

A night-time photograph of the St. Louis skyline, featuring the Gateway Arch as the central focus. The city lights are reflected in the water in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Reimagining Public Safety in the City of St. Louis

March 2022



Center For  
POLICING EQUITY

# Who We Are

“For 250 years the system has worked as intended. And that should inspire change.”

DR. PHILLIP ATIBA GOFF  
Co-Founder & CEO, CPE



# What Does It Mean to “Reimagine” Public Safety?

## Public safety is more than just policing

- “Public safety” refers to how systems of government ensure that all residents are safe; this includes, but is not limited to, policing.

## Reimagining requires reflection and innovation

- To reimagine public safety, a community must first systematically assess its current situation:
  - Is the public safe? Do all community members *feel* safe?
  - Are there systemic injustices at play within the public safety system?
- From this assessment, innovative and creative solutions can emerge, with the goal of providing true safety and equity to all.



*Co-responses between SLMPD and community health workers*

# What Does It Mean to “Reimagine” Public Safety?

## Harm reduction involves improving existing systems

- Existing systems must be optimized for equity and responsiveness:
  - How should we ensure equitable response times across districts?
  - How should we update police policies (i.e. use of force) to reduce harm to vulnerable community members?

## Reimagining involves building new public-health based systems

- New systems must be built to solve long-standing problems:
  - How can we create systems of care (e.g. civilian responders, education, employment, and other youth programs)?



*Non-police crisis responders in Chapel Hill, NC and Olympia, WA*



# Community Perspectives

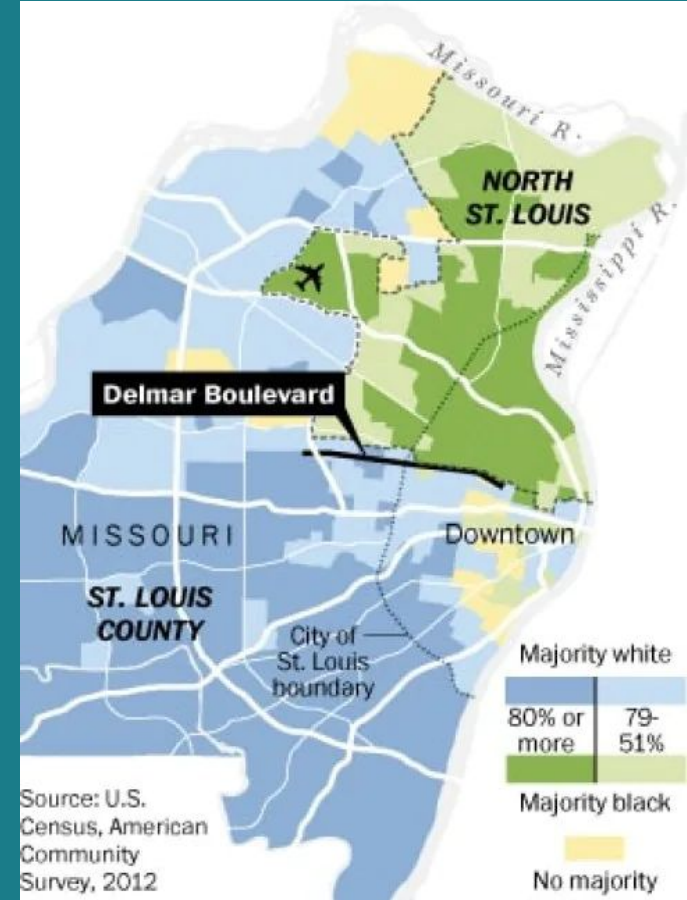
## Inequities between North and South St. Louis

- A sense that there is a clear division between the North and the South of the city, both racially and economically
- A perception that the speed of police response is dictated by zip code (slower response or in some cases no response in the majority-Black North part of the City)

## Desire for increased investment in alternative response models

- Overwhelming support for mental health workers and clinicians taking on more calls for service
- One resident noted that “purple shirts” have become a symbol in some parts of the city that residents are safe

*Visualization of St. Louis’  
“Delmar divide”*



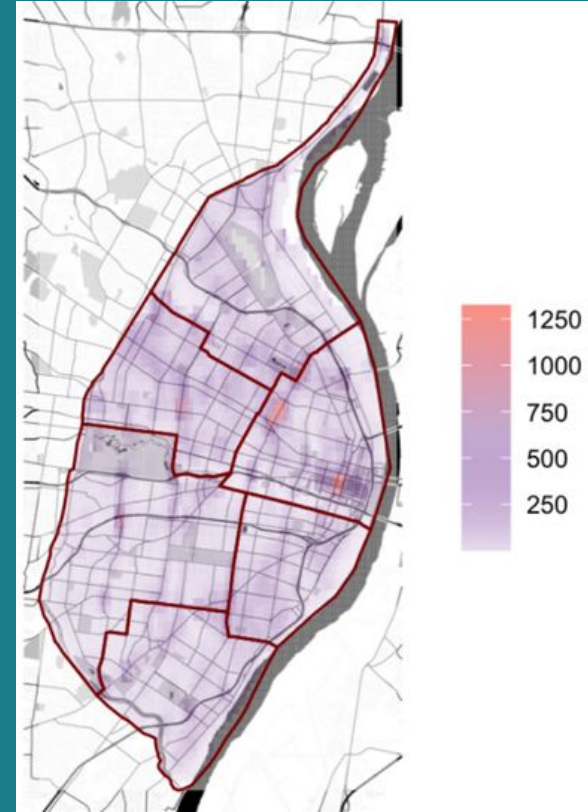
# Calls for Service Analysis

## Background

- CPE conducted a comprehensive assessment of SLMPD's calls for service and response outcomes between 2015-2019

## Key findings

- **Offer-initiated preventative calls for service generated a large share of use of force incidents.**
- **The Northern part of the city experienced:**
  - More use of force incidents per capita
  - Slightly slower dispatch times and times to close
  - More per capita officer-initiated nuisance calls

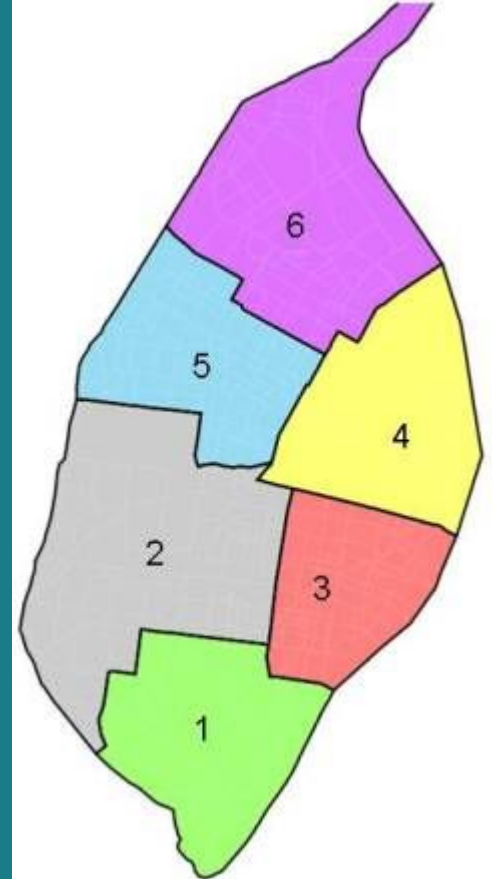
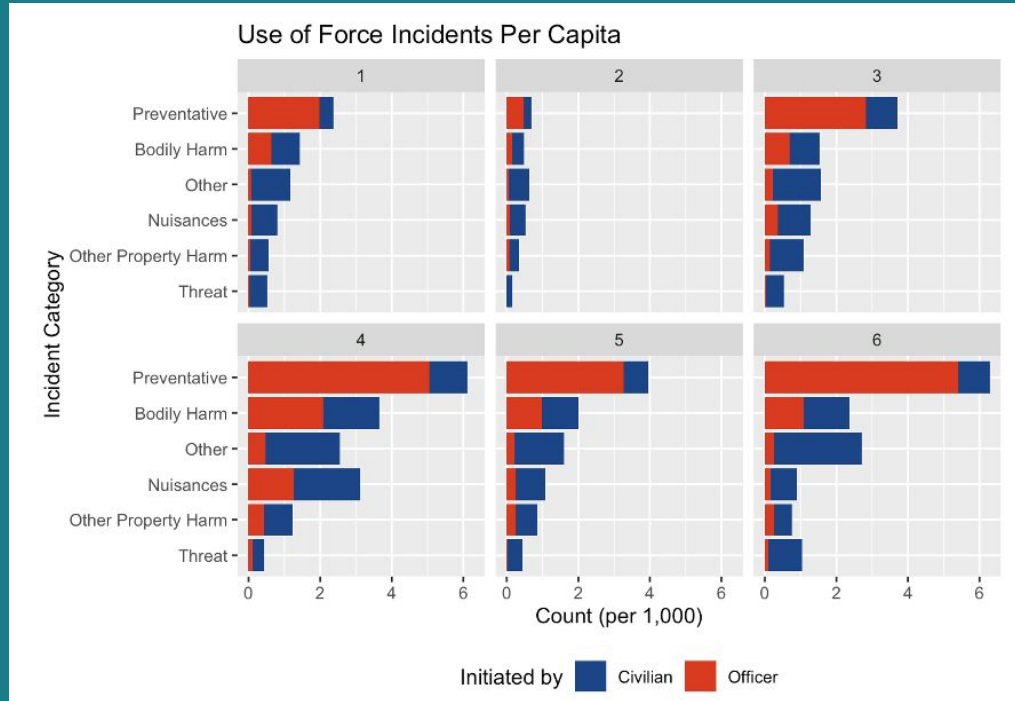


Geographic distribution of calls for service (per capita)

# Disparities Between Districts

Use of force incidents are most likely to emerge from officer-initiated “preventative” calls

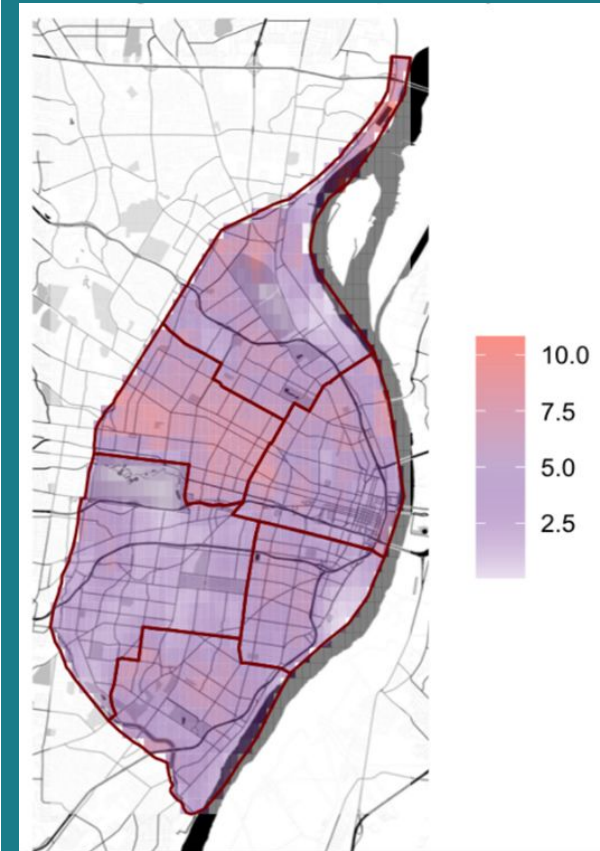
- In particular in Districts 4, 5, 6



# Disparities Within Districts

Within districts, census tracts with more Black residents experience the following disparities (with statistical significance):

- Longer average dispatch times
- Longer average total times to close
- More urgent calls (as measured by discretionary change in call priority)
- More officer-initiated nuisance calls (per capita)



Average Time to Dispatch  
(minutes)



# Patrol Workload Findings

## Background

- CPE partnered with Matrix Consulting Group to analyze patrol workload in St. Louis to identify call diversion and staffing optimization opportunities

## Key findings

- “There are **significant opportunities to implement a program of diverting non-emergency, low-risk calls for service to civilian responders.**”
- “There are **significant imbalances in staff assigned to patrol districts and platoons relative to the workload they handle.**”
- “**Reallocating staff between districts and within platoons can fundamentally improve equity in service levels** and the experience of officers on duty.”

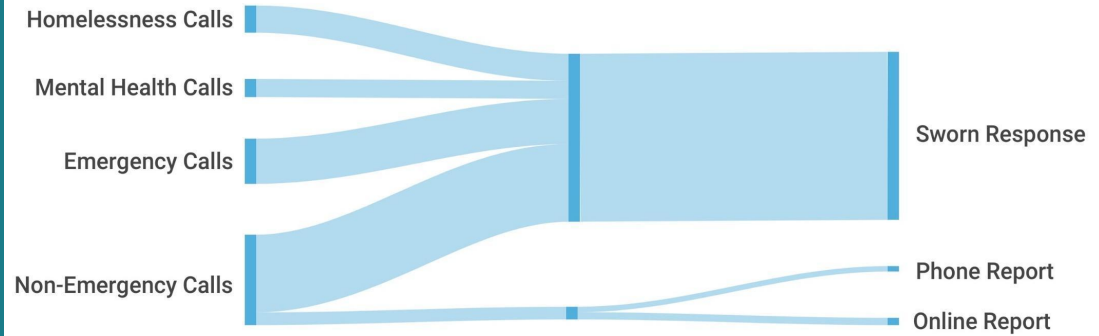


# Opportunities for Call Diversion

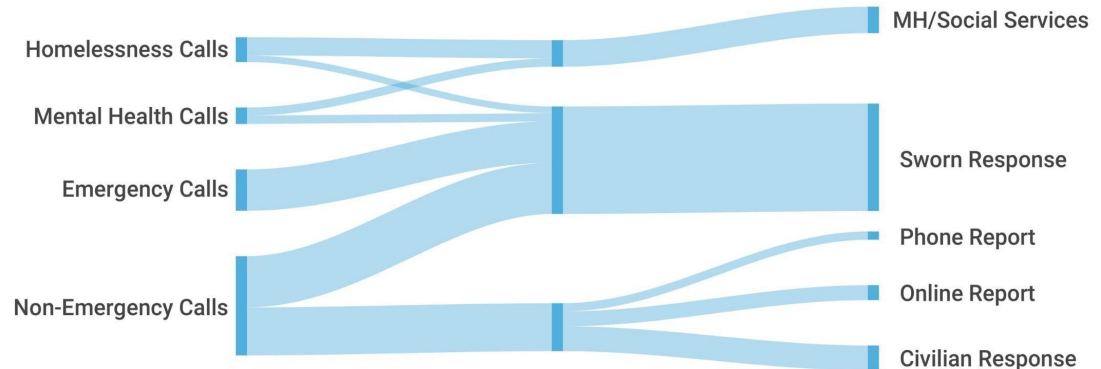
## Call diversion

- Call diversion can reduce the involvement of police in handling certain types of workload, deploying alternative responders to those calls instead.
- This frees up patrol officers' time to meaningfully engage with the community, and to focus on more severe calls for service.

ILLUSTRATIVE: Before Implementing Call Diversion Approaches



ILLUSTRATIVE: After Implementing Call Diversion Approaches



# Opportunities for Call Diversion

## Diverting calls to civilian responders

- To determine the number of calls that could feasibly be handled by civilian responders, Matrix analyzed SLMPD CAD data and overlaid that data with insights from call diversion programs in other jurisdictions.
- Matrix identified **19 incident types that could potentially be partially diverted to civilian responders**; these incidents **represent 18% of SLMPD calls for service**.

## Matrix estimates of potential call diversion to civilian responders

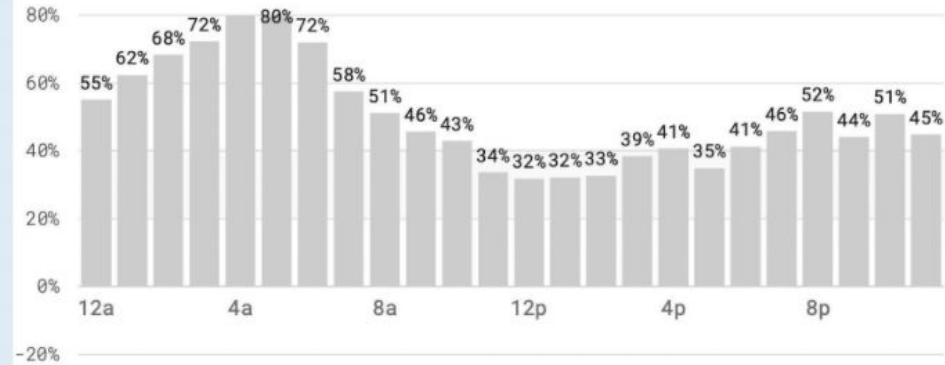
Incident Type	# CFS	Avg. HT (min.)	% Diverted	# Diverted	Hours Diverted
Accident	14,256	47.2	40%	5,702	4,484
Accident Information	1,070	44.0	40%	428	314
Assist Motorist	2,399	31.9	50%	1,200	638
Traffic Control	452	57.6	50%	226	217
Parking Violation	5,217	117.0	80%	4,174	8,140
Auto Abandoned	568	55.8	80%	454	423
Larceny	2,700	44.3	55%	1,485	1,096
Larceny From Vehicle	514	47.6	65%	334	265
Fraud	211	54.3	65%	137	124
Auto Theft	992	47.0	65%	645	505
Burglary	3,553	56.5	60%	2,132	2,008
Destruction Of Property	1,639	43.7	50%	820	597
Tampering With An Auto	947	36.0	50%	474	284
Dumping Rubbish	648	124.5	75%	486	1,008
Overdose	1,810	15.8	65%	1,177	309
Person Down	2,185	12.7	40%	874	185
Missing Person	1,338	51.1	50%	669	569
Recovered Article	806	75.6	70%	564	710
Recovered Auto	392	56.1	65%	255	238
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,697</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>22,234</b>	<b>22,117</b>

# Workload and Patrol Staffing by District

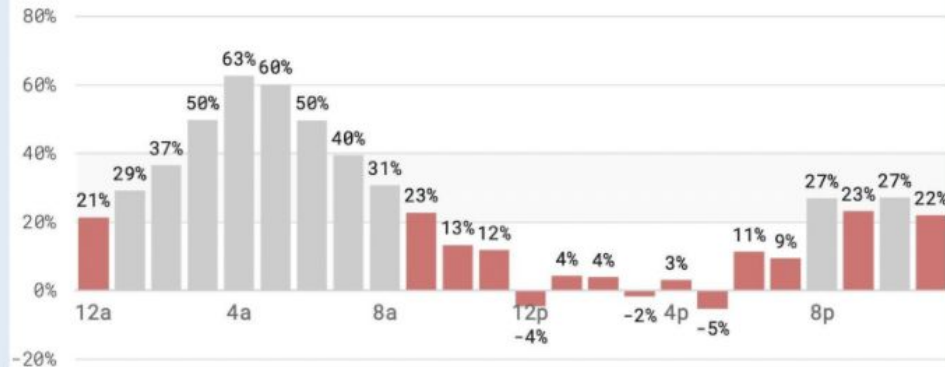
## Current patrol staffing is not in-line with workloads

- Current workload varies by district, with **highest workloads in Districts 4, 5, and 6**
- Despite varying workloads, **patrol staffing is relatively equal across districts**
  - Districts 4 and 5 are most understaffed
  - Districts 2 and 3 are most overstaffed
- This **creates significant disparities in service levels** between districts

Third



Fourth





# Policy Review Process

## At the City's request, CPE reviewed written policies on:

- Use of force
- Pedestrian and vehicle stops
- Crisis intervention (as part of City working group)

## Goal of review:

- Identify opportunities to reduce risk of disparities and harm through changes to written policies

## Guiding principles from social science:

- Behavior is more strongly affected by situations and policies than by individual attitudes
- Restrictive police policies associated with lower rates of force and more equitable outcomes

# Recommendations: Transparency and Accountability

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>SLMPD policies are not easily accessible to the public</b>	<b>Increase transparency of SLMPD policies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt a unified system to store and update all current SLMPD policies</li><li>• Publicly share all operative SLMPD policies on the City of St. Louis website.</li><li>• Share any updated policies with the community for input before finalization through virtual town halls and outreach in community spaces (e.g. schools, rec centers, churches)</li></ul>
<b>A lack of community confidence in existing civilian oversight systems for the SLMPD</b>	<b>Address community concerns with civilian oversight systems:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convene a planning group to follow up on community concerns regarding civilian oversight and investigate whether the oversight board could be improved in terms of mandate, authority, resources, and representation.</li></ul>

# Recommendations: Vehicle and Pedestrian Stops

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>Ongoing racial disparities in SLMPD pedestrian stops and vehicle stops</b>	<b>End use of pretextual stops:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt policy banning pretextual stops</li><li>• Prohibit stops based solely on low level equipment and registration violations (e.g. registration violations, tinted windows)</li><li>• Prohibit officers from asking questions unrelated to the original stop reason</li><li>• Evaluate effectiveness of policy change</li></ul>
<b>A lack of uniform data collection and analysis on SLMPD stops</b>	<b>Improve data collection and analysis of vehicle and pedestrian stops:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collect data, including demographic data, for <u>all</u> pedestrian stops</li><li>• Enhance procedures for routine analysis of stop data<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Assign responsibility for routine analysis to analysts rather than supervisors</li><li>○ Create statistical criteria and procedures for follow up investigation of racial disparities.</li><li>○ Analyze disparate impact of policies &amp; practices</li><li>○ Develop a regular and systematic audit of Body Worn Camera footage</li></ul></li></ul>

# Recommendations: Use of Force

<u>Problems</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
Ongoing racial disparities in SLMPD use of force	<p><b>Update SLMPD general use of force policy provisions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt a unified use of force policy that contains all recent revisions</li><li>• Revise use of force policy to require that use of force be proportional</li><li>• Set clear, mandatory criteria for when medical aid must be summoned</li></ul> <p><b>Clarify and expand SLMPD policy language on neck restraints and positional asphyxia:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen and clarify the chokehold ban adopted in 2020, including banning any pressure to the throat or windpipe that may hinder breathing or impede the flow of blood to the brain.</li><li>• Add guidance to its use of force policy addressing the risk of positional asphyxia.</li></ul> <p><b>Update SLMPD policy language on Tasers and OC Spray:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remove current requirement that OC spray incidents be classified as “resisting arrest.”</li><li>• Remove provisions denying the rare but serious risks of OC spray and Tasers</li><li>• Remove provisions recommending taser use on people experiencing mental health crises</li></ul>



# Recommendations: Mental Health Response

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
<b>Need for improved policies and systems to facilitate effective responses to mental health incidents</b>	<p><b>Continue work of CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) policy working group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt an updated CIT policy that includes clear guidance on key issues:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Values</li><li>○ Obligations of dispatch, officers, and supervisors,</li><li>○ Pre-arrest diversion</li><li>○ Transportation and referrals</li><li>○ Data collection and documentation.</li></ul></li><li>• Consider expansion of group's effort to include review of policies of other stakeholders (e.g. dispatch, hospital, or BHR) to ensure alignment and maximize diversion.</li></ul> <p><b>Support dispatch of alternative &amp; specialized response systems:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system options to allow dispatchers to determine more easily which officers are CIT-trained.</li><li>• Expressly inform callers of the availability of mental health response (e.g. "911 do you need police, medical, fire, or mental health services?")</li></ul>

# Recommendations: Transparency and Accountability

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Body worn cameras (BWC) are not utilized as a proactive accountability and assessment tool	<p><b>Develop a regular review process conducted by front line supervisors.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize footage as a training tool in order to highlight responses which exemplify positive outcomes (ie. de-escalation)</li><li>• Develop a rubric for procedural justice and score individual interactions (should be accomplished with an academic partner)</li><li>• Publish de-identified results of any BWC audits focused on procedural justice</li></ul>

# Recommendations: Alternative Response

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>A need for civilian responders to address low-risk calls</b>	<b>Establish an alternative response function for certain low-risk calls:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a new Community Service Officer (CSO) classification to handle certain types of low-risk calls for service<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ These CSOs should be housed outside SLMPD and should be unarmed</li></ul></li><li>• Add 15 CSOs and deploy the positions to patrol day and afternoon watches</li><li>• Train call takers and dispatchers to dispatch CSOs to appropriate calls</li><li>• Seek input from the community and coordinate with other city agencies</li></ul>

# Recommendations: Staffing

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>A lack of alignment between SLMPD staffing and workload, creating inequities between districts</b>	<p><b>Align patrol staffing with workload:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Re-allocate patrol staff across districts using a workload-based methodology, to ensure equitable response times and to address violent crime in the communities where it is most prevalent</li><li>• Formally track the workload of patrol districts and adjust staffing accordingly as workload changes as a result of the proposed Community Service Officers (detailed below)</li><li>• Re-prioritize proactive patrol staff time to emphasize positive community engagement instead of “stop, question, and frisk”<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Embed this re-prioritization in the promotion process and in Compstat presentations</li></ul></li></ul>



# Recommendations: Acoustic Gunshot Detection

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>Acoustic gunshot detection is a drain on resources and does not contribute to public safety, but may benefit investigations</b>	<b>Critically evaluate patrol response to acoustic gunshot detection:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate the practice of a patrol responding to acoustic gunshot detection activations as a high priority call</li><li>• Collect and publish data on the utilization of acoustic gunshot detection systems as an investigative tools.</li><li>• Inform communities regarding where acoustic gunshot detection sensors are located (neighborhoods, business districts etc.)</li></ul>

# Recommendations: Intimate Partner & Family Violence

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Responses to IPV and family violence are led by police and front line assessments of the various types of family violence and IPV are conflated; follow up services are limited	<b>Establish a more robust, holistic response to IPV and family violence incidents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investigate a partnership with hospital or clinic-based childhood trauma teams to provide interventions to children who witness or experience violence</li><li>• Ensure appropriate holistic responses to both <b>family violence</b> and <b>intimate partner violence</b> and track service utilization and needs</li><li>• Form a stronger continuum of care by connecting CRU teams to existing service providers in order to facilitate responses in the field, wrap around services, and community outreach</li><li>• Develop an infrastructure to support victims of IPV who are not currently supported via existing services (men, transgender people, etc.)</li><li>• Investigate the creation of a Family Justice Center in the City (<b>long-term investment and goal</b>)</li><li>• Explore funding for additional services such as housing, relocation and rental assistance for victims of intimate partner violence</li><li>• Enhance collaboration efforts between existing service providers and local government to ensure a cohesive city response to intimate partner violence</li></ul>

# Recommendations: Community Engagement

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>A lack of coordinated and strategic community engagement by the City of St. Louis and the SLMPD</b>	<b>Create and publicly distribute a community engagement strategy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a clear community engagement strategy which outlines the purpose of each effort and the desired outcomes</li><li>• Whenever possible, evaluate the success of the effort and solicit feedback on what could be improved</li><li>• Focus on engaging the most vulnerable members (racial minorities, low-income communities, the unhoused population etc) of the St. Louis community and identifying ways to make providing feedback for these groups more convenient</li><li>• A greater focus on engaging community member and groups in the spaces they already operate in such as neighborhood association and community group meetings, schools, recreation centers etc.</li></ul>

# Recommendations: Opportunities for Youth

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>A lack of accessible, affordable youth programming that ensures children have a safe, supervised place to be during Out-of-School-Time</b>	<p><b>The City should expand and fund after-school and summer programs for youth:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Invest in new and existing after-school and summer programs, prioritizing neighborhoods with larger low-income populations</b></li><li>• <b>Ensure that programs are accessible to children</b> by providing need-based scholarships and safe, reliable transportation</li><li>• <b>Ensure that families are aware of available opportunities</b> by engaging parents and by creating a public guide listing all after- school and summer opportunities for St. Louis youth (including scholarship information)</li><li>• <b>Evaluate and measure the long-term impacts of youth participation in different types of after-school and summer programs</b> (e.g., functional literacy proficiency, social-emotional learning competencies, high school graduation rates, youth referrals to the criminal legal system)</li></ul>



# Recommendations: Public Safety Collaborative

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>There is an unfulfilled desire to shrink the footprint of policing and ensure that everyone who can play a role in public safety is able to play a role</b>	<b>Create a St. Louis Public Safety collaborative powered by RTMDX software:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Public Safety Collaborative would empower all stakeholders to do what they do best at places that need them most</li><li>• The collaborative would be powered by software which utilizes Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ RTM identifies the multiple issues which create opportunities for crime and offers public safety stakeholders the opportunity to proactively disrupt those opportunities</li><li>○ RTM synthesizes the data which already exists and uses the geography of a city to help pinpoint what areas of the city are at risk for crime or disorder</li><li>○ A collaborative powered by RTM would transfer of control of data and decision making around data from the Police to all stakeholders, including community</li></ul></li></ul>

Q & A



# Want to get involved?

CPE will be facilitating future events on the subject of public safety.

If your community group would like to participate, please contact:

Ronda Smith Branch

**[STLCommunity@policingequity.org](mailto:STLCommunity@policingequity.org)**



