

Reimagine Policing Plan

Summary - April 2023



Vision

Based on best practices in police reform and extensive community feedback gathered over the past two years, the City of Boulder has created a bold Reimagine Policing Plan. It is abundantly clear that policing cannot continue as it has. This plan seeks to transform how police serve and engage with the community. The goal is to move the department from a traditional model of policing that relies heavily on enforcement after crime has occurred to one that centers holistic problem-solving. We reimagine a policing model that emphasizes crime prevention and community-based solutions.



This is a summary of the plan as of April 2023. A final plan is expected to be released this summer. This summary includes common themes heard from the community, key strategies the department plans to use to address the feedback, and a sampling of ways progress can be measured over time.



“My vision for Boulder is that the police serve as public safety ambassadors and work holistically with the community to solve and prevent problems. When the police show up, I want people to feel a sense of relief that help has arrived. The primary role of police should be to prevent community harm.”

-- Boulder Police Chief Maris Herold

Community Feedback

Core Values

Creating a safe community takes all of us. This plan recognizes that police play a significant, but not exclusive, role in achieving this outcome. The plan strives to enhance the ability of the department to meet these expectations. This value statement reflects the input of Boulder community members during engagement.

Key Goals

More specifically, the Boulder community told us they want their police department to implement transformative strategies to achieve these goals:

- Shift the policing focus to more meaningful and inclusive engagement and deeper partnerships with the community
- Ensure officer readiness and expertise to address emerging crime concerns and dangerous situations
- Treat all community members with dignity and respect; prevent over-reach and demonstrations, conscious or unconscious, of bias by officers
- Explore and implement, with the help of other city departments, alternative ways to respond to crisis; prioritize de-escalation over use of force
- Ensure that officers have the support and training they need to sustain their physical and emotional well-being so they can better serve the community

We feel safe in our community when:

- **We are all free to enjoy public and private spaces without fear of harm**
- **Laws are enforced equitably**
- **Police respond professionally and respectfully when we need them, but we have alternative and creative resources to address problems not suited to policing**
- **We demonstrate we are a compassionate community that supports the basic needs and the right to be free from crime for all community members**
- **Criminal behavior is met with accountability measures that are fair and just within policing and other systems, with opportunities for individuals to be supported in underlying issues**
- **Officers are part of the communities they serve, building relationships and understanding and addressing problems before having to step up enforcement and resort to force**

Central Strategy

Problem-solving and community-based crime prevention

The Reimagine Policing Plan includes many strategies. The most central of these is a fundamental shift in how officers serve and partner with community.

Historically (and currently), policing has been organized to respond to calls from the community. The model emphasizes responding and enforcing laws, often once a crime has occurred.

However, 40 years' worth of research demonstrates that responses to calls after a crime has occurred is unlikely to make the public safer.

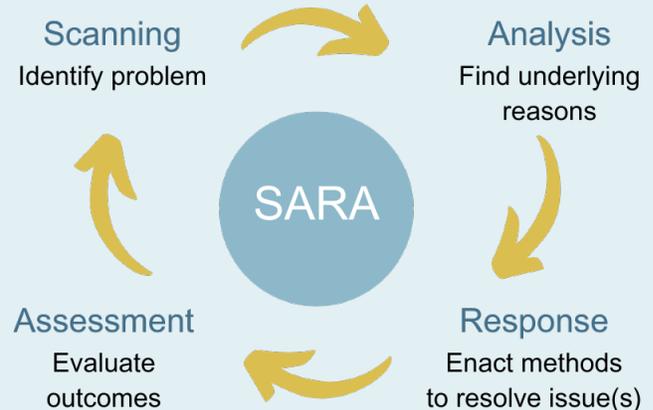
Problem solving within a holistic governance model has far greater promise for improving policing and meeting community needs than modifying the call-and-response system police use now.

This is why we are reimagining a police service for Boulder that focuses on community-based problem-solving that increases public safety, fosters trust, and prevents crime before it occurs.

The goal is to prevent harm through strong relationships and effective solutions, rooted in the actual public safety risks in Boulder. With a commitment to building trust, police will collaborate with impacted community members to address and solve problems that matter to them.

Success is not based on whether someone is arrested. Instead, success is measured by the prevention of harm and strength of ongoing relationships.

A Model for Change



Boulder police will use a problem-solving process called the SARA model. SARA stands for Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment.

Problems that respond best to this approach meet the following criteria:

- **Community** – The problem must be occurring within the community.
- **Harm** – There must be a tangible harm suffered by community members. This is the harm the problem solving effort will try to reduce.
- **Expectations** – There must be a current expectation that police need to be involved. At the same time, there is no expectation that police must continue dealing with the problem if there are alternatives.
- **Events** – Problems are made up of discrete incidents, such as assaults, injuries, car crashes, and drug overdoses.
- **Repeat** – It must be likely the event will occur again unless addressed. This is necessary because a one-off event, regardless of how serious, cannot be prevented. The model is designed to prevent future harms.
- **Similarity** – The repeating events must have common characteristics. They all may occur at the same address, for example, or they may all involve the same type of victim.



Individuals impacted by a problem will have a voice in how to solve the problem. They are also likely to have some of the best ideas.



Case Study: Reducing catalytic converter thefts at the Table Mesa Park-n-Ride

Boulder police applied this problem-solving model to an issue that was occurring at the Table Mesa Park-n-Ride garage. Because of its easy access and the fact that many cars were left unattended for long periods, the garage was being hit with frequent thefts of catalytic converters - an important and valuable car part.

First, the department **scanned** the problem to determine if it met the criteria for holistic problem-solving. After officers determined the thefts were indeed a problem, BPD worked with the Regional Transportation District (RTD) to conduct **analysis**: learning how the problem arose, as well as processes and loopholes that were contributing to it. Then, BPD entered the **response** phase. Officers built stronger relationships with RTD partners and together identified multiple pathways to addressing the problems. These included more signage, lighting, cameras, patrols by both police and security, and more activity that made the site less attractive to criminals. While assessments are ongoing, there has been a 27% reduction in monthly calls for service since these actions were taken.

Companion Strategies

The central strategy is expected to impact all the goals our community identified. Other strategies apply more specifically to particular goals, so these are organized to reflect the goal they apply to most.

COMMUNITY GOAL: Shift the policing focus to prevention and collaboration

- Develop and implement a new staffing model that ensures that calls for service can be covered while the department transitions to an approach that emphasizes prevention
- Implement regular meetings and problem-solving workshops (start with three neighborhoods meeting monthly and add three more each year)
- Strengthen relationships and trust with organizations that support groups disproportionately impacted by policing
- Create and commit to a youth engagement program
- Leverage the Police Oversight Panel to provide feedback on training needs and policy updates, as called for in city code; create opportunities for other interested community members to participate in hiring processes and demos of new technology to provide feedback
- Develop and adequately resource consistent citywide engagement opportunities, such as summer evening food truck visits with the chief, forums to talk about policing reform, ride-alongs, community member academies, etc.

COMMUNITY GOAL: Effectively respond to crime and dangerous situations

- Enhance data collection and analysis capabilities so police and community have a better understanding of crime trends across the city; share this data through online tools
- Update criteria for use of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT team) and produce annual data on how often the team was called out
- Conduct civil disturbance training with a goal of giving officers a wider range of options for protests, riots, etc.
- Partner with external organizations that can augment local resources, with agreements that reflect the Boulder context and expectations if local and state or federal laws conflict
- Measure de-escalation tactics used in critical incidents



COMMUNITY GOAL: Treat all community members with dignity and respect; prevent over-reach and bias by officers

- Conduct best practice bystandership training with all officers to equip them to intervene if a fellow officer is responding inappropriately
- Publish results of stop and arrest analysis that is currently underway; work with community to set reasonable targets; disaggregate data by race and ethnicity; and conduct ongoing analysis to flag areas where numbers and data exceed standards
- Develop and track a consistent set of officer performance metrics that includes data around use of force, community member complaints and commendations, problems solved, directed patrols, and quality of interactions
- Continue participation in racial equity and bias/micro-aggression trainings with a requirement that all current employees complete training and all new employees receive training within their first year on the job
- Recruit and retain a diverse workforce, with a goal of women officers representing 30 percent of the department roster by 2030, and developing and meeting targets for hiring based on other identities, including race and ethnicity
- Form a department Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team to evaluate policies, practices, budget, etc. using the city's Racial Equity Instrument
- Continue to participate in evolving oversight processes with the city's Independent Monitor and Police Oversight Panel

Companion Strategies

COMMUNITY GOAL: Explore and implement alternative forms of response for individuals in crisis; prioritize de-escalation over use of force

- Continue collaboration with Housing and Human Services Department to respond to mental health and social service needs with clinicians through the Crisis Intervention Response Team (CIRT)
- Launch and evaluate the CARE program with the Housing and Human Services and Fire-Rescue Departments to dispatch certified counselors instead of officers in appropriate cases
- Lean into successful Homeless Outreach Team model and continue to partner with the Public Spaces Reclamation Team to address issues related to unsanctioned camping
- Fully implement and enforce updated use of force policies
- Administer best practices de-escalation and sanctity of human life training; track use of force incidents and themes and share annually with the community
- Implement community de-briefs of police response to calls that have a high impact, such as shelter in place or evacuation orders, or result in serious injury or death to officers and/or community members

COMMUNITY GOAL: Ensure that officers have the support and training to sustain their physical and emotional well-being

- Develop, with regional partners including CU Boulder, a Boulder Police Academy, which will focus on evidence and best practices in policing.
- Increase leadership training for executive, command and supervisor-level positions
- Continue revamp of Training Unit and develop evaluation measures for all police training
- Work with city's Fleet and Facilities Department to evaluate space and building needs in coordination with planning efforts around a West and East campus concept
- Leverage emerging technology, including drones, cameras, cell phone streaming, and robotic tools, that can reduce risks by giving officers critical information or performing tasks that would otherwise require in-person response
- Increase the department's employee wellness budget to build upon recent advancements in Peer Support, Employee Assistance, and cardiac wellness programs

Tracking Our Progress

You asked:

*"How will we know the plan is working?"
"What will be different?"*

Here are some of the ways we'll determine, together, whether we're headed in the right direction over time.

PROBLEM-SOLVING BECOMES FOCUS

1

- Department tracks problems solved
- Percentage of time officers engage with community increases -- goal is at least 40%; 2022 average was 26%
- Number of arrests is no longer the measure of success

TARGETED CRIMES DECLINE

5

- Annual decrease of 10% in motor vehicle theft and burglaries
- Consistent or lower than benchmark cities in reported crimes against people
- Arrests numbers decline as problem-solving techniques are introduced

WORKFORCE IS MORE DIVERSE

2

- 30% female officers by 2030
- Increase in number of bi-lingual officers
- Continued efforts to recruit from varied identities, experiences and previous careers; BPD will share this info yearly

DE-ESCALATION & REDUCED USE OF FORCE

6

- All officers are trained in sanctity of life model
- 80% of officers are current in crisis intervention and bystandership trainings
- Percentage of use of force cases compared to calls decreases

TRANSPARENCY & QUALITY THROUGH METRICS

3

- Recruits are participating in locally run academy with training aligned to metrics
- Internal dashboard is created to track officer performance
- Supervisors assess officers based on agreed upon metrics; department flags disparities

COMMUNITY VOICE IS HEARD, MATTERS

7

- Community members complete random audits, rating interactions with officers
- Chief shares letters of appreciation BPD receives with officers and public
- Police actively participate in oversight processes to address complaints

DEPARTMENT ADDRESSES BIAS

4

- BPD consistently tracks stop and arrest data; info is disaggregated by race, ethnicity
- 80% of employees are current in all trainings to recognize and reduce bias and micro-aggressions
- Supervisors address suspected bias

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE INCREASES

8

- Crisis Intervention Response Team clinicians respond with officers to an increasing percentage of calls each year
- City starts CARE program, which sends clinicians instead of officers, and achieves target percentage of calls each year

Did you know?

Boulder Police officers averaged 85 hours in general training in 2022, plus 39 hours in skills training. The state requires 24 hours a year with 12 of these in specific skills.

BPD hired 29 new officers last year.

BPD has two officers with PhD's, a dozen officers with Master's degrees, and one officer with a law degree.

BPD has a goal of having 30% of its sworn staff be females by 2030. Women currently make up 20 percent of the force and 16 percent of leadership -- the highest rates in Colorado.

BPD hires officers with unique life perspectives including individuals who grew up in Brazil, Germany, England, and Guam, as well as officers with previous work experience in mental health, construction, middle school education, and more.



Share your feedback!

Boulder City Council is expected to consider adopting the full version of the Reimagine Policing Plan at an upcoming session this summer. More information is available at <https://tinyurl.com/5f48kc3t>. Please contact council and city staff with your input by visiting: <https://tinyurl.com/r99vrhzh>.

Budget

Initial estimates to fully implement the Reimagine Policing plan include \$1.77 million in one-time expenditures and \$3.89 million in ongoing costs phased in over five years.

The Police Department is exclusively funded by the city's general fund, except for some limited grant funds. As such, the department must rely on general fund revenue unless the city passes a dedicated tax supplement.

Additional funding will be necessary in other departments, such as Housing and Human Services, to support the plan.

City Council typically considers several levels of funding when adopting plans such as these, taking into account the possibility of phasing in the work if the budget is constrained.

