



ADVISORY COMMISSION ON POLICING

August 14, 2025

Chief Marc R. Yamada
Montgomery County Police Department
J. Thomas Manger Public Safety Headquarters
100 Edison Park Drive Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Re: Recommendations for Revising FC-210, Department Mission and Organizational Values

Dear Chief Yamada:

The Advisory Commission on Policing (ACP) applauds your initiative to revise outdated department policies and incorporating public input to ensure that MCPD policies align with the needs and expectations of our community. In that spirit, we offer the following comments regarding FC-210.

FC-210 was last updated well before Montgomery County efforts to align local policing with the County's aspirations for racial equity and social justice.ⁱ Therefore, FC-210 should be revised to establish Policing by Consent, the concept that informs policing in modern democracies, as the philosophical underpinnings for the department's organizational culture. In Policing by Consent, police officers understand that they exercise their powers to police their fellow citizens with the implicit consent of the community they serve, and their legitimacy in the eyes of the public is based upon a consensus of support that follows from transparency about their powers, their integrity in exercising those powers, and their accountability for doing so.ⁱⁱ In other words, the police are "citizens in uniform;" that the primary duty of the police is to the public; and that the use of force is a last resort.

The principal manifestation of Policing by Consent in the United States is Community Policing, which dates back more than three decades ago and has been etched in the Montgomery County Code.ⁱⁱⁱ The US Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing defines it as a "philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety."^{iv} Community policing started with an emphasis on tactics, such as foot patrol, neighborhood watch, and community meetings or newsletters, but evolved to include collective efficacy and empowerment; procedural justice and legitimacy; and efforts to increase police accountability through citizen review boards, body-worn cameras, and improved complaint processes.^v This means that, to be

effective, Community Policing cannot be implemented unilaterally. Rather, it has be part of a collaborative effort that reconciles MCPD efforts to change the public’s perception with the community’s desire to change police behaviors.^{vi}

The proliferation of high-powered, semi-automatic guns and terror attacks in recent decades, however, led police departments across the country to put a premium on tactical skills, SWAT teams, and military equipment. Though not formally taught, the “Warrior” mindset became ingrained in the culture of police departments through training that overemphasized hypervigilance and potential threats over relationship building and public safety. To the detriment of community policing efforts, officers were increasingly perceived as more of an occupying force than fellow citizens empowered by the community to protect the public. At the beginning of the decade, communities pushed back, and to meet this expectation MCPD must actively seek to divest itself of any vestiges of the “Warrior” mindset within its ranks and promote a “Guardian” culture that restores the balance between officer safety and relationship building, law enforcement and public safety.^{vii}

SPECIFIC COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Policy: FC-210 policy should make clear that MCPD’s mission, vision, and organizational values articulate the expectations of the department and the community it serves. It is a foundational policy and a guide that frames MCPD’s organizational culture and informs other MCPD policies detailing expectations for the behavior of all department members.^{viii}

Mission Statement: The mission statement should frame its law enforcement objectives in the context of the broader goal of public safety. This means that MCPD implements its mission in coordination and collaboration with other county agencies as part of a whole-of-county-government approach to advance the well-being of the general public.^{ix}

Organizational Values: The articulation of MCPD organizational values, those fundamental principles and beliefs that guide MCPD’s behavior and shape its culture, should explicitly reflect the core principles of Policing by Consent and Community Policing, promoting the role of police officers as defenders, protectors, and keepers of the community, prioritizing the safety and well-being of citizens, including those most vulnerable.^x

We hope you find our input useful and look forward to seeing the revised policy.

Sincerely,

Rev. Brian Bellamy
Chair, Advisory Commission on Policing

CC: Montgomery County Council
Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission

ⁱ See Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) report at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rps/Resources/Files/reports/rps-task-force-recommendations-report.pdf>, Police Accountability Act (PAA) at <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0670/?ys=2021rs> And Effective Law Enforcement for All (ELEFA) at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rps/Resources/Files/reports/ELEFA-MCPD-FullReport-v7.pdf>

ⁱⁱ For a more complete explanation of Policing by Consent see Government of the United Kingdom, Definition of policing by consent, December 10, 2012, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-by-consent/definition-of-policing-by-consent>, see also Watts, Dom, What is Policing by Consent? at [https://ministryofjustice.co.uk/what-is-policing-by-consent/#:~:text=Policing%20by%20consent%20is%20a,Rowan%20and%20Sir%20Richard%20Mayne\).](https://ministryofjustice.co.uk/what-is-policing-by-consent/#:~:text=Policing%20by%20consent%20is%20a,Rowan%20and%20Sir%20Richard%20Mayne).)

ⁱⁱⁱ See Community policing guidelines in Montgomery County Code, Chapter 35-Police; Section 35-6A (b).

^{iv} U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Community Policing Defined, 2014, <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p157-pub.pdf>

^v While there are different conceptualizations of community policing, some common elements emerge from the literature:

An emphasis on partnerships: Community policing posits that the police can rarely solve public safety problems alone; therefore, law enforcement should develop partnerships with community stakeholders (e.g., other government agencies, community members, nonprofit organizations/service providers, businesses, and the media) to develop solutions to problems and promote trust in police.

Citizen input: Under community policing, law enforcement should engage the public in making decisions about public safety priorities, addressing identified problems, and making decisions about how their communities should be policed. In addition, the police should carefully consider citizen input when making policy decisions that affect the community.

A focus on prevention and problem solving: Community policing promotes proactive efforts to address conditions that are contributing to public safety problems rather than responding to crime after it occurs. One of the more commonly cited problem-solving models in the community policing literature is SARA (scanning, analysis, response, and assessment). Scanning involves identifying and prioritizing problems. Analysis involves researching what is known about the problems. Response includes developing solutions to permanently reduce the number and extent of the problems. Assessment involves evaluating the success of the response to the identified problems.

Officer assignments: One of the key tenets of community policing is a focus on long-term geographic assignments. This means assigning officers to a place (i.e., a specific beat) for an extended period of time to facilitate interactions between the officers and residents and foster a sense of mutual accountability for what happens in the neighborhood.

Fostering positive interactions: Policing involves some negative or coercive interactions with members of the public, such as making arrests, issuing tickets, stopping people based on reasonable suspicion, or ordering people to desist disruptive behavior. As such, under community policing law enforcement also works to develop ways to have positive interactions with the public. The theory is that positive interactions can help offset the negative interactions, foster a sense of familiarity and trust, and allow police officers to become more knowledgeable about people and conditions on their beat.

Organizational change: Community policing emphasizes the need for flatter organizations (i.e., reduced layers of hierarchy) and decentralized authority. These changes are necessary so that officers can act more independently, be more responsive to their communities, and take responsibility for their roles in community policing. In addition, management should empower officers to be proactive and creative in solving public safety problems and developing relationships with the community. Community policing also places an

emphasis on organizational culture, mission, and values, and less emphasis on rules and policies, with the idea that if officers are instilled with certain values they will generally make good decisions. Evaluations of officers' performance should be based on the quality of their community policing and problem-solving activities instead of traditional performance indicators (e.g., tickets issued, arrests made, calls handled). *Access to information*: Community policing relies on collecting and producing data on a range of police functions—not just enforcement and call-handling activities—as a means to developing solutions to community problems and providing citizen-focused services. Community policing also emphasizes the need for police to conduct crime analysis at a more localized level (e.g., a neighborhood) so that officers can identify and respond to problem hotspots.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime and Communities* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2018), p. 64-65

^{vii} Stoughton, Seth, “Law Enforcement’s ‘Warrior’ Problem” in *Harvard Law Review*, Volume 128 Issue 6, April 2015 at <https://harvardlawreview.org/forum/vol-128/law-enforcements-warrior-problem/> Researchers found that the warrior mentality often leads to more use of force, making it more likely that the officer or the citizen gets injured. Officers who scored higher on the guardian measure were more likely to value communication, while higher scores on the warrior measure revealed greater importance of physical control and more favorable attitudes toward excessive use of force. See Florida State University. “Data-driven evidence on warrior vs. guardian policing.” *ScienceDaily*, 26 February 2019. At www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/02/190226155011.htm

^{viii} See University of North Texas University Policy Office, “The Purpose of Policies,” at <https://policy.unt.edu/purpose-policies>

^{ix} Public safety refers to the well-being and security of the general public, encompassing protection from various threats, such as like crime, accidents, health emergencies, and natural disasters. It is primarily the responsibility of governmental agencies, such as law enforcement, fire departments, emergency services, and public health officials, to ensure the safety and security of communities.

^x Organizational values are the fundamental principles and beliefs that guide an organization's behavior and culture, shaping its decision-making and actions. They serve as a moral compass, defining what the organization stands for and how it operates, both internally and externally.