policies.

Please work to train the force on de-escalation techniques. Additionally, SPD needs to undergo intensive DEI training as well as training on the importance of acting to support ALL citizens and not just those they agree with.

I highly suggest training in areas in diversity training.

Police officer safety is important. Important to invest in your officers and their families and provide them tools and resources to cope with their job stress. This is important to me.

Offer workshops in stress management such as meditation. Recognize need for peer support for PTSD. Create team who can help with counseling resources.

They can do yoga on their own time and money.

While important, wellness and health is a personal responsibility. The employer must provide adequate safety equipment and safety training, but it is up to the individual to control their own health.

Some community members believed that **officers should be vaccinated** as part of a safety and wellness program.

Based on the current events I also support a COVID vaccine mandate for any persons employed in 'Public Safety'.

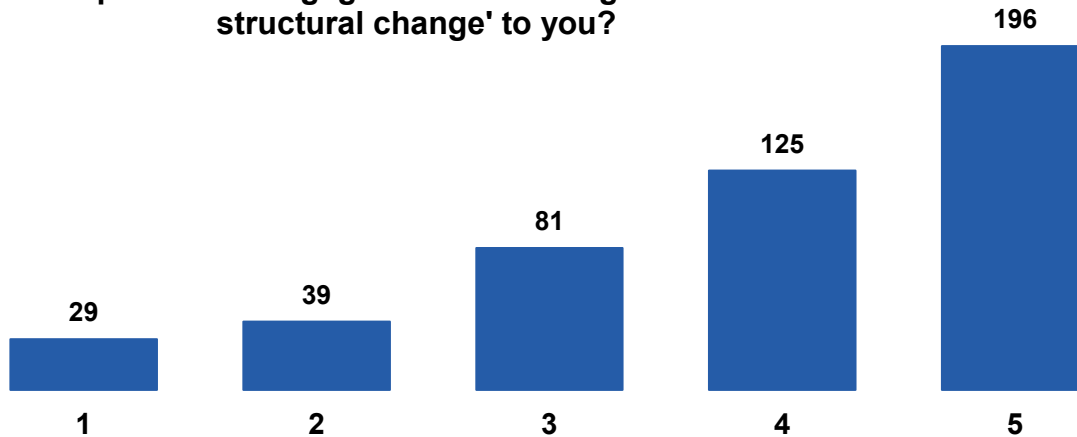
All sworn and civilian employees to be vaccinated against Covid-19.

Mandate and enforce COVID vaccination for all police, fire and EMT personnel. Terminate those who refuse. Any who refuse are a direct threat to their coworkers and the public. COVID is a devastating and lethal disease. Stopping it has to be among the highest of priorities. And law enforcement, fire and EMT need to lead by example.

Goal: Legitimacy

Objective: Engage in informed organizational and structural change.

How important is 'Engage in informed organizational and structural change' to you?



Community members found this objective to be important, though in the narrative responses, several people were confused about what the objective meant. 68% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating.

Community members were **positive about a data first approach**.

Kudos for proposing to use data to make decisions; I see way too little of that occurring.

The reason for the objective and proposed solution is wonderful. Implementation is critical. We don't need more rhetoric, rather solutions that work.

Using data to increase capacity is key, especially looking at when and where crime happens so as to deploy resources more effectively.

Many respondents advised the Community Engagement Unit to **meet with diverse groups to hear all perspectives**.

Please include a diverse group of community members in this objective.

A very balanced approach should be used. Engage the Chamber and business groups as well as the faith, education, various charitable groups and members of the neighborhood groups in well published and hopefully well attended meetings.

Need to be able to listen to all voices in the community, not just the vocal minority.

In order to build and enhance trust in the community, however, it is integral that all such efforts engage a diverse array of voices (including those that are critical of current SPD structures, policies, and practices). This is difficult work, but change will not result unless it is done thoughtfully and inclusively.

Communication with all neighborhoods in Salem is KEY.

Participants asked for **transparency to build trust with the community** as the Department engages in more data-driven activities.

As you know, there is a huge gap in SPD transparency and community trust right now. Sharing as much data as possible with help SPD rebuild that. Safeguarding efficiency data and strategic plan details only hurts SPD.

I'm all for more data that the public can understand. The recent "audit" had almost no quantitative data which was a big disappointment. Sometimes I think you are trying to hide the fact that crime in Salem has been declining for years and continues to decline.

Transparency is key to any effective relationships, especially between a community and those who are intended to protect it.

Make as much data available to the community as possible.

I am assuming reports would be made available to the public? Citizens should be able to see actual statistics and not just arbitrarily make up what they believe the stats are.

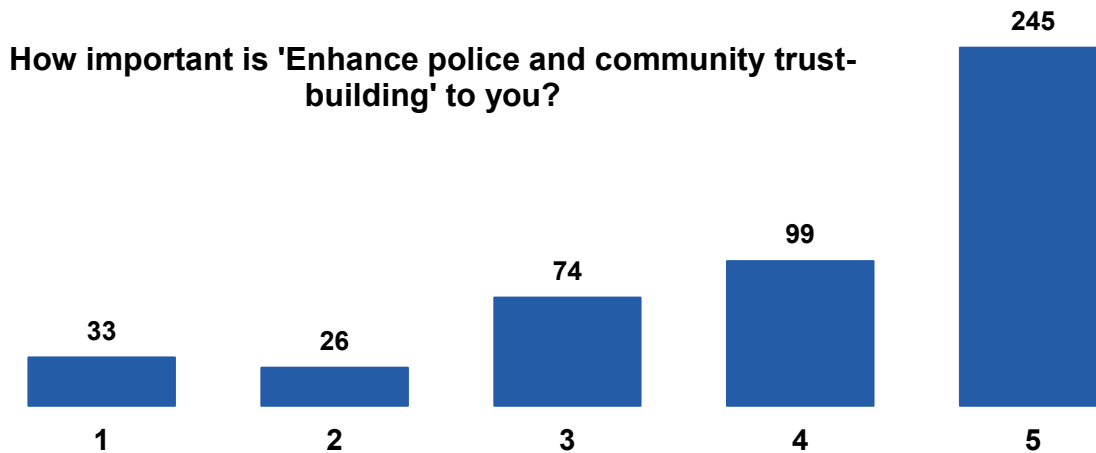
Some respondents were concerned that this objective may **take away from officers patrolling and doing police work.**

This is very important however it cannot take away of officers patrolling.

Sounds like less time fighting crime, more time holding hands.

Change is good unless it interferes with the police department's main job and that is to enforce the law.

Objective: Enhance police and community trust-building.



Community members found this objective to be important. 72% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating.

Respondents were **largely positive about the Chief's Advisory Council.** Several had advice for choosing the members.

Chief's Council sounds like an amazing way to hear from the community

I think having a Chiefs advisory board is a great idea as long as it contains people from the community and not just business owners or city management.

Typically, advisory councils like this are loaded with fringe members of the community that do not speak for most of us. We need cool, stable heads that look past the current chaos.

Ensure that the Chief's Advisory Council is diverse & not all white people

*When engaging people and finding advisory councils, you will need to go out into the community and **SEEK OUT** people who can represent diverse views. They are generally not the people already engaged in our city government.*

Community members stated that **community policing is vital** to build trust within the community.

*Be around. Talk to me. I wave at police sometimes I get a smile sometimes a leer sometimes a turn away **NEVER** in Salem have I got a wave back.*

*This is **SO** important. Community Policing can be the backbone of a city. I truly think this can effect lives from the top down.*

*Police must interact more in non-violent, informal ways. Get **INTO** community events unarmed. Talk with folks on the streets. In parks. Ride more bikes.*

To build relationships, you need to get out of your cars. Start having cops walk a beat, as they used to do, and still do in many countries.

Respondents offered several **community engagement** strategies that the Police Department could use to build trust in the community.

Have open house / zoom events to introduce the community to officers.

Having officers attend the Neighborhood Association meetings is invaluable.

Let us know how we at the Salem Leadership Foundation can help! rian@salem1f.org

Trust is built through communication. I believe a series of neighborhood meetings and conversations can help improve trust. I think activities oriented toward youth are very important.

Let us know through social media about how and where we can give our opinion or consider doing something else.

The leadership of the police department and the city should listen formally (in public forums and private meetings) to their most severe critics during the last 18 months. Not in order to give explanations, but to ask them about their specific opinions about the necessary improvements. The reason for this suggestion is that these people in Salem are very active in their community, and they are the type of people that are rarely invited to the advisory council.

As Salem becomes a more diverse community the police department needs to be proactive in outreach to all parts of the community that the department serves.

Several respondents cite **that diversity in hiring** is important to build trust.

Police force should more closely reflect the diversity of the community.

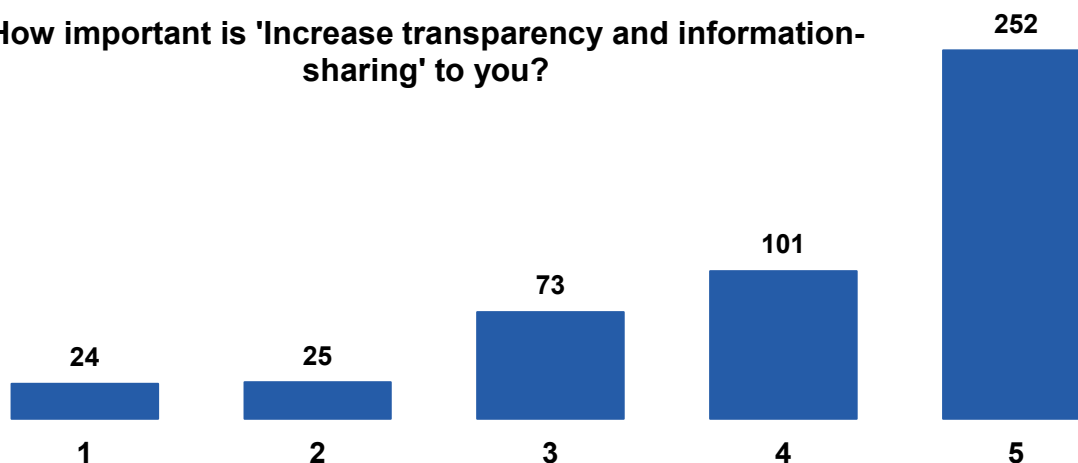
Diversity is very important. perhaps look into hiring people who came from a diverse/difficult background.

Be kind to the diversity that will come to the department, get rid of cliques and hazing and make people feel welcomed and a part of the department. Rid yourselves of double standards and mindsets that stereotype people

Stronger efforts towards diversity, equity and inclusion in recruitment and hiring to more effectively reflect the Salem community.

Objective: Increase transparency and information-sharing.

How important is 'Increase transparency and information-sharing' to you?



Community members found this objective to be important. 74% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating.

Most respondents **supported greater transparency and information-sharing** in the comments

Public input on this objective was overwhelmingly related to **body cameras** with more than 90 comments related to them. Most comments were **in favor of the purchase**, though people expressed some concerns.

Body-worn cameras and a robust policy on their use, how footage is released to the public, and the privacy of individuals is necessary to maintain consistency in a meaningful way and allows community members to understand what's going on and demand better outcomes in a meaningful way.

Body cameras should have been enacted years ago.

Make sure the officers can't just say "oops, my camera turned off" whenever they want to.

Body cameras are essential in demonstrating your willingness to be transparent even when the situation is confusing and dangerous.

Body cameras are both a curse and a blessing. I would just proceed with caution and see what other departments and especially officers feel about them.

I support the body-worn camera program.

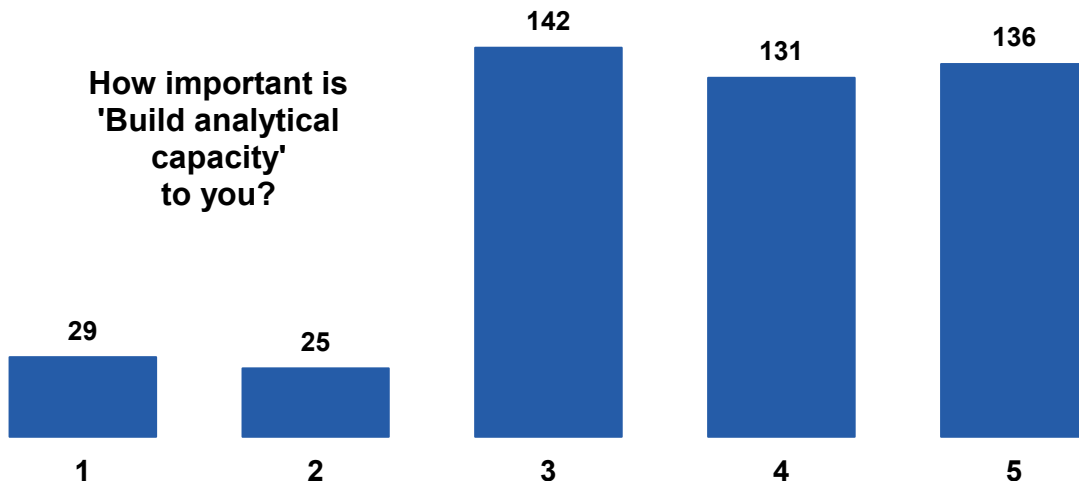
There were also negative comments around a body camera purchase, though these were in the minority.

No cameras, they are a waste of money and make officers look intimidating. If I can't have a casual conversation with an officer unrecorded, I'm not going to talk with that officer.

I believe that body-worn cameras that will cost millions over the next few years will turn out to be a huge waste of money. We don't have a problem with police misconduct in Salem. That's a good thing and a credit to the leadership of the SPD! You should have said "we don't need those" when the idea came up. Now we are going to waste millions of dollars on them instead of addressing serious underfunding of other General Fund services.

Goal: Excellence

Objective: Build analytical capacity.



Community members found this objective to be mildly important and only 58% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating. This received the **lowest importance score of the survey**.

One cause of the low score could be general confusion from respondents about what the meaning of the objective. More than 25 people wrote that they didn't understand the objective.

Several community members were **skeptical about how useful data analytics could be** or how data could be manipulated.

To me I think data can always be manipulated.

A lot of data analysis programs disproportionately impacts Black and Brown communities. If doing this you need to understand how the data is being interpreted and always make sure it's not being bias or discriminatory.

Data is important, but policy and regulations created as a result of data at the expense of common sense is not a good idea.

I'd rather see training for de-escalation and trust-building than data collection and 'intelligence'.

Data is too easily manipulated to create a desired narrative.

Data doesn't always show the whole picture. Community policing does.

Several participants requested that **new data be shared with the public**.

As long as there is transparency in this goal (on your side, of course), it should be very helpful to the SPD in terms of upholding an effective, community-driven approach.

This data, if gathered, needs to be readily available to the public. For instance, I would like to know the incidence of crime around the Rite Aid building as the campers and homeless moved into downtown. How many fires or other related emergency calls resulted from our allowing people to camp in our parks and downtown streets?

Objective: Enhance recruitment and hiring efforts.



Community members found this objective to be important. 77% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating.

Most respondents were in favor of this objective and encouraged the Department to focus efforts on **diversity hiring and retaining officers** that reflect the demographics of the city.

The SPD force should mimic the community it serves as best it can.

You may not be intentionally excluding diverse qualified applicants, but you are. I think you should focus on retention of diverse applicants.

Diversity is key to healthy society and trust in the police. The more the police "look like" the society they are charged with caring for, the more believable and trustworthy they will seem. This alone will do much to create a strong bond of trust in the community.

I think it is also critical to recruit a department with diverse lived experiences, educational backgrounds, and levels of community engagement.

Ensure that diversity is a priority and develop interview questions or analysis to eliminate current and future employees/candidates that exhibit discriminatory view points.

Many participants recommended that the Department **hire officers after intensive background checks** and some suggested **raising education requirements for candidates**.

SPD should require a 4 year college degree in a relevant field, background investigation, and extensive mental health evaluations.

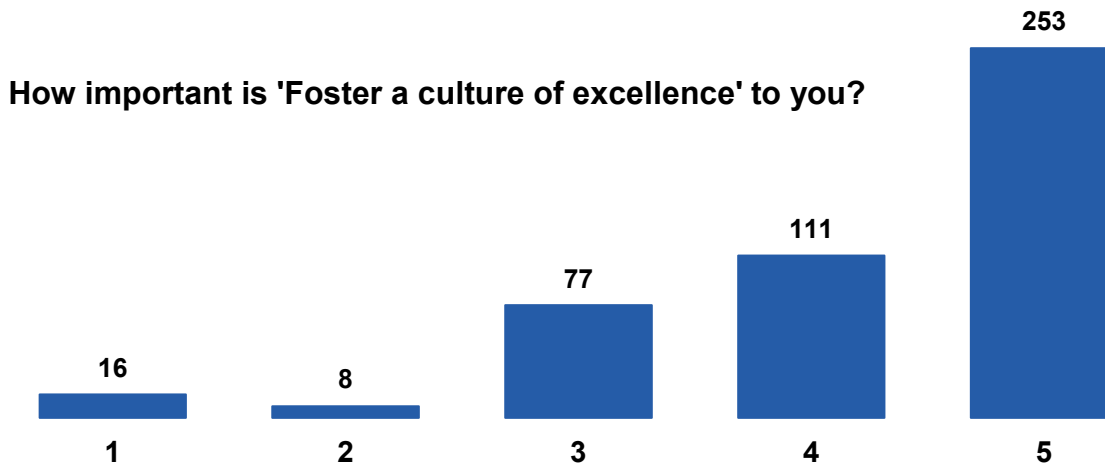
It is important to hire the right persons and provide continuing training support for the best outcomes.

Besides standard background checks, examine social media accounts of prospects to look for red flags such as racist remarks, White supremacist and/or ties to extremist militia groups such as the Three Percenters or Oath Keepers.

Recruit only the most professional candidates out there. Those that are willing to learn the new way of policing. Those that have bachelor and masters degree in societal issues and behavioral sciences.

High school diploma is too low a standard. Requiring either community college credits or that a recruit be engaged in continuing education classes should be the goal.

Objective: Foster a culture of excellence.



Community members found this objective to be important and 78% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating.

To foster excellence, many community members agreed that **officers should be held accountable** in a variety of ways. Some participants stated that this can be achieved by internal reviews. Others would like the community to be involved in the process.

There should be oversight from community member board with input from an auditor from the City of Salem. SPD should not be allowed to audit itself or be trusted to hold itself accountable.

There needs to be more random community involvement to ensure sincere accountability

Annual evaluations of all employees, to include officer evaluations of his or her supervisors.

Several community members recommended **rewarding excellence** to retain high performing officers.

Reward excellence by publicly acknowledging, giving leadership roles, etc.

A must. Weight Watchers gives out charms for good work, some employers give bonuses or recognition events.

Treat people like rock stars they will be rock stars. Give special provisions to those who serve in all forms of service. Tax breaks will work. Give your best, get the best special home loan rates.

Respondents also recommended **using metrics established with community input** to evaluate officers' performance.

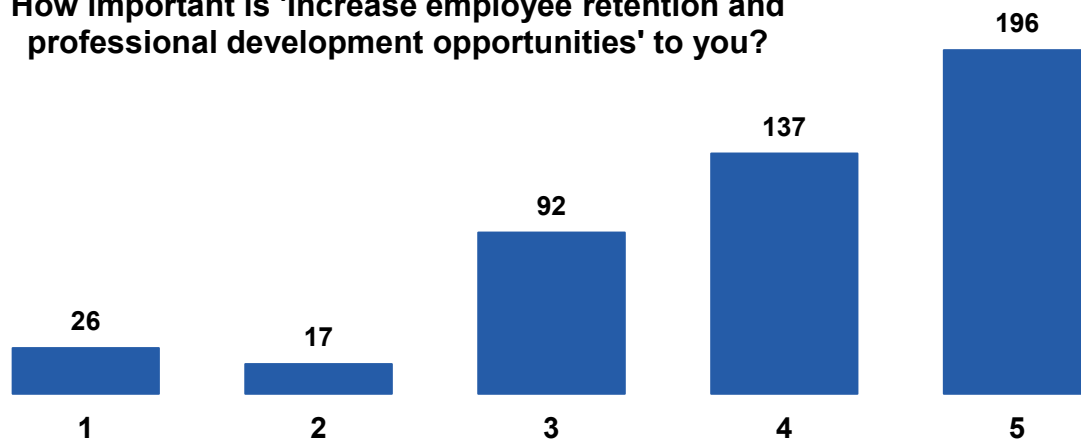
Sounds like this is about evaluating / measuring and offering a way for the community to weigh in. Yes.

The success of such activities will be determined by the quality of the performance measures selected. It is important to measure the goals of the Police Department in preventing crime and maintain the public safety.

I would recommend community focus groups to establish what these measurements should be.

Objective: Increase employee retention and professional development opportunities.

How important is 'Increase employee retention and professional development opportunities' to you?



Community members found this objective to be important. 71% of respondents gave this objective a 4 or a 5 rating. Overall, participants agreed that employee retention is key to a high-quality police force in Salem.

Respondents reacted favorably to a mentoring program and offered advice on how it could be implemented.

Mentor programs and advanced trainings are HUGE in retaining people in key roles. This is great.

Mentors within the department is a good program.

Council your older employees and get them to promote your new ways.

Work with unions to ensure mentors get paid a premium for teaching.

Exemplary police officers should mentor new police officers, not those that want to be mentors and go through the training. Mentoring should not be a job that someone applied for, but a job someone is referred to because of their exemplary qualities. Mentors should be trained to be effective mentors, just because you are a good carpenter it doesn't mean you will be a good woodwork teacher.

A few people would like to see **high retention of diverse officers.**

Focus first on retention and professional development of people of color, women and other underrepresented groups.

you may not be intentionally excluding diverse qualified applicants, but you are. I think you should focus on retention of diverse applicants.

Several written comments **support increased pay, benefits, and other perks to retain officers.**

You have excellent trainers, but you need to pay them incentive pay to maintain your high standards.

You will retain officers if they are adequately compensated

Competitive salaries and benefits are crucial, as with all jobs.

I would suggest monetary incentives for education and professional advancement, and for longevity.