

Community Session Response

Introduction

On August 12, 2025, the Minneapolis Police Department hosted a Community Engagement Session where residents shared thoughtful questions and comments on topics ranging from policy implementation to building community trust. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to hear directly from you, and this follow-up serves as a summary of the questions raised, the responses we were able to provide, and the next steps we are committed to taking.

As we shared during the session, our goal is to answer questions as openly and completely as possible. Please note, however, that some questions fall outside of the scope of the Implementation Unit—particularly those involving day-to-day operational decisions. What we *can* and *will* address are questions related to the implementation of the Settlement Agreement and the Consent Decree. That is the focus of this memo.

For questions that could not be fully answered in the moment, or those that did not fall within the Implementation Unit’s responsibilities, we forwarded or rerouted them to the appropriate leaders and divisions for follow-up. Our commitment is to keep these conversations moving forward in good faith, with transparency, and with accountability.

Themes & Response

During the session, community members provided feedback and raised a number of issues that can be sorted into the following four buckets.

Policy and Training Implementation

During the session, several community members raised valid concerns about the length of time it takes for new policies to become effective. Many asked why policies cannot be enforced as soon as they are written, why training takes so long, and whether accountability is delayed in the process.

We want to stress that *for policies that require training, they cannot be effective until every officer in the department has been fully trained on them*. This is intentional and necessary. If half of our officers operated under old policies while the other half followed new ones, it would create confusion, inconsistency, and even unsafe outcomes. Ensuring that all officers are trained before implementation guarantees that expectations are clear, consistent, and fair across the department.

The process itself is deliberately thorough. After a policy is drafted, it must undergo review and approval by ELEFA and other oversight partners—a process that can take several months. Only after approval can the work of building a comprehensive training curriculum begin. While this may feel long and drawn out, this structure has proven effective in meeting the needs of all parties—officers, leadership, oversight partners, and most importantly, the community (all of us together).

We acknowledge that this process can feel cumbersome, especially when policies are complex and require additional time to draft in a way that ensures clarity and long-term success. Still, this rigor is what makes the policy strong and sustainable once it is in effect.

As a next step, we will continue to share updates on training progress, including the number of officers trained and the projected timelines, so that the community has transparent visibility into both the challenges and the progress being made.

Use of Force and Firearm Pointing

We want to begin by apologizing for any misunderstanding during the community engagement session regarding the designation of firearm pointing as a Level 1 force instead of Level 2. We understand how the way this was explained may have caused confusion or even frustration, and we want to clarify the decision-making process with transparency.

First, we want to be clear: at no point was ELEFA responsible for making an operational decision about MPD policy. ELEFA's role is to review and issue compliance determinations, but operational decisions remain with MPD leadership. During the discussion, it may have sounded as though responsibility was being shifted between ELEFA and MPD, and for that we apologize. That was never our intent.

As it relates to firearm pointing, the decision to classify it as Level 1 force was made operationally by MPD and approved by ELEFA. This decision was influenced by several factors that impact policy development: operational realities, best practices, resource allocation, and alignment across different oversight parties. In this case, our reasoning centered on ensuring public safety while still maintaining robust oversight.

By making firearm pointing a Level 1 (enhanced), we provide the same level of oversight and scrutiny as Level 2—with two important differences: a supervisor is not required to physically respond to the scene in real time, nor is there a secondary review. However, supervisors are still required to be notified, review the incident, and examine the body-worn camera footage just as if it were a Level 2. Additionally, a sample of Level 1s and 2s will be reviewed and presented to the Quarterly Review Panel for their review, where, at a higher level, the firearm pointing will be reviewed versus the secondary level review. The change was made to prevent supervisors and squads from being tied up responding to every firearm-pointing incident, which would significantly limit our ability to respond to other emergencies across the city.

This decision was not about minimizing accountability, but about balancing oversight with the operational need to keep resources available for the other incidents happening at any given time. The firearm pointing classification as Level 1 (enhanced) ensures that incidents are still reviewed with the same seriousness, while allowing officers and supervisors to remain responsive to broader public safety needs.

As we move forward, we remain committed to keeping this conversation open. We will continue to provide data and updates on firearm pointing incidents and supervisor reviews so that the community has visibility into how accountability is being maintained.

Transparency and Engagement

Another major theme raised by participants was frustration with transparency in how feedback and communication are handled. Several residents expressed concern that when requesting data, only a small number of comments were shared publicly, even though they knew hundreds had been submitted. Others noted that feedback collected during roundtables was not always reflected in the final policy drafts, leaving them uncertain whether their voices had truly been considered. Some participants also shared that the frequent use of acronyms and technical terms makes the process harder to follow and less accessible to the public.

In response, we acknowledged that inconsistencies exist in how community input is reported back. While feedback is collected through multiple channels, we recognize the need to be clearer about how that input is processed, analyzed, and incorporated. We committed to several steps to address this: creating a glossary of acronyms for future sessions, finding additional ways to share information beyond websites and social media (such as through neighborhood organizations), and reviewing our practices to ensure accuracy and transparency in how data is reported back.

We also want to directly address questions about access to the full set of comments from the 2023 Community Engagement Sessions. While we understand the request, we are not able to release all comments for one key reason:

- **Data Privacy:** Community members participated with the expectation of confidentiality.

In addition, in the initial summary feedback that we provided, once the feedback was analyzed, we mentioned, *“While transparency and access to data are important, we are limited in our ability to publish all the actual comments we received to preserve the privacy of those people who comment.”*

That said, we emphasize that *all* comments are shared in their entirety with policy writers, ELEFA, and MDHR. To ensure fairness and accuracy, notetakers documented direct transcriptions of what was said in each small group. This means every voice was captured, not summarized or filtered. When reviewing the data, we found some comments to be unrelated or unactionable for the Department. Still, in the spirit of transparency, we provided counts that reflect the total number of entries, including conversational responses outside the Department’s scope.

Moving forward, our goal is to strengthen communication so community members can clearly see how their input shapes policies, while also ensuring confidentiality and compliance with legal obligations. We are committed to improving the consistency, accessibility, and transparency of this process.

Leadership and Trust

Finally, participants raised important concerns about leadership presence and overall trust in the Department. Some felt that the Chief’s absence signaled that community engagement was not a priority, which they described as damaging to credibility. Others pointed to concerns about officers with controversial histories being promoted into training roles, which they felt could undermine reform efforts.

We want to directly address that concern. At the direction of the Chief, the officer in question has since been transferred to another unit. While serving in training, the work this officer provided was consistent with the change we are all working to accomplish. He believes in the reform process and works tirelessly towards change. It is rare to find someone with the skill set needed to move such a complex agreement forward. That said, MPD heard the community loud and clear, and the decision was made to remove him from a training role. This decision reflects our commitment to ensuring the community voice is at the center of reform.

Residents also expressed frustration that long-standing community safety issues—such as activity at Lowry and Penn—remain unresolved. We recognize these concerns and know they require leadership-level and City-level follow-up. These matters were escalated to the Chief and Deputy Chief of Patrol, who have communicated to the appropriate precinct to take action.

We want to be clear: reform is a top priority for MPD leadership, and we are dedicated to making it a success—together with the community. The Chief's absence at this session was due to an urgent conflict; the Chief responded to a critical incident involving park police that day. Your time and voices matter, and leadership must show up. We are committed to ensuring greater leadership presence at future sessions or providing clear communication when scheduling conflicts occur.

Our leadership team views these community conversations as essential to building trust, ensuring accountability, and driving lasting reform. While we know there is much work ahead, we are committed to walking this path with you, listening to your concerns, and working together to achieve meaningful change.

Closing

We thank all participants for their time, honesty, passion, and engagement. The concerns raised during this session demonstrate both the urgency of reform and the importance of building trust through transparency. Our goal is never to confuse or overwhelm the community. If anything in this document is unclear, we strongly encourage you to reach out to us for clarification—the last thing we want is for important information to be misunderstood.

At the last community engagement session, we identified areas where we must do better. This included reestablishing our Community Engagement Team—which had to be rebuilt—and ensuring that future engagement sessions are properly facilitated so that voices are heard, respected, and accurately captured.

We remain committed to following through on the action items identified, continuing to provide updates on progress, and working toward a culture of accountability that truly honors the voices of the community. Reform is not something we can achieve alone—it requires partnership, dialogue, and trust. Together, we can make this process a success.