



GLOUCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Office of the Chief of Police
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Chief Edward G. Conley

GLOUCESTER POLICE COMMUNITY IMPACT DIVISION

Optimizing the Gloucester Police Department's approach to improving quality of life

SUMMARY

I am proposing the creation of a new Gloucester Police Department Division called the "Community Impact Division". This unit would be commanded by a lieutenant and responsible for creative problem solving while leveraging all our internal and external assets. The goal of this unit would be to coordinate the Gloucester Police Department's approach to engaging our community.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

The quality of life for Gloucester residents has been negatively impacted by the blight of addiction, untreated mental health disorders and homelessness. Law enforcement is often called to handle the ancillary effects of community disorder to include accidental death, medical aids and property crimes. The Gloucester Police Department has led Cape Ann in developing collaborative approaches to engaging this vulnerable population. However, GPD efforts have lacked structure, accountability and defined workflows. Without a well-designed approach, incorporated into day-to-day GPD operations, our efforts are not sustainable.

SOLUTION PROPOSED

Fortunately, the City has both a wide scope of community-based organizations and a long history of positive partnerships. It is time to build upon this history by increasing the capacity of GPD to engage this population with the goal of building trust, finding solutions and improving outcomes. This can be accomplished by 1) Establishing a single chain-of-command and workflow structure that can be given the proper authority and held accountable for accomplishing this work. 2) Increasing workflow by shifting existing GPD assets that have similar community impact missions under this command. 3) Creating the non-sworn position of "Navigator" to attract and imbed the best qualified addiction specialist into GPD daily operations. 4) Establish community impact best practices and codify those practices into GPD culture and policy. 5) Taking a leadership role in coordinating and synergizing the work of Gloucester's community-based organizations. 6) Coordinating GPD problem solving efforts with other City departments, particularly the Gloucester Health Department.

At its core, the Community Impact Unit will be a well-organized, well-staffed and well-equipped problem solving, solution generating and program implementing team.

HOW TO GET STARTED

To demonstrate our commitment to this approach we must provide the proper level of authority to this new Division. Given that the Community Impact Division supervisor will report directly to the Chief of Police, the appropriate rank should be a lieutenant.

The Gloucester Police Department is on the verge of creating and appointing a deputy chief position. Pursuant to a previous union impact bargaining agreement, if an internal lieutenant is named deputy chief, that lieutenant position must be backfilled. It is my intent to utilize this additional lieutenant as the commander of the Community Impact Division. A draft job description has been attached to this memorandum.

The timeline for promoting a deputy chief is tentatively set for December. In the near term I recommend beginning the process of hiring a Community Navigator. By recruiting and hiring this position now, we can have a Navigator who is trained and acclimated when the new structure is rolled out.

CLOSING AND CALL TO ACTION

Gloucester will not be the first community to hire a Community Navigator. In fact, Plymouth, Chelsea, and Boston have also created similar structures. However, these communities lack one vital component that Gloucester possesses, which is a deep community spirit of helping one another. In a recent interview PAARI Recovery Coach Tito Rodriguez pointed out, "Gloucester is an old port-town where people look out for each other". I couldn't agree more, which is why I am confident that the Community Impact Division concept will flourish in Gloucester more than any other city or town.