

# Re-envisioning public safety & justice

A community conversation about Prop P funding for Maplewood

Maplewood Community Builders

May 2018



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## Who we are:

Maplewood Community Builders is a group of Maplewood residents who came together in late 2017 to begin a conversation about public safety and justice around the community's \$400,000 Proposition P allocation.

## What we learned:

Through an exhaustive information gathering process (described in detail in this report) we've discovered some profound truths about our community:

- Maplewood residents and visitors feel extremely safe.
- Residents believe in our police and understand that they're doing a good job.
- At the very same time, not everybody experiences fair treatment in Maplewood. People of all races are frustrated and worried because race impacts how people are treated in our neighborhoods.
- There are painful stories we need to listen to and learn from.

## What we request:

Let's spend Prop P dollars to make our city a better place for everyone. To that end, we offer four recommendations:

1. **Create a Maplewood Public Safety Commission.** Establish a commission that fosters partnership between city, law enforcement, fire department, and the community, using a recognized model. Task the commission with creating the long-term vision for public safety and give it teeth and value by allocating Prop P funds toward its work.
2. **Build trust through transparency.**
  - a. Shine a light on the positive things Maplewood is already doing for public safety.
  - b. Post all City Council Meetings, City Board and Commission meetings, and public hearings as events on Facebook to encourage citizen participation and to be more welcoming.
3. **Catalyze positive interactions with police.**
  - a. Use dollars to contract with professional mediators for disputes of all types, which ultimately will reduce calls of service to law enforcement.
  - b. More officer visibility: outside of cars, on bikes, coffee with an officer; seeing officers smiling and chatting helps to reduce fear and build trust.
  - c. Training for officers and joint trainings for officers and citizens together.
4. **Commit to reducing fines, fees and confinement.** Let's take bold action to create the consciously inclusive community that we want to be. We can improve our reputation and interactions between law enforcement and citizens by reducing fines, fees, and confinement.

See page 15 of this report to read about these ideas in greater detail.

## What am I reading?

The report that follows details our journey to determining the requests above. It includes the following sections:

1. Introduction to St. Louis County Prop P sales tax - page 3
2. Maplewood Community Builders - page 4
3. Gathering voices: Our survey - page 4
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## Introduction to St. Louis County Prop P sales tax

In April of 2017, St. Louis County voters passed Proposition P, a ballot measure that added a half-cent sales tax which will provide an estimated annual \$80 million to promote our region's public safety beginning in 2018. Of the money raised, 60% (about \$46 million) will go to St. Louis County and the remaining 40% (about \$34 million) will be distributed among municipalities based on population. Maplewood, a community of about 8,000, is projected to receive about \$400K annually.

The ballot language was vague and left the matter of *how to spend the money* up to the county and each municipality. Before and after the April election, there were reports and that county and municipal governments would use the funds for body cameras, additional police officers, police raises, infrastructure, training, and even to fix potholes.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of 2017, St. Louis County police officers grew frustrated when the County Council asked for more information before finally approving raises for county officers,<sup>3,4</sup> while other County employees who work in public safety began asking questions about why they were potentially being left behind.<sup>5</sup>

Residents all over St. Louis County had questions about how the money would be spent and how officials would provide transparency, accountability, and public input around these funds. Beginning in summer 2017 citizens began raising questions at St. Louis County Council meetings and on August 15, St. Louis County Council approved a resolution recommending a process for public input around Prop P funds, transparency around the plan for and reporting of the spending, and that the money could be used for spending besides police salaries.<sup>6,7</sup> In October 2017, St. Louis County Council passed a measure to require additional hearings on how Prop P funds are to be spent and create an internet portal where the public can access details on the expenditures, as well as to increase salaries for county officers.<sup>8</sup> Residents in municipalities including Chesterfield, University City, Webster Groves, and Maplewood began gathering to ask questions - about how their municipalities would spend the funds, what public safety means to their community, how we might re-envision public safety and justice as a region, and what kind of open, transparent, inclusive process there would be about allocating these sales tax funds.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/police-would-benefit-from-st-louis-county-s-prop-p/article\\_841336d1-10bb-5b3d-8767-99bc570894d8.html](http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/police-would-benefit-from-st-louis-county-s-prop-p/article_841336d1-10bb-5b3d-8767-99bc570894d8.html)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/some-county-municipalities-plan-to-use-prop-p-public-safety/article\\_c0458f0f-df24-5b6b-a610-9148640f78f5.html](http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/some-county-municipalities-plan-to-use-prop-p-public-safety/article_c0458f0f-df24-5b6b-a610-9148640f78f5.html)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/delays-in-pay-increases-leave-st-louis-county-police-frustrated/article\\_b558d002-c551-5ba7-b98f-95178ae06b41.html](http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/delays-in-pay-increases-leave-st-louis-county-police-frustrated/article_b558d002-c551-5ba7-b98f-95178ae06b41.html)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/big-raises-coming-for-st-louis-county-police-after-council/article\\_a78e2a86-c732-5646-8b74-a0979245a706.html](http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/big-raises-coming-for-st-louis-county-police-after-council/article_a78e2a86-c732-5646-8b74-a0979245a706.html)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/after-prop-p-other-st-louis-county-workers-want-raises/article\\_8ac87c69-2d87-504b-bec0-046abb38c345.html](http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/after-prop-p-other-st-louis-county-workers-want-raises/article_8ac87c69-2d87-504b-bec0-046abb38c345.html)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/resolution-by-st-louis-county-council-seeks-to-offer-public/article\\_9e26984b-baed-5f85-b85b-12058a5f0948.html](http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/resolution-by-st-louis-county-council-seeks-to-offer-public/article_9e26984b-baed-5f85-b85b-12058a5f0948.html)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.sltoday.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-after-approving-a-vague-prop-p-st-louis-county/article\\_7bdce600-abec-5830-ad5c-52314c293a46.html](http://www.sltoday.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-after-approving-a-vague-prop-p-st-louis-county/article_7bdce600-abec-5830-ad5c-52314c293a46.html)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/facing-concern-about-use-of-prop-p-police-money-st/article\\_2ff55a44-795f-59fc-955b-67d30b210319.html](http://www.sltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/facing-concern-about-use-of-prop-p-police-money-st/article_2ff55a44-795f-59fc-955b-67d30b210319.html)

# Maplewood Community Builders

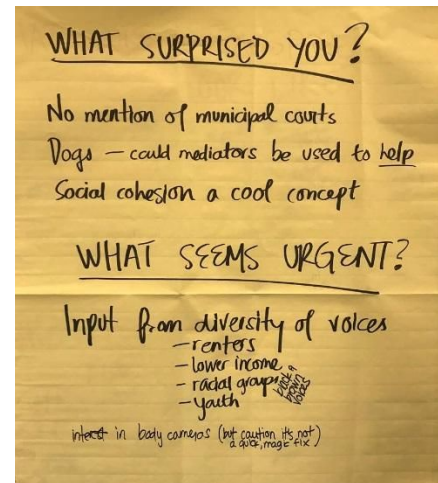
A group of Maplewood neighbors wondered about what the Prop P sales tax would look like here: How will Maplewood spend the projected roughly \$400,000 revenues earmarked for “public safety”? Will the process be transparent? Will the money help make Maplewood safer for everyone? What about racial bias? What about our municipal courts? How can we use this as an opportunity to ensure a safer and stronger community for all?

To begin this conversation, a group of neighbors rallied together in summer 2017 as **Maplewood Community Builders**. In fall 2017 we met with city officials, law enforcement, and elected officials, and planned a series of public meetings.

In November 2017 we hosted a community meeting at the Focal Point, attended by about 30 residents. We began to create a vision for what public safety could mean for all of us in our community - including those who live, work, shop, own businesses, and pass through Maplewood.

Three big themes emerged from the meeting:

1. When we asked about what a transparent process could look like, the concept of collecting more information from many different voices (especially through non-traditional channels) rose to the top.
2. Residents want all people to have fair and positive interactions with the public safety system.
3. Residents want a sense of safety and a sense of social cohesion. We believe that people want to feel safe, secure, and connected to each other, and that people want to be treated fairly.



**We also wondered: how does our broader community feel about our public safety and policing?**

## Gathering voices: Our survey

To better understand this, we developed and deployed a survey to understand public perception of police and public safety. In February and March 2018, we collected 440 survey responses of people who live, shop, work, go to school in, and pass through Maplewood through in-person canvassing and a digital survey.

The survey was inspired by a 2016 citizens-led survey inquiring about public safety conducted in Olivette, Missouri. We began with Olivette’s tool and revised it with feedback from Kyle Oberle (under the supervision of Barbara Levin with The Alliance for Building Capacity at The George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis), Dr. Yolanda Alovero, and Dr. Erin Solomon.

We intentionally focused efforts on paper surveys for these reasons:

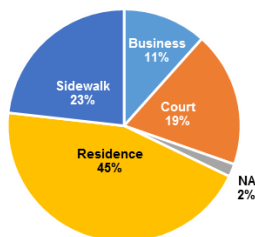
- To maximize the diversity of respondents. Distribution primarily through social media would tend to capture respondents with similar racial, age, socioeconomic background.
- Encourage open responses. People feel more comfortable responding while out and about rather than at their homes.
- Reduce the possibility of reaching many people who do not live in or directly interact with Maplewood.

The paper survey was administered door-to-door, at parks, on sidewalks, at municipal court, and at the Maplewood Walmart. An electronic survey was delivered to high school students through partnership with Maplewood-Richmond Heights High School. In late March, a digital version was released for a four-day period through email/social media.

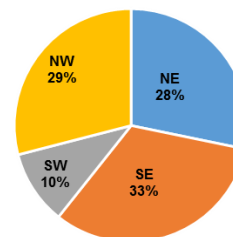
Our survey included 440 total responses, 112 of which were paper surveys and 328 of which were digital. Of the 328 digital surveys, 218 of were collected from students administered during advisory period at MRH High school.

Of the 112 paper surveys administered, almost half of them came from canvassing door-to-door, a quarter from canvassing on sidewalks, and a third from canvassing outside municipal court or businesses. The responses about where people spend the most time looks like the geography of Maplewood, divided by Big Bend and Manchester.

**Location for 112 paper surveys**



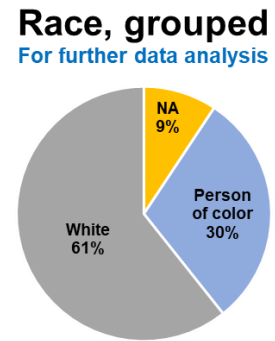
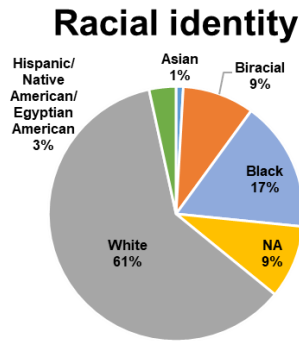
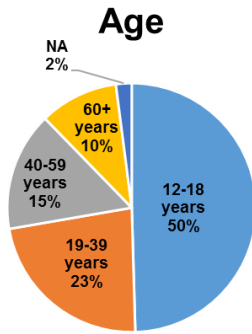
**Respondents spend most time in...**



The characteristics of our population sample match that of the Maplewood population well.

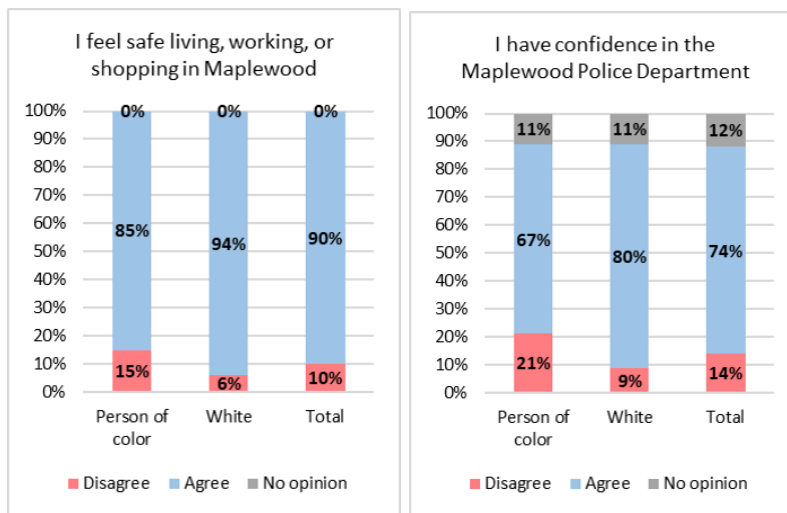
|        | <b>2016 US Census Survey<sup>9</sup></b>                            | <b>MCB Survey</b>  |
|--------|---|--|
| Gender | 51% Female<br>49% Male  | 32% Female<br>42% Male<br>1% Other<br>25% did not respond            |
| Race   | 74% white<br>17% African American<br>4% 2 or more races<br>5% Other | 61% white<br>17% African American<br>9% 2 or more races<br>13% other |

<sup>9</sup> <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>



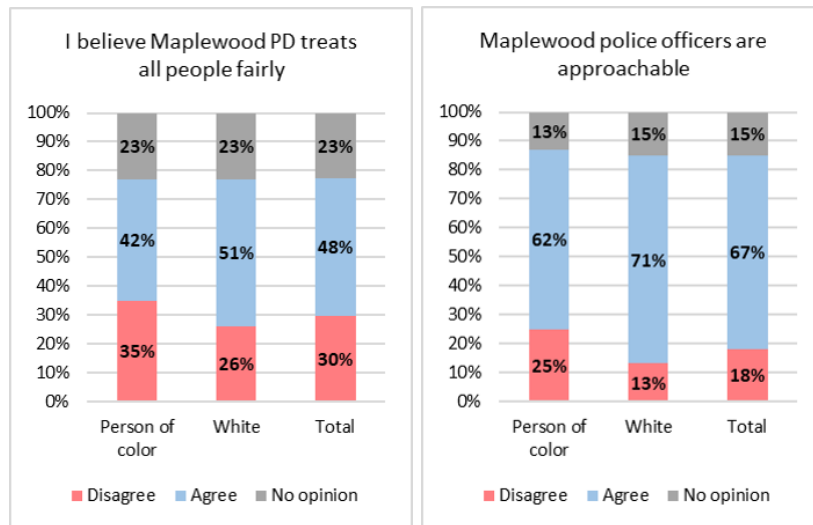
## What people said: Our results

Our survey yielded some extremely positive perceptions about police and public safety in our municipality. About 90% of total respondents feel safe, living, working and/or shopping in Maplewood. Also, about 74% of total respondents have confidence in the Maplewood Police Department (MPD).

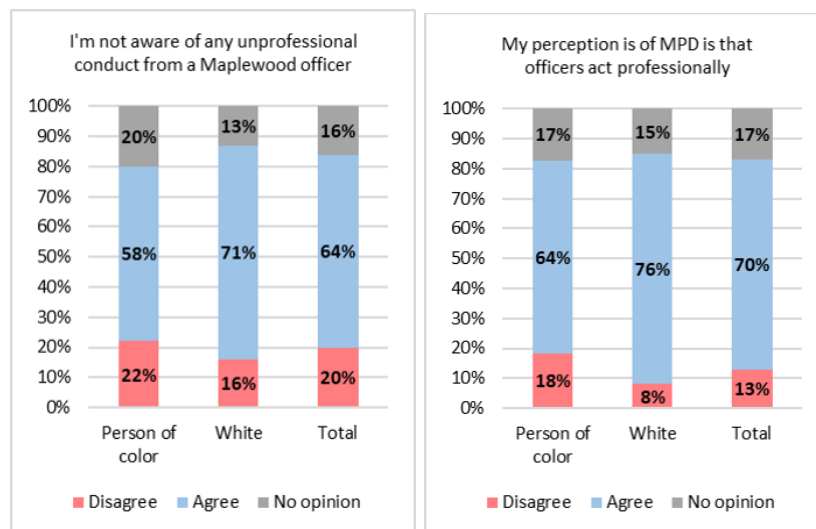


Other questions yielded some perceptions that were more concerning. Among all respondents, 30% of reported that they did not believe that the Maplewood police department treats people fairly. A racial disparity presented itself within that statistic: 26% of white people believed that the Maplewood police did not treat people equally, compared to 35% of people of color.

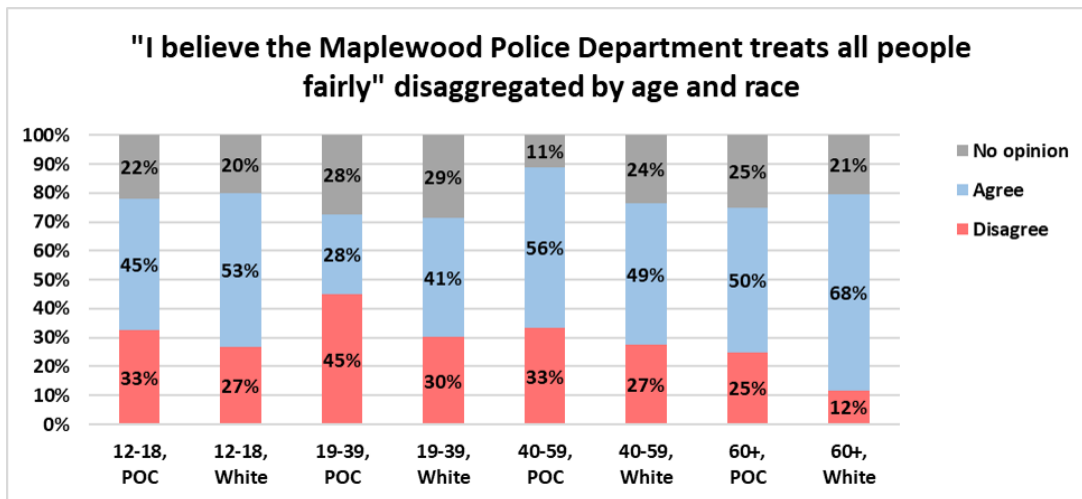
When asked whether MPD officers are approachable, there was a significant discrepancy between people of color (POC) and white respondents. In total, 62% of those surveyed believed that officers are approachable. However, results indicate that a person of color is nearly twice as likely to view a MPD officer as “unapproachable” than a white person: 25% POC respondents stated they do not feel officers are approachable versus only 13% of white respondents. It seems notable that **one of every four respondents identifying as a person of color might be intimidated** by police officers or unwilling to ask for assistance.



Similarly, there was a racial division to be found when inquiring about concerns about professional behavior of MPD officers. When white people responded to the question: I am NOT aware of any unprofessional conduct of a MPD officer; 71% of white respondents agreed and only 16% disagreed. When the same question was posed to people of color, 58% agreed and 22% disagreed.



Digging deeper into the data, we also saw a disparity between age and beliefs surrounding equitable treatment by MPD officers. Though the perception of fair treatment is consistently divided along racial lines (people of color are more likely to disagree than white people), it is more favorable in older adults than in teenagers and young adults, and least favorable for people of color aged 19-39.



## The youth voice

We were invited to share our results with the Maplewood Richmond Heights School Board at their board meeting on April 19, 2018. We are grateful to live in a community where the Board of Education centers the voices and needs of students. We recognize and honor the hard work of Superintendent Hall, Principal Grawer, and Chief Kruse to strengthen the relationship and build more trust between our students and law enforcement. For this meeting, we focused on the youth voice by extracting the 218 responses that came from the digital survey deployed during advisory period at MRH High school. Of these responses, 124 students identified themselves as Maplewood residents and 38 identified themselves as Richmond Heights residents (56 students did not report a residence location). Most (89%) students feel safe, but only two-thirds (67%) feel MPD officers are approachable and only 49% believe the MPD treats all people fairly. Students of color are less likely than white students to think officers act professionally and more likely to be aware of unprofessional conduct from an officer.

### I feel safe living, working, or shopping in Maplewood.

|                            | Person of color | White | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Agree/strongly agree       | 88%             | 91%   | 89%   |
| Disagree/Strongly disagree | 12%             | 9%    | 11%   |

### Maplewood police officers are approachable.

|                            | Person of color | White | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| NA/No Opinion              | 9%              | 15%   | 13%   |
| Agree/strongly agree       | 64%             | 69%   | 67%   |
| Disagree/Strongly disagree | 27%             | 16%   | 21%   |

### I believe the Maplewood Police Department treats all people fairly.

|                            | Person of color | White | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| NA/No Opinion              | 22%             | 20%   | 21%   |
| Agree/strongly agree       | 45%             | 53%   | 49%   |
| Disagree/Strongly disagree | 33%             | 27%   | 31%   |

### I'm not aware of any unprofessional conduct from a Maplewood police officer.

|                            | Person of color | White | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| NA/No Opinion              | 20%             | 19%   | 21%   |
| Agree/strongly agree       | 59%             | 71%   | 63%   |
| Disagree/Strongly disagree | 21%             | 10%   | 16%   |

### My perception of the Maplewood Police Dept. is that officers act professionally.

|                            | Person of color | White | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| NA/No Opinion              | 17%             | 19%   | 19%   |
| Agree/strongly agree       | 66%             | 71%   | 68%   |
| Disagree/Strongly disagree | 16%             | 10%   | 13%   |

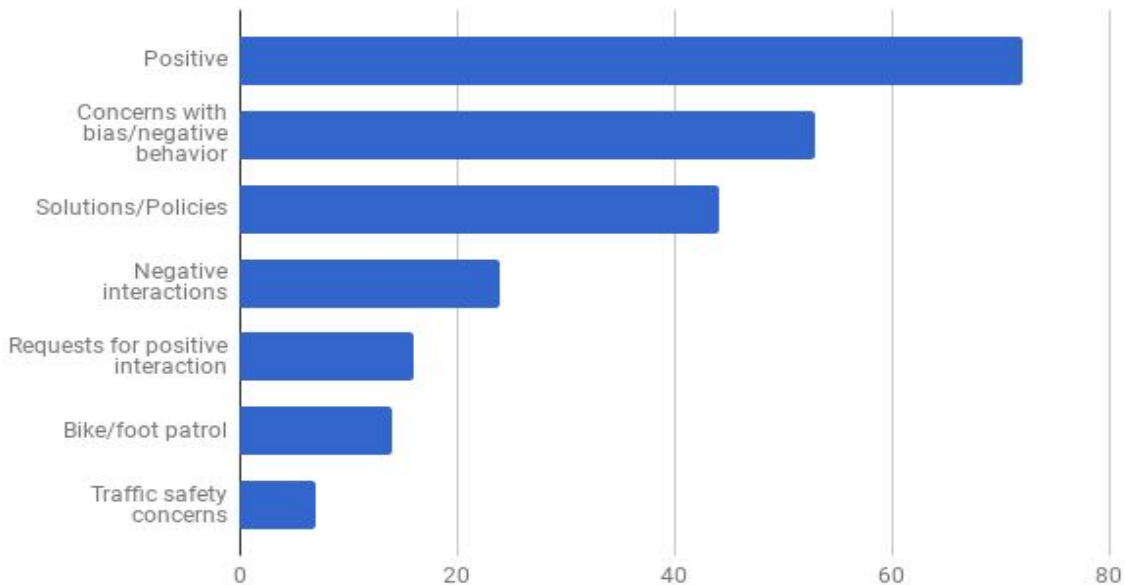


## Comments and stories

Besides collecting quantitative data, the survey asked two questions:

1. Please share any comments/ stories/ experiences you feel are relevant.
2. Is there anything Maplewood could do to improve your sense of public safety?

Respondents shared personal opinions and experiences with the law enforcement, both positive and negative. As you can see from the graphic below, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. However, 24 people reported a story of a specific negative interaction with police and more than 50 other people reported concerns about racial bias and rude or unprofessional behavior.



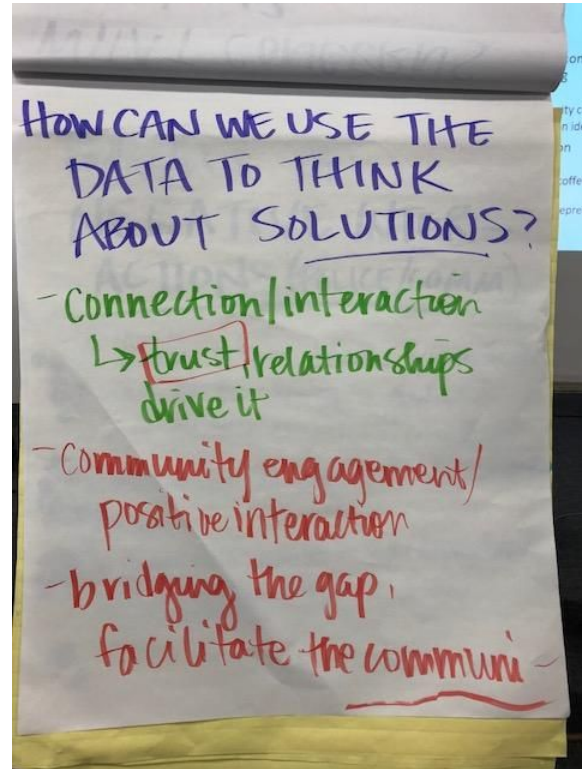
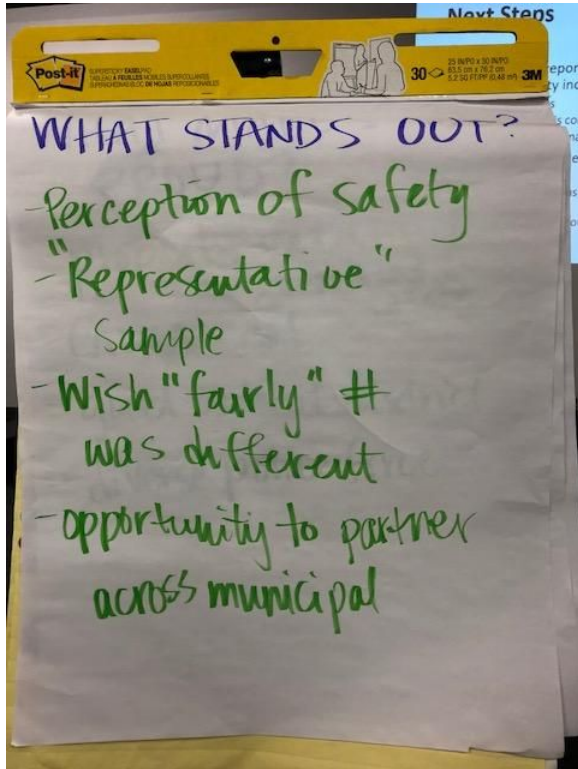
## Sharing results & gathering more community voice

In **mid-April 2018**, we gathered at **New Destiny Apostolic Church** to share and discuss our survey results with our neighbors and invite their thoughts and feedback. Over 30 residents and city officials wondered together: what does this data say about public safety and justice? How can it inform our Proposition P spending?

## What do we see in the survey data? How can it inform our practices?

We began this meeting by sharing a handout of the data and asking people “What are you proud of? What are you concerned about??

We wondered how we could use the data to inform solutions.



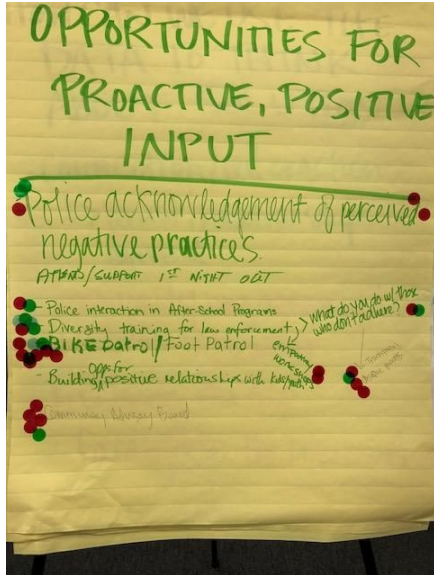
To prepare for our group discussion of solutions, we shared examples of people trying new things around the St. Louis region:

- Public safety commissions
- Chesterfield PD training residents on Fair and Impartial Policing and implicit racial bias
- St. Ann Consolidated Municipal Courts
- Mediation services to mediate neighbor-neighbor and neighbor-police interactions
- Training residents & police together
- School boards considering model MOUs with law enforcement
- End cash bail for nonviolent crime

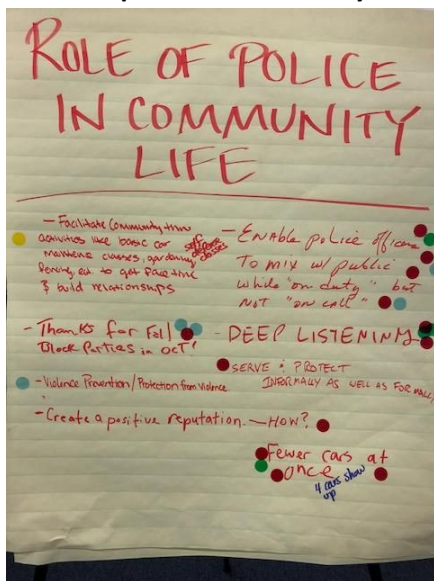
## Gallery walk to brainstorm solutions

Everyone at the meeting participated in a gallery walk to brainstorm and vote (with colored dot stickers) on what we would like to see in Maplewood and priorities for possible solutions moving forward.

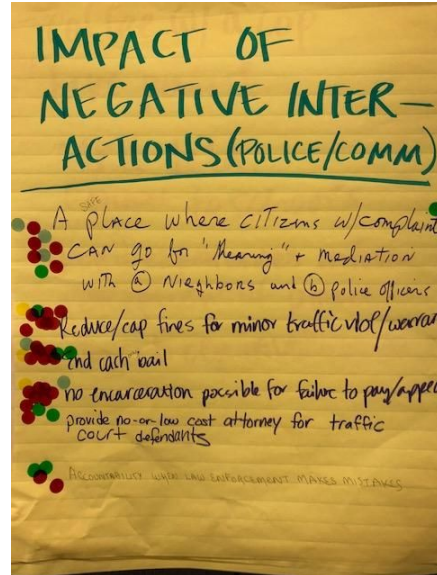
### Opportunities for proactive, positive input and interaction with police



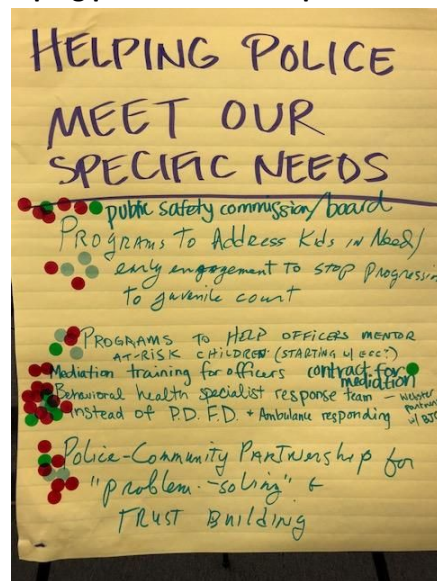
### Role of police in community life



### Negative encounters and the impact on community/police relations



### Helping police meet our specific needs



Our main takeaway from this meeting was that **neighbors in Maplewood want to engage in deeper partnership with the City regarding our public safety.** People were excited about the ideas of police-community partnership and mediation services. Neighbors wanted everything from officers on bike patrol and lower court fees to programs for kids. We aggregated the conversation from our community meeting with the data gathered in the survey and created the following suggestions.

## What we request:

The Maplewood Police Department “exists to serve all people in our jurisdiction with respect, fairness, and compassion.” Our community already feels extremely safe. Public safety could be strongly enhanced with out of the box ideas that meet our community needs for public safety. To that end, we offer four recommendations based on our findings. **These requests will begin to make our city a more just place for everyone.**

- 1. Create a Maplewood Public Safety Commission.** Establish a commission that fosters partnership between city, law enforcement, fire department, and the community -- using a nationally recognized model. Task this commission with leading an effort to create a community vision for public safety that includes strong public input on how to spend Prop P sales tax funds. This could include a series of public meetings facilitated by professional facilitators who have some expertise in community engagement across a diverse set of stakeholders (e.g. Emerging Wisdom, <http://emergingwisdomllc.com/>) and bring a Racial Equity lens to their work. Applying a Racial Equity lens to work and key decisions involves asking the following questions about every policy, opportunity, and decision: Whom does this benefit? Does this differentially impact racial and ethnic groups? What is missing that will reduce or eliminate racial disparities?<sup>10</sup> There is a wide range of what a public safety commission or board can look like. There are over 100 civilian public safety boards around the country, including larger cities in Missouri such as St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield, and Columbia. One resource to easily review a variety of models can be found at NACOLE.org ([https://www.nacole.org/agency\\_profiles](https://www.nacole.org/agency_profiles)). Create a line-item for this commission to give it capacity - for example, 15% of each year’s Prop P allocation for the commission to use on research, new initiatives, and innovation.
- 2. Build trust through transparency.**
  - a. Shine a light on the positive things Maplewood is already doing for public safety - for example, MPD’s partnership with health providers, existing use of mediation services, and commitment to hiring a racially and linguistically diverse law enforcement officers, etc. MPD is doing many good things, but citizens don’t know about these positives; more transparency about the good work that IS happening would help to build trust.
  - b. Post all City Council Meetings, City Board and Commission meetings, and public hearings as events on Facebook to encourage citizen participation and to be more welcoming. This will create more trust among citizens that the city is an open, welcoming institution.
- 3. Catalyze positive interactions with police.** Maplewood residents have so many ideas:
  - a. Mediation: use dollars to contract with professional mediators for disputes of all types. The City of St. Louis and Clayton use Community Mediation Services (<http://mediationstl.org/>), which can provide neighborhood, family, eldercare, and police-citizen mediation services. The city could refer and financially support mediation services to ease conflict and tension felt by city council, reduce calls of service to and potentially negative interactions with law enforcement, and build trust among citizens.
  - b. More officer visibility: outside of cars, on bikes, coffee with an officer; seeing officers smiling and chatting helps to reduce fear and build trust.
  - c. Training for officers and citizens: Trainings we recommend include:

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<sup>10</sup> <https://forwardthroughferguson.org/calls-to-action/apply-a-racial-equity-framework-across-region/>

- i. Effective Police Interaction With Youth Training (from CT) -- Now offered by Missouri Juvenile Justice Association.
  - ii. Fair and Impartial Policing (Lorie Fridell; <http://www.fairimpartialpolicing.com/>).
  - iii. Police and citizen joint training developed by Lt. Perri Johnson, SLMPD Juvenile Division and Tiffany Robertson, Metropolitan Congregations United - pairs community and police in joint trainings; successful model used in City of St. Louis that can be adapted for suburban setting.
  - iv. Inviting members of neighborhood watch groups to join trainings - we have an active neighborhood watch program and impressive engagement by blocks and block captains; we recommend engaging these already-interested citizens in trainings around racial bias and policy change. (For example, Chesterfield PD will be providing a training on implicit racial bias for residents at a local church; organizations like NCCJ and Crossroads Racial Justice Training & Organizing can provide workshops for law enforcement and citizens together.)
- 4. Commit to dramatically reducing fines, fees and confinement.** While Maplewood is known for our dynamic economic and school revitalization, we are also known for our system of fines, fees, and confinement that disproportionately harms people who are poor and people of color. Let's take bold action to create the *consciously inclusive community*<sup>11</sup> that we want to be. Let's commit to start the work of reducing the burden of our system of fines, fees, and confinement.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the help of many community members, team members, and friends across the region who generously helped support and amplify this work. We especially thank:

- **New Destiny Apostolic Church**, with special thanks to Olivia Medina for dramatizing some of the shared stories, members of the Youth Group (the YG) for bringing it to life, and Marlon Lee for assistance with logistics and welcoming the community into New Destiny's beautiful space
- **All those who shared** their stories and thoughts with us in our survey
- **MCB team and friends** – those supporting this meeting, surveying, organizing, running for office, or talking to neighbors to create an even stronger, more equitable Maplewood
- **MRH students** for sharing stories and inspiration (We thank Dr. Grawer, Dr. Hall, and the MRH Board of Education for vision and leadership in commitment to racial equity and for centering the voices of our youth)
- **Forward Through Ferguson**, for catalyzing and connecting stakeholders, through collaborative, unflinching, and community-driven principles, to lead the region toward Racial Equity **#stl2039**
- **West-County Community Action Network, Metropolitan Congregations United, and We Stories**
- **Friends in Webster Groves, University City, Kirkwood, Chesterfield, and City of St. Louis** who are organizing around Prop P, community policing, re-envisioning public safety, and justice for all

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**The survey was revised by:** Kyle Oberle (under the supervision of Barbara Levin with The Alliance for Building Capacity at The George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis), Dr. Yolanda Alovero, and Dr. Erin Solomon.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://forthesakeofall.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SegregationinSTL\\_DismantlingDivideReport.pdf](https://forthesakeofall.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SegregationinSTL_DismantlingDivideReport.pdf)