



2023 Community Engagement Session Analysis

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. METHODOLOGY	3
3. KEY FINDINGS	5
3.1. USE OF FORCE SESSIONS	6
3.2. STOPS, SEARCHES, CITATIONS, AND ARRESTS SESSIONS.....	8
3.3. MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY/IMPARTIAL POLICING SESSIONS.....	10
4. LEARNINGS AND ACTIONS TO CONSIDER	12
4.1. POLICY (32%).....	13
4.2. TRAINING (22%)	13
4.3. ACCOUNTABILITY (21%)	13
4.4. ENGAGEMENT (19%).....	14
4.5. COMMUNITY EDUCATION (16%).....	14
5. CONCLUSION	14

1. Introduction

In August and September 2023, the Minneapolis Police Department conducted a series of nine community engagement sessions to receive feedback and guidance on policy changes. These sessions were aimed at fostering a productive dialogue between law enforcement and the diverse communities they serve. The Department utilized DeYoung Consulting as facilitators and notetakers for these sessions to encourage conversations and capture community thoughts and opinions.

The nine sessions were broken apart in groupings of three sessions each and focused on unique topic areas. The first set of sessions focused on Use of Force policies. The second set focused on Stops, Searches, Citations, and Arrests (SSCA). The final set of this round of sessions focused on the Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals and Non-Discriminatory/Impartial Policing. These sessions were hosted at several locations across the city to ensure community members from different walks of life could converge to share their stories, grievances, and visions for a safer and more inclusive Minneapolis.

This analysis delves into the wealth of information gathered during these sessions, offering an in-depth examination of the themes, concerns, and aspirations voiced by the community. As we navigate the findings, it becomes evident that these critical pieces of feedback not only unearth challenges for the Department and trials suffered by the Community, but also unveil opportunities and moments of greatness that will spur transformative change within law enforcement practices, ensuring a more responsive, and community-centric approach by the MPD.

2. Methodology

Utilizing nine community engagement sessions across multiple Minneapolis neighborhoods, the Minneapolis Police Department worked to ensure a broad spectrum of individuals that live, work, or play in Minneapolis. The sessions, while conducted by the Department, were facilitated by DeYoung Consulting Services: a certified minority-owned business focused on providing training, organizational development, evaluation, and outreach and communication services working with various types of institutions.

Each two-hour session shared a common agenda format, where leadership from the MPD, such as Chief Brian O'Hara, Assistant Chief Christopher Gaiters, and Commander Yolanda Wilks, would introduce the session's primary topic. Dr. Raj Sethuraju, an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice from Metro State University, would provide his thoughts and commentary to help spur the conversation. He utilized his over twenty years of community-based activism to help attendees achieve the proper headspace to have a productive discussion. The lead facilitator would then remind participants of the purpose and ground rules for these discussions before breaking them into smaller groups each led by a facilitator and accompanied by a notetaker, who would transcribe these notes. Both the facilitator and notetakers were provided by DeYoung, and not part of the MPD.

The MPD broke apart the nine sessions into three groups that covered: 1) Use of Force, 2) Stops, Searches, Citations, and Arrests, and 3) Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals and Non-Discriminatory/Impartial Policing. Each of these topic areas received three sessions each. At the conclusion of these sessions, DeYoung Consulting provided the MPD with copies of all the notes transcribed during these sessions for analysis.

The MPD utilized its newly formed Implementation Unit, a primarily civilian team, to analyze these notes over the coming weeks. During this time, the Unit members worked tirelessly to catalogue and identify potential action items from over the forty-five hundred pieces of feedback received. At no point was any portion of the feedback notes disregarded, and each piece of feedback was read and reviewed by multiple members of the Unit. The Unit

operated on the following timeline to accomplish the large task of entering, cataloging, and analyzing the provided data:

Primary Step	Secondary	Assigned	Reviewed and Entered
Review and Enter Use of Force Notes	1 st Session	Sept. 29 th	Oct. 3 rd
	2 nd Session	Oct. 4 th	Oct. 10 th
	3 rd Session	Oct. 11 th	Oct. 16 th
Review and Enter Stop, Search, Citation, and Arrest Notes	1 st Session	Oct. 17 th	Oct. 20 th
	2 nd Session	Oct. 23 rd	Oct. 27 th
	3 rd Session	Oct. 30 th	Nov. 3 rd
Review and Enter Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, & Non-Discriminatory Policing Notes	1 st Session	Nov. 6 th	Nov. 10 th
	2 nd Session	Nov. 13 th	Nov. 17 th
	3 rd Session	Nov. 20 th	Dec. 1 st
Data Integrity/Analysis		Sept. 29 th	Dec. 8 th
Session Analysis Findings White Paper		Dec. 11 th	Jan. 8th

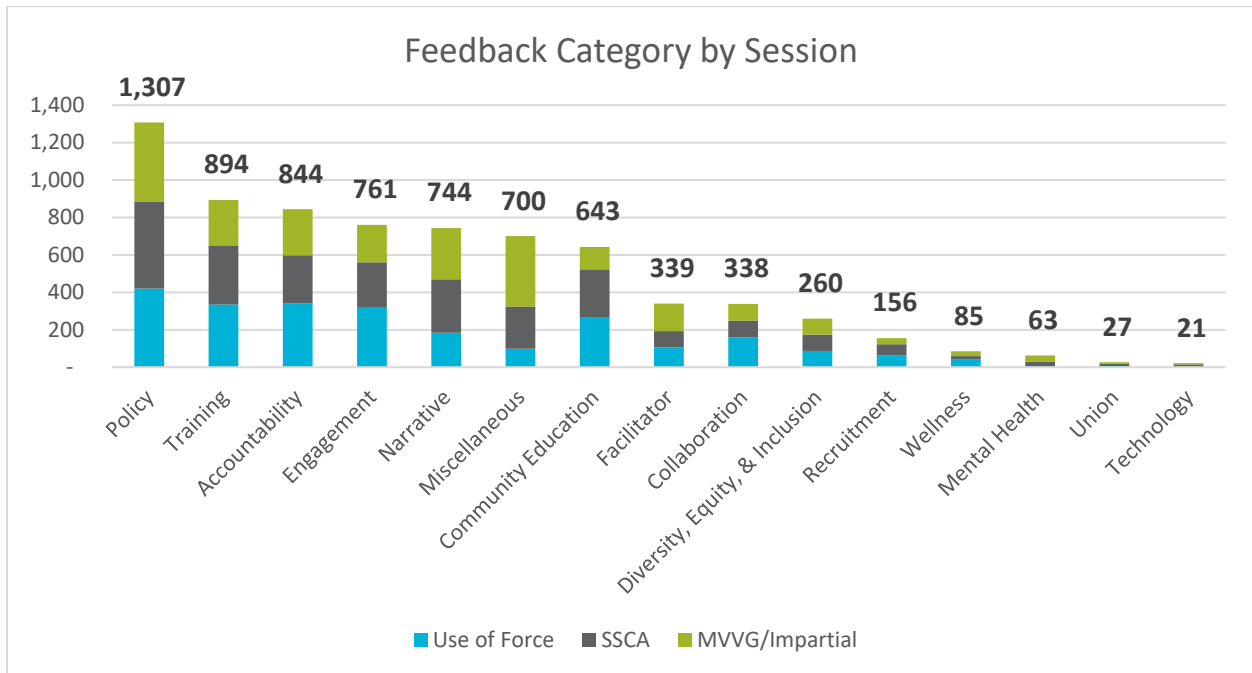
The Unit utilized both qualitative and quantitative measures where possible to guide the findings and potential action items to consider. Regardless, if an action item could be prescribed to a piece of feedback, the Unit made sure all pieces of feedback were read, analyzed, and where possible, incorporated into future policy amendments, and will continue to do so.

To catalogue the pieces of feedback garnered, the Implementation Unit sorted pieces of feedback into the following primary topic areas, allowing each piece of feedback to be tagged into multiple areas:

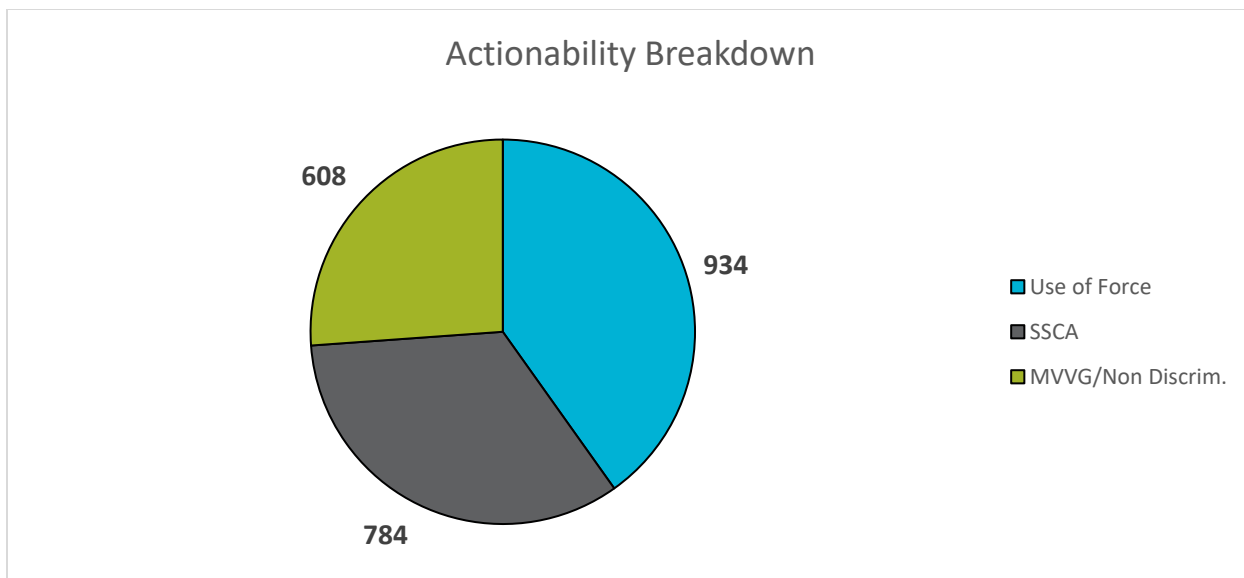
- **Accountability:** ways to improve officer oversight or holding individuals responsible
- **Collaboration:** focused on ways to solve these problems together through partnerships
- **Community Education:** improving community knowledge around policing, MPD resources, and MPD practices
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** comments focused on improving cultural sensitivity and empathy or general DEI efforts
- **Engagement:** ways MPD can or should engage with the community
- **Facilitator:** comments from the facilitator that were reiterating or asking a clarifying question
- **Mental Health:** feedback around the mental wellbeing of both community members and officers
- **Miscellaneous:** comments that were off topic or unrelated, such as a participant saying “Sorry” to another participant
- **Narrative:** a story or personal experience from a community member
- **Policy:** feedback that contained a policy recommendation or sentiment about an existing policy
- **Recruitment:** ways the Department should consider its recruitment efforts and the types of officers the MPD should be recruiting
- **Technology:** feedback around the use of technology in providing policing services
- **Training:** suggestions or comments about the type and quality of training for officers
- **Union:** commentary about the Police Federation and the impact the Union has on Minneapolis policing
- **Wellness:** feedback focused on improving the officer safety net to ensure they are cared for

3. Key Findings

Utilizing these definitions, in the below table, “Feedback Category by Session”, the Unit found the sessions were well focused on the policy discussion overall with training, accountability, and engagement following. We notice that the use of stories to communicate the community members’ sentiment about policing was also used to a great extent.



In an attempt to extract action items from the feedback received, the Department was able to identify over two thousand pieces of feedback containing a request of the Department. The Implementation Unit took measures to find actions being requested of the Department, even if it wasn’t overtly stated or was nestled in an individual’s experience or story. In the below, “Actions Identified in Feedback,” we learned that the greatest demand for action is likely within the Department’s Use of Force policy, followed by the Stops, Searches, Citations, and Arrests. It is also likely easiest for the community to communicate and for the Department to receive the feedback in the first two categories because they are the most tangible and real to community members.



Nestled within these action items, we identified that community driven policing is a common theme and request of members. In the below word cloud, we see the same theme categories rise to the top of actions the Department should consider.

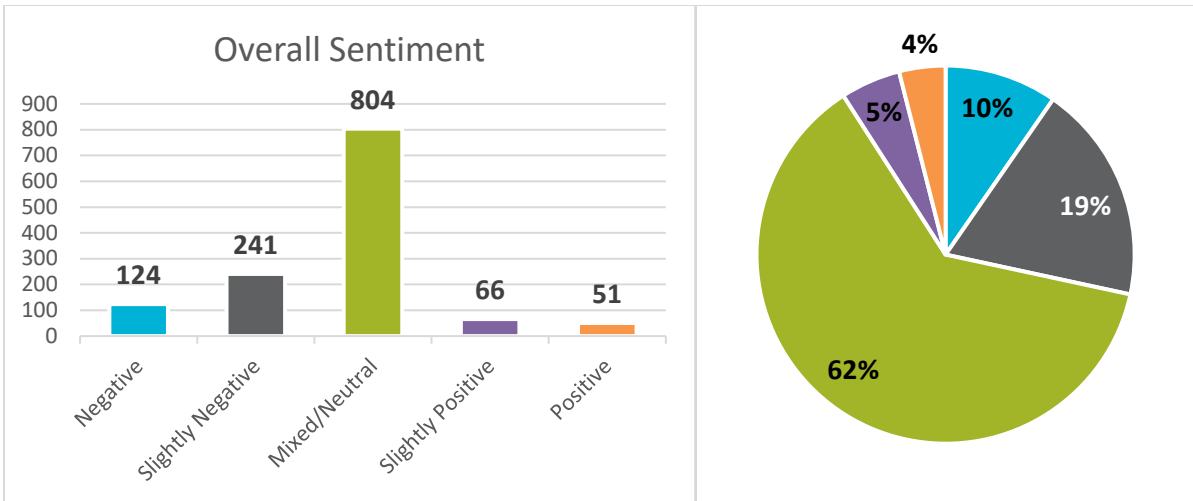


It is important to notice that central to improving the Department is the support and engagement with the community to allow their guidance in becoming one they deserve and can be proud of.

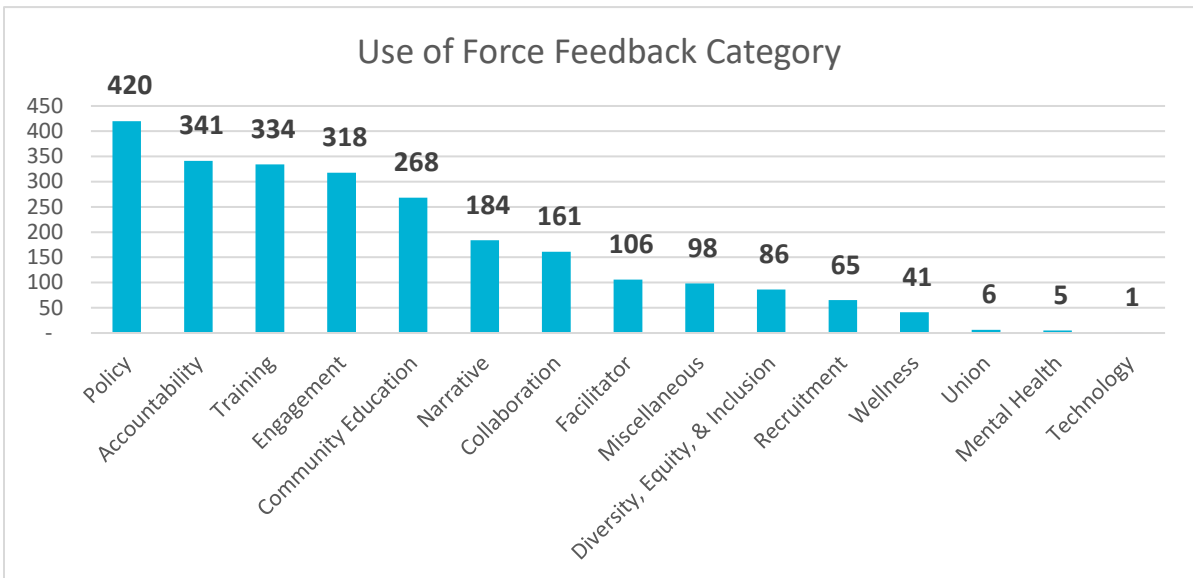
3.1. Use of Force Sessions

During the Use of Force sessions, the community provided over eight hundred pieces of feedback that could lead to an action item for the Department to consider out of slightly under thirteen hundred received.

The Use of Force section had a negative to positive ratio of approximately 3 to 1 highlighting the negative perception of the MPD by the community members that attended these sessions. This highlights the long path the Department has in rebuilding community trust and perception of their services, but it is also notable that a significant portion of feedback had a more neutral tone.



Like the overall findings, the Use of Force Sessions had a resounding focus on improving policy, ensuring accountability, providing credible training, and additional routes for engagement.



One community member stated, “Sometimes I try to speak with them, and I look at every officer’s badge. Everyone of them that acts like they’re too good to speak to me” ~8/19 Session. This community member desires the officer to engage and acknowledge them and their humanity, a critical area to improve.

Another member found the Department lacking in providing appropriate safety support. This member stated, “Wanting to help people when they do something wrong they need to do better because at this point. [...] It is kind of just this repeat of this very privileged people get the law fair and other get screwed. [...] I had a suicide attempt a firefighter, a emt, and six police officers and ignore the scene behind me [...]. It felt like there were more police than EMT. When I wanted them to do their job I feel like they did not. [...] I feel silenced and quiet..” 8/15 Session.



Community members placed a strong emphasis on holding officers accountable, reviewing policies, ensuring transparency in actions, and having appropriate oversight mechanisms. Attendees also encouraged a focus on training and education, in particular elements of de-escalation, implicit biases, community engagement, and alternative approaches to policing.

Central to these alternative approaches would be community engagement and collaboration, a prominent theme. Members are asking the Department to prioritize engagement with communities to build trust and appreciate the effort involving members in this feedback process but desired more officer input at these sessions. Members also are advocating for additional diversity, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity efforts as it relates to use of force and making sure they are incorporated in the MPD decision making process.

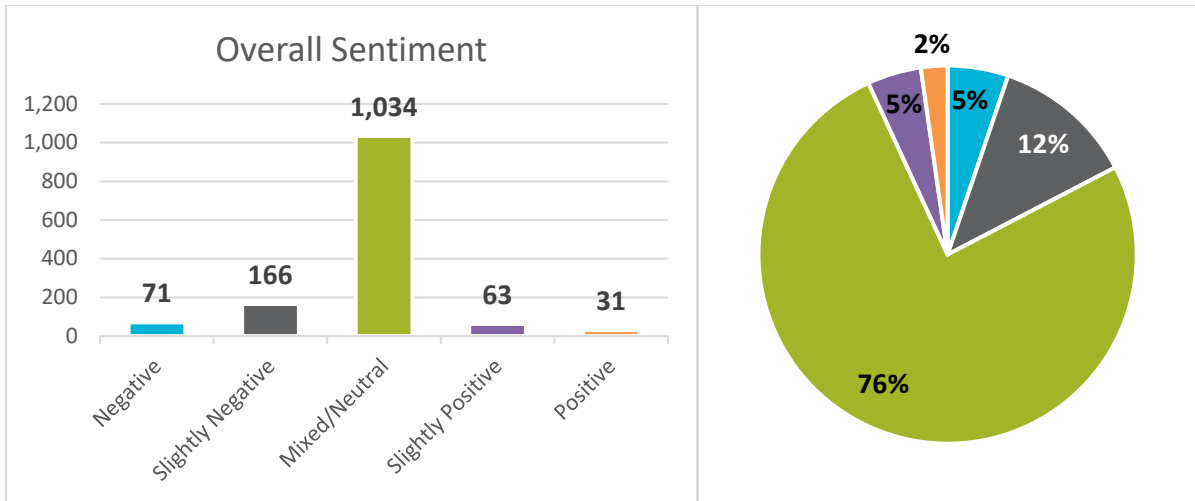
As part of this decision-making process, not only should officer safety and wellbeing be respected, but also those they are interacting with. Attendees found that alternatives to traditional policing, such as community-based alternatives and increased emphasis on de-escalation and other less than lethal interventions.

A final theme consolidated around the response to incidents and the aftermath of critical incidents and the amount of trauma those events cause on community members. Attendees found that having strong post-incident protocols, rights for victims, support systems for affected parties, and a transparent review process is vital. The ethical and procedural integrity is important in all interactions, but even more so in these moments.

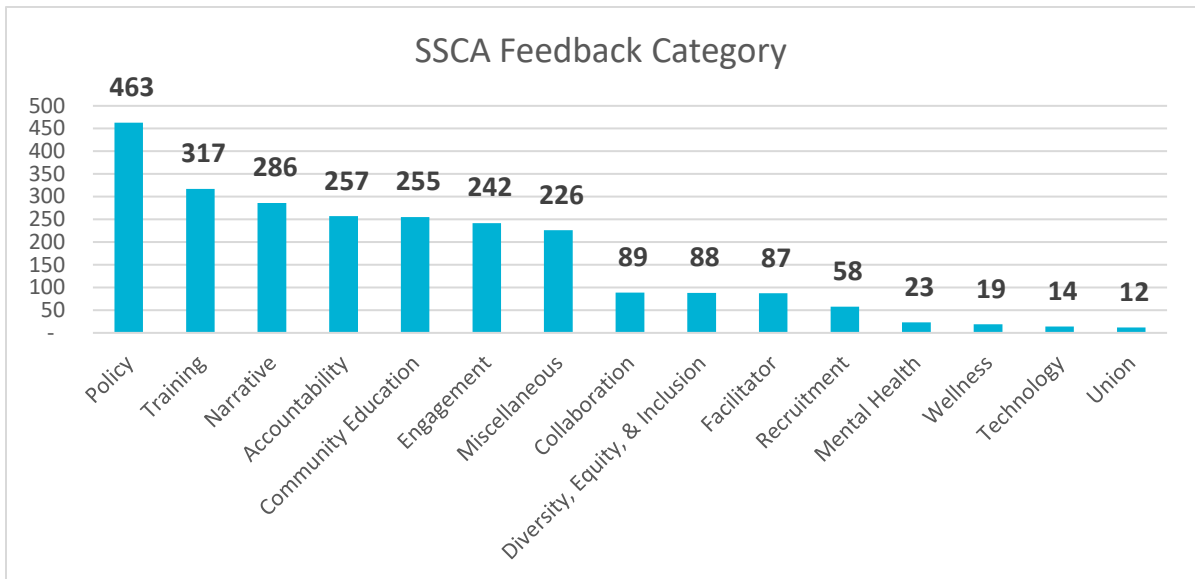
3.2.Stops, Searches, Citations, and Arrests Sessions

During the Stops, Searches, Citations, and Arrests sessions, the community provided over seven hundred pieces of feedback that could lead to an action item for the Department to consider out of slightly under fourteen hundred received.

The SSCA section had a negative to positive ratio of approximately 2.5 to 1 highlighting the negative perception of the MPD by the community members that attended these sessions; but a slightly more positive ratio when compared to Use of Force. While it’s a slight improvement comparatively, there still is a long path the Department has in rebuilding community trust and perception around this area.



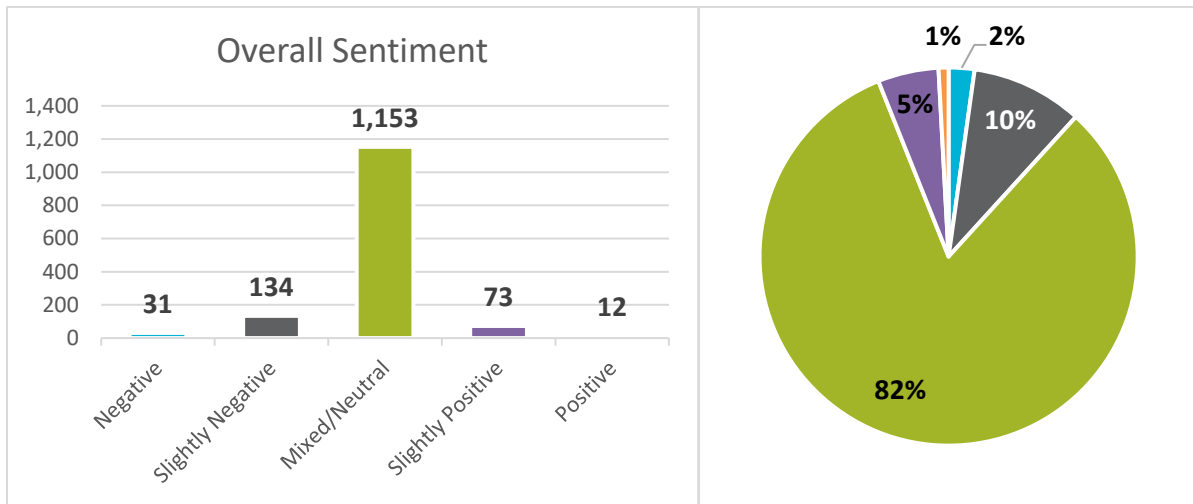
Like the overall findings, the SSCA had a resounding focus on improving policy, enhancing training, and improving officer accountability. Unlike the overall, we see a much stronger inclusion of narrative storytelling compared to the overall likely signaling the larger number of individuals that have been impacted by the MPD in this area.



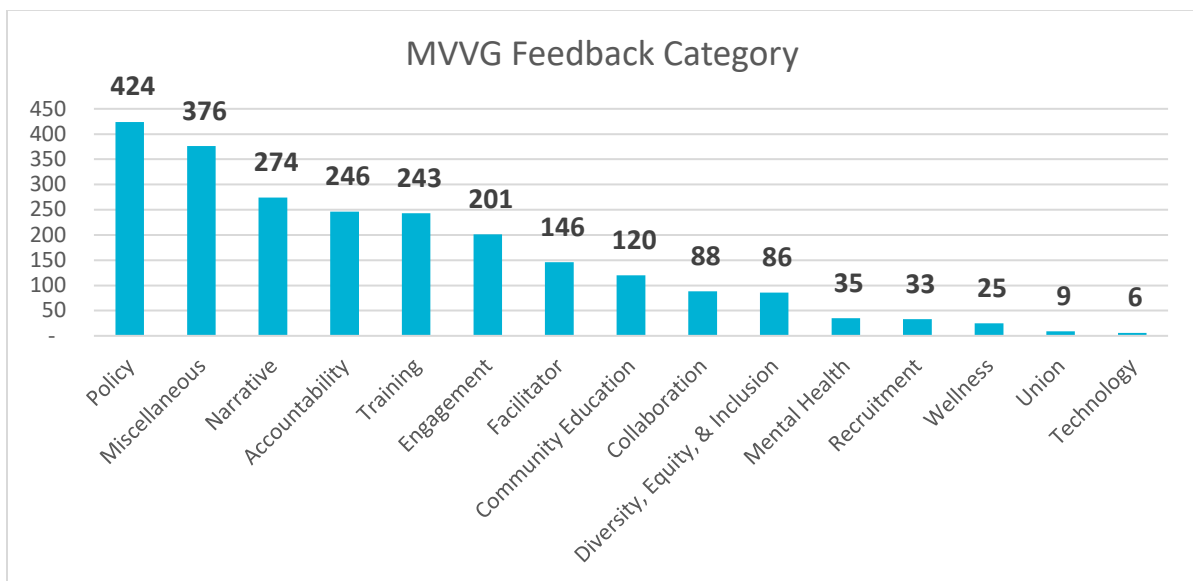
One community member stated, “Well, they got away with everything. Thousands and thousands of dollars in people’s possessions. One guy, uh, he [inaudible], uh, there was a Latino family. He got them kicked out of their apartment. Locked their apartment. When they came back after [inaudible] to get their stuff, it was all gone. All of their possessions. All of their personal possessions were gone. And this guy—this guy, he’s still a cop” ~8/24 Session. This community member was concerned in particular about the potential lack of accountability in an instance of a seizure.

Another member expressed concern for their children stating, “These just my two children. She is nine, and he is sixteen. So, I have an up-and-coming Black man, and I don’t let him come outside. It’s sad” 8/24 Session.

compared to the other two session types. While an improvement comparatively, there still is a long path the Department has in rebuilding community trust and perception around this area. It is also worth noting this section of feedback presented the most mixed feelings of all sessions.



Like the overall findings, the MVVG sessions focused on improving policy. However, we notice that these sessions appeared to drift the most off topic and included the highest concentration of narratives compared to the other session types. Beyond that, individuals still found that accountability and training are key to improving the Department in this session area.



One community member stated, “To me, the words are frosting or kind of meaningless. I don’t think this drives any behavior. I don’t think it did, then. I don’t think what we change now will. [...] This is—I kind of feel we’re wasting—I’m wasting my time. I’m not gonna speak for anybody else, but, to me, the words don’t matter. They haven’t mattered so far.” ~8/30 Session. This community member was concerned that while it is important to fix the words on paper, the real need is in action.

Another member expressed concern for the police officers viewing themselves as separate from the community stating, “Police are not just working for the community. They should see themselves as part of the community” 8/30 Session.



Breaking down these key themes, individuals find that fair and clear policies drive Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Non-Discriminatory/Impartial Policing. These fair and clear policies should enhance better communication of enforcement practices and permeate the department. It is our first set of sessions that does not lead with community, though, in this area plays a supporting role by providing critical feedback in guiding the department. MvVG is the first one to place policy first and foremost as needing improvement.

Individuals want to make sure that officers are held accountable with stricter rules for breaking policy, especially as it relates to non-discriminatory practices. They find this will help build trust with the communities the MPD serves and will make engaging with community easier and allow for more positive interactions between officers and the communities they serve.

In these sessions, attendees expressed a desire for more ongoing training for officers in conflict resolution, handling of mental health, and understanding different cultures. Technology can help support these efforts by providing greater transparency for the community through Body Worn Cameras (BWC) and online dashboards.

Individuals found that the Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals of the department needs to focus on resolving conflicts peacefully, with more attention on using less aggressive tactics and getting to the root of the community problem that is causing the incident. Additionally, politeness, fairness, and respect are essential in all officer conduct.

During these sessions, community members also discussed alternative and new approaches to policing, exhibiting an openness to try new methodologies. Overall, they want safer communities, better communication, and fairness in how the MPD operates, and they want to see these changes acted on.

4. Learnings and Actions to Consider

In this learning endeavor, the Department has numerous potential actions it can consider helping it in its improvement process. The community is providing the Department clear direction that the way it is currently operating is not sufficiently meeting community expectations and should focus its efforts in five key improvement

areas: Policy, Accountability, Training, Engagement, and Community Education. Note the percentage totals are the number of times that Feedback Area was identified as share of the total Feedbacks received, and since a piece of feedback can be catalogued into multiple areas, the total will sum to over 100%.

4.1. Policy (32%)

The community is concerned that old policies and standards are still being used such as quotes. Additional members expressed a policy goal of reducing the number of stops and increasing feedback loops from the community about these changes in enforcement practices as it relates to policy. Additionally, community members recognized that our existing policy may be sufficient, but it is too complicated for both officers and members at large to understand. For example, individuals requested these potential considerations:

- Instead of creating multiple new policies, the MPD should focus on simplifying existing policy, especially as it relates to Use of Force
- Increase ability of officers to call out behavior of supervisors that they find questionable
- Start or continue working sessions where community members dive deep into actual policy language

However, policy is not the be all and end all in improving the Department, but rather the starting point.

4.2. Training (22%)

The community found that training officers with better tools would likely lead to improved outcomes for all parties involved in any incident. Training should allow officers to better relate to community members and empower officers to better communicate with individuals they stop. Also, this training needs to be frequent and ongoing to make sure that best practices are constantly incorporated in the Department. As examples, attendees found these potential actions to consider:

- Increase training around use of force, in particular de-escalation tactics
- Incorporate more real life examples, especially ones around Stops, Searches, Citations, and Arrests
- Incorporate more medical training to help officers respond to mental health crises
- Increase cultural training to help officers understand cultural sensitivities that may come into play during interactions

Training is just one component that helps build a resilient department of employees that are equipped to handle the highly demanding situations the city needs them to.

4.3. Accountability (21%)

Within the Accountability section, the Department should focus on changing and improving the culture of the organization. This requires the Department to make sure to hold officers accountable in a fair and transparent manner and ensure the MPD communicates these decisions and processes to the public. As examples, the Department could consider these potential actions:

- Create and present processes that confirm officer attendance at trainings
- Include a QR code for a survey of the community members experience after an interaction to encourage more feedback on officer performance
- Office of Police Conduct Review needs stronger teeth to be a meaningful oversight committee

Proper accountability and oversight allows members of the public to know that the high standards expected of officers is lived up to, and helps enhance all other areas of improvement by making sure the feedback loops are reaching the appropriate decision makers.

4.4. Engagement (19%)

In modern law enforcement, bolstering community engagement stands as a paramount strategy and must incorporate additional connections between officers and the communities they serve. These deliberate efforts can foster mutual empathy and understanding, ultimately building a stronger and more cohesive relationship. From the feedback notes, the MPD should consider the following actions:

- Find additional methods for officers to engage within the community such as:
 - Increasing “Beat Patrols”
 - More time out of the car
 - Regular interactions at community events
- Find alternative/non-traditional methods to allow community members and police to see the humanity in both parties
- Require officers to carry business cards to provide during stops – including a QR code for a survey

By improving the engagement between officers and the communities they serve, the MPD can build the trust necessary to improve community safety by being able to forge new and cultivate existing partnerships with community-based organizations.

4.5. Community Education (16%)

Community Education in policing is vital for fostering transparency and trust. The MPD has a number of resources that the feedback shows that not all members know about, and increasing community knowledge on policing practices helps all parties. It empowers members of the public to access resources they need in critical moments and ensures the public knows about the activities the MPD is undertaking. If the community doesn’t know about them, they may as well not exist. To that end, the MPD should consider:

- Start or increase community education sessions covering policing practices
- Start or increase community seminars on existing police transparency practices
- Ensure timely updates to dashboards both for discipline and crime statistics
- Create a podcast with officers explaining why particular policies exist

The more the MPD knows of the communities they serve and the community of the MPD, the better each can respond to and guide improvements in public safety.

5. Conclusion

This comprehensive examination of the community feedback sessions underscores the critical need and resounding call from community members for improving law enforcement within Minneapolis. The profound messages and powerful stories from members paint a vivid picture of lived experiences of individuals’ interactions with the Department, which can serve as a catalyst to improve. These pieces of feedback will allow the Department to craft policy that is both effective and responsive to the community needs.

However, it doesn't end there. The community is demanding heightened accountability of officers, which is a fundamental building block in earning the community's trust. The Department must provide multiple avenues for accountability and provide that information to community members in full transparency. Officer training will be a critical investment, not something that can be ignored, toward fostering a more empathetic and culturally sensitive approach within the Minneapolis Police Department.

Equally crucial is finding ways to bridge the divide between officers and the individuals they serve through increased engagement. Forging and constantly cultivating these relationships is a mandate from the community, and one that can provide an opportunity to not only enhance trust but improve community safety. Equally important is the communication of actions taken by the Department and the status of public safety in Minneapolis so the community can be educated on the resources available, and progress made during this process.

The insights gleaned from these sessions will not merely be catalogued and placed on the shelf but will be a compass guiding the Department toward a future where collaboration, understanding, and collective action will form a bedrock of a safer, more equitable Minneapolis. As the Department continues to improve, we continue to ask for your support, patience, and trust as we navigate this together.

6. Disclaimer

While transparency and access to data is important, we are limited in our ability to publish all the actual comments we received to preserve the privacy of those people who comment.