

Nashua Community Conversation on Race and Justice
Honoring Diversity and Building Equity
May 21, 2015
Rivier University
Nashua, NH

What are some ways you feel we have worked well together?
Refugee, immigrant, racial difference, newcomer, language

Open to listening, sometimes no follow up
More cooperation within community – increase connection between City/Organizations.
More inclusive
People willing to work in community and share information
Police does excellent job, but has little interaction
Very little action, but have great respect for new Chief of Police – Has positive feeling from Chief
Everyone has to be on board from top to bottom – PAL, Citizen Academy important to chief and officers as well as community. Continue to build trust.
Honoring or having (hard to determine which word) people of color on NPD?
Great beginning – Recommends minority or Officers of Color to events for recruiting -
Making more visible the diversity
Flexible with anti-graffiti
Leadership
Two events in Nashua/Manchester/Rochester/Portsmouth DMC Communities
Diversity education at Police Academy
DMC program – three police departments (Nashua, Manchester, Rochester)
Neighborhood watches
Officers here overall giving out their direct phone numbers
Work well but can work much better together when we hear it's usually in paper
Hours with works primarily with problem areas
Well with community, but can work much better
More training to officers, Now more awareness today
Traffic accident, fire started, police came, acted calmly and professionally
Neighbor victim of domestic violence, police responded well and personally
Police officers interacting on a personal level with the community
Officers becoming more approachable
Officers are more available, community feels safer
Police becoming more knowledgeable on different culture and languages
All has a translation option, hospitals as well all languages
Nashua overall is safe and comfortable city
Certain areas typically get a bad reputation
Depending on where you live it is more dangerous, unsafe and police presence is wanted and needed
Perception is reality for some/all
Best example – community has helped with community watch, people call with concerns
Neighborhood watch is very good thing. Police office facilitates this. Alderman, Senator

go to these meetings. Ed Lucius does a good job.
PAL is run by volunteers and it is critical aspect of community
Bike patrol officers plays soccer and basketball with kids
Important to have officers interact with community. Many people do not see humanness
behind the uniform, which creates the stigma
Juvenile Disproportional minority community
Role playing with police and kids
Police officer very passionate about community
Community police at schools a great program in Nashua High Schools
Police on bikes is very important
Neighborhood watch and policing
School officers
Works well with children in the community
Outreach with the Hispanic community
Not out to “get people”
Great work with PAL
Solving problems directly
This community conversation is a great start
Open house at the police department
Shop with Cops
NPD does good job with racial and ethnic disparity groups
Diversity in Police force – Years ago, predominantly w/m now more mixed ethnic groups
Interactions with refugee community
Efficiency in PD
Come a long way in community as far as “White/Black” relations
Communication at times is good – Considerate
Diversity issues – Great cooperation for positivesness towards officers – good
communication
Cooperative work on creating positive Nashua graffiti (anti-graffiti – negative, gang)
Work disproportionate target of citizens (minority contact)
Good communication in graffiti program
Soup kitchen clients in crisis – many officers respond helpfully – trust in police to not
escalate problem
SROs work well with students in community
Foot patrols are a positive in the community. However, there may be fewer of them in the
future due to the budget and seniority – some officers will move up to higher
ranks. Takes some time to train them. Foot patrols tend to be slow in responding
which at times can be problematic.
Police Athletic League
Nashua Road Race
Police are fast
Brook Village neighborhood worked well with Joe Brown – Anything for community Joe
Brown – Officer Soucy has been big influence on son – Kevin Landry big part in
helping son get life together. Community Fun Day has brought awareness to the
community.
Police report when they have open house, people very receptive. During open house

discussions around how operations are run. The people don't always understand procedures. Officer reports that the full story is not really understood. When one officer does wrong – the entire force gets labeled. Not always fair.

NPD is currently working on graffiti issues in the city by connecting directly with the general public

Positive Street Act (PSA) is great non-profit that takes kids across the city and gives them positive, legal spaces for them to express their art

What are some ways we have not?

Reassurance of youth when stopped by an officer

Better communication

Interrogation practices

Illegal searches

Assumptions of guilt for certain people

Limited conversations of this type

History and conditioning that reinforces divisiveness

Under-recorded due to fear of police

Think about, “It’s not the message, it’s the delivery, especially with younger folks

Young African American youths – running (our – for a run) get stopped and asked to show ID but Caucasian youths do not

Nashua/NH has more resources for immigrant populations than there are for African Americans (U.S. citizens)

Friend – distrust of police because of harassment. Had previous discussions with P.O. facilitator was not receptive to input

Was not treated well in police custody

Kids don't have many choices (not much to do in Nashua, except Boys and Girls Club)

Communication

Mistaken identity

Cultural – Ethnic awareness – We can improve on communication on both sides (or by all parties involved)

Disrespect for police, threatening license suspension

French Hill area – established route – Police can get to know the residents. Spanish people were saying they were treated differently, not well, because they lived in a not so good neighborhood.

Kessler Farm area - Does not see very many police officers – very quiet area

Pine St – Tree Street – never bothered by police – There is always a police presence.

Elderly Spanish resident report that it is good there is a strong police presence because he fell and an officer was able to call for assistance

Meeting with residence at St. Louis Church – not successful because police were always defensive. Father Marcos thought something different had to be done. During Latino Festival – hot dogs given out – more cooperation now as the people started coming together

Language barrier –Police reports there are not many bilinguals on force – Minorities are in fear of police. Afraid to have contact with police because of language barrier. Ideally would be great if more officers spoke Spanish. Experience of Latino

woman – she drove without license. She went to court with pastor from her church. She had to do community service. Was not able to appear in court because she was hospitalized – woman did not speak any English. She asked if husband could o to next court date. The court said there were translators inside court. Very bad experience with authorities. Not able to express self or communicate with authorities. Because minorities not understanding cultural norms – there is misunderstanding. No translators were available
Nashua celebrated India Independence Day last year and plans to do so again this year. This event brought together the current Mayor, Governor Hassan and the Chamber President who all partnered with State Representative Latha Mangipudi to make the event happen

What would have made it more cooperative and collaborative?

Diversity training

More walking officers needed on the street to gain personal relationships with community
– not just bikes or patrol cars

Availability to talk to an officer about situation – Capt. Lenehan – ask to meet elsewhere to have a discussion

Change hiring policies (diversify)

Smile☺

Following up on compliant

More patrolling on foot

Us the people: Do more meetings (community)

Be polite

Saying “sorry”

Would like to see unwarranted searches stopped

Communities need to pull together and help each other to understand – It takes a village to pull everything together

Services in the community – i.e., PAL station makes a difference – Education is everything.

Officer talked about why when police pull someone over they might ask some in the car for their driver’s license and not ask others

There could be more proactive communication from police officers to those people they have pulled over, explaining the rationale behind the procedures they’re taking with those people

Our state DMV booklets are not available in languages other than Spanish and French

Our local DMV is not equipped/staffed to help immigrants easily apply and test for NH license

More diversity training necessary – currently given one year possibly

Communications

Assessing the situation before reacting and jumping to conclusions, needing to be more open minded

Flexing police officer style, not treating everyone the same. Younger officers needing o be less aggressive

Targeting the poor – homeless

Being more communicative (both parties)

Coming to a resolution before locking people up
Community coming together
Homeless hotline M-F, 9:00- 5:00

What do you believe makes it difficult?

Stigma associated with law enforcement and politicians can inhibit
Police officer brought up different ethnic groups have their ...**(NOT COMPLETE)**
Male/female privilege for safety sake
Growing up in a white community for ethnic minority
Rare viewpoint – Grow up in very poor upbringing. Real racism looks, difference
between ignorance and racism. Privilege is people in the front and socioeconomic
plays a big factor: ignorance, cronism, racism all plays a role
Socioeconomic has no barriers
Digitally it is easier to communicate at the same time segregating communities.
Information overload for young people.
Cultural difference
Communication
Sometimes both sides don't tell whole story
All the influences kids bombarded with bad influences. Positives are not that often.
Lack of trust, lack of communication
Lack of knowledge
“Hostile” officer during a call
Age difference (gap in generations)
Profiling
Misunderstandings
Fear (specifically when a young person is stopped, they may be terrified)
Poverty issues
Language differences
Assumptions that a crime is being committed to a person – Not committing a crime
Accused of having a gun when reaching for a driver registration
Former Chief of Police lied in front of everyone – Campbell didn't get arrested for being
drunk and running over ducks
Police feels dispatch isn't always good. Dispatchers are civilians – checklists?
There are too many cops (free time for harassing people)
Perception about disrespect for humans (Ferguson)
Police Commission assigned by panel independent of City Hall
There is a segment of our community that does not trust the police
Peer pressure
Policing in big cities is different than it used to be
Main problem –No training on culture/race – We are not the South
Less value in police and there is less to no pride of being a police
Integration in and out of stops
Kids and the relationship to the law
Previous Chief –Officers without integrity

History, Conditioning, Mistrust
Tactical experiences
Focus on negative situations
Driving while Black
Zero tolerance policies
SMC
Growing up mixed race people
Not enough resources for youth in trouble in NH
Drug court, Mental health court, Regular criminal court
Nashua over last 20 years has become more transient
Not enough opportunities for police to have conversations about race with people of color
The African American residents feel they are invisible to the city officials
Police seems to be more aware of Latino organizations than African American
Organizations
Racial profiling occurs here
It is difficult for a person of color to easily come and go
Immigrant – Language barriers – If 0 license, NPD gives ticket
Learning cultural differences
Pre-conceived notions on both ends
Being judgmental, close minded
Leniency towards different races
Consistency
Community contributing on inequalities

**What organizations, groups, or leaders do you think are or should be helping?
To build a better relationship between us – who should take the
responsibility? Education, health, media, spiritual, neighborhood, police
(PAL), etc.**

DMV, Police, School working together, Faith communities, Social groups
Pastors, Fathers (Catholic Churches)
Adult Learning Center, Church, PAL, Boys and Girls Club
Churches, Schools, Youth organizations, Citizens Academy, Neighborhood watch
meetings, VFW
Media Fairness, PAL, DMC, Youth Council
Nashua Labor Coalition
Churches and community leaders
Local entities should work together and translators should be more available
City government – those who represent the city should provide translators
Boys and Girls Club, PAL
Culture fest
Churches, PBU, DMC, Cultural connections, Boys and Girls Club, Citizens that want
peace and safety for everyone
Southern NH Outreach for Black Unity (OBU), Bridges as organizations, City noises
Police Athletic League (PAL)

Spanish Network (new name) – Important to communication, DMC to liaison with Sgt. Camacho, Communication with NFBC youth group, Two groups Neighborhood Watch/State Representative, A) Need for more focus on problem and budget, B) Neighborhood walker

ACLU wanting to be more present in Nashua, 12 step program/AA to step in and help with drunks and addicts, Bridges, Child Advocacy Center, Chief of Police being extremely accessible, Citizens Academy every year to be educated on what police officers do

What positive steps can we take to move us forward?

Risking your life, have conversation about race itself. If you are not able to have a conversation regarding race or privilege. Stereotyping race and privilege

Reading and conversation – check sources about information about racial bias

Police officer talked about diversity within NPD – changing human behavior

Breaking the cycle of poverty and early intervention

Community centers for safe places for children to grow up

Look for more similarity than differences. Patience with each other

Respecting a person and each other

Good first step starting this conversation

Set up appointment with police and Catholic Priests

Continuing conversation

Follow through

Dialogue – Keep it going

Giving people the opportunity to contact police officers directly

Publicize more

More community meetings

Open house, Citizens academy

Police to let us know the rules and regulations they have to work with

Building relationships important to try and have better relations

Asked about coming to elementary schools for visits? Positive impression with little kids. Bigger kids not so good 😊.

Educating people very important

Should be useful to have more community conversations with everyone. Young people 13 to 21 seem to have the most issues

Communication meetings (non-formal)

Community policing (business drop ins, introductions, etc.)

Communication

Working with schools, organizations, citizens academy, neighborhood watch meetings

Working within

Bring it to the neighborhood

Continue the community conversation events at other locations – Like Adult Learning

Center
Go around to the neighborhood and invite people to attend the events
Continue to communicate
A forum like this for high school students
More foot patrols
The community meeting is perfect. We need to bring this into the schools and to the younger people.
Providing a safe place for teens to open up and talk – schools – community churches – boys and girls club, etc. A safe place.
Intervention with parents and children to understand authority Help parents teach kids that police are not “the bad guys”. Don't threaten your children by threatening police will come and take you away – Teach to trust police – To respect them – Have conversations early to avoid present stereotypes – Police do go the extra mile many times
The city government should be representative of their communities
Follow through with NPD and the Community
Youth presence
Next time double the amount of time for the table conversations
Communicate what is procedure what is not
Trust in the police –give reasons
Hang out with the police
Posters for PSA in high volumes of tagging
Hear something do something say something
Continue the dialogue to work with others who want to fix issues
Use the system to resolve issues until the system shows it is unfair
Needs more exposure to police officers as a resource to make bridges
Don't leave this meeting without planning another session for conversations
Nashua Police website
OBU website
Volunteering with organizations like PAL
More mentoring by African Americans with youth – a more active mentoring role
Parenting
Involve clergy more and use them as community resources
Role play program- Kids play police officers and police officers play “punk kids”
Cookouts sponsored by OBU
Open Conversations –“Welcome to our world”
Be in the community more
Make contact with immigrant newcomer and establish relationship early to develop trust and open lines of communication
Continued discussion must follow – Frequency? Bi-Annual? Or Quarterly?
Being educated
Communication
Educating the youth
Communicating via social media
Making sure to show appreciation when situations are handled well

Other

Does the Nashua Police Department accept the National/International Driver's License?

Has there been more training for officers pertaining to people with mental health issues?

If you have a concern, put in formal complaint.

Leadership in department very important – some town very professional, others not

Being stopped, saves people

Language survival

Minorities similar to mental health

Nashua Strong

Very lovely to hear Chief Lavoie who is looking to ???

Community feels cops arrogant – Police who say “We can do whatever we want.” No

positive respect for PAL

People pat people down for their safety

Called in about bike path. There were a lot of people hanging around there near Palm.

Officer didn't know where it was – then two people killed there

Suggestion – All police in Nashua should have a business card that is handed to people after an encounter with police.

Sometimes people are randomly stopped for no reason. Let people know why they are being stopped – Good time to have a business card. People who get stopped late at night often get scared, but one participant said it's unlikely that you could tell the demographic of the occupant that late at night.

Tangent – Disagreement about what the worst thing that could happen at a traffic stop.

One person said, “You could just have to get out of the car.” Another person said, “There could be other things that happen too.”

Many people say they are nervous during traffic stops. However, the police say that politeness goes a long way.

The application process for police officers would be impacted if limited Spanish speaking applicant. Somebody asked why there are not more speakers of other languages.

Participant reports that the Spanish/other minorities don't understand protocol.

Law update for citizens - familiarization of law. Educate people about laws and norms –

Adult Learning Center/Nashua Library could help out with this – i.e., Driving rules – when drivers get stopped maybe a way to help explain – Service in place to help citizens that don't understand

Participant reports the uniform of police can be very intimidating. When she sees a uniformed police – automatically thinks something is wrong. Less intimidating when wearing more casual uniform. At Latino Festival officers were wearing polo shirts and khaki pants – Much less intimidating – Latino participants report the intimidation by uniforms – not approachable to citizens. Officers appear to be always “on duty”. Officer reports this is more likely by the newer officers.

Officer asked that “you get more/better results with honey than vinegar.”

What if businesses could put up a flyer designating their property as friendly space to talk or do murals?

Does NPD have cultural sensitivity training programs for trainees?

-Not at this moment

-These types of programs should be made available to all city departments, not just police

It is incumbent upon us to make sure immigrants understand differences between their home culture and ours

We are one

We are all people

Two African American officers, one Spanish, one Asian

Have there been efforts to reach out to other communities?

Racial profiling, but criminal profiling

Asked a friend – Nashua PD is going to stereotype only doing it to make themselves look better

You live in Nashua, you're going to jail for something small

Overly aggressive

How does NPD show relation with immigrant/Newcomers?

Perception is reality for some/all

Stereotyping is present in Nashua PD

Nashua has the potential to be a Ferguson or a Baltimore

People of color are told to modify and adjust their lives in order to not be profiled or stopped by police

Why are people of color targeted? Media propaganda plays a huge role in how officers see people of color

Goals – Get back to the old fashion way and have the police get out in the neighborhood and get to know their neighbors

Poverty creates crime and desperate situations amongst people in those high crime areas aka “Tree Streets”

Numbers in high crime areas at certain times lead to stopping and questioning people of color and other citizens in general