

DMNA Public Safety Task Force Update

Public Safety Town Hall Summary

October 27, 2020

At the DMNA Public Safety Town Hall Forum on October 27th, moderator Merv Moorhead presented a variety of questions to our elected officials and a panel of law enforcement officials. These questions were drawn from a larger pool of questions written by Public Safety Task Force members and by community members, who were able to submit questions as part of their annual meeting registration. People attending the forum were also invited to submit questions in the chat feature of the Zoom meeting. As a means of describing our community's specific concerns about public safety, we have prepared a list of 1) thirteen questions asked by the moderator; 2) fifty-three other questions received in advance of the forum, and 3) twenty-five chat questions submitted during the forum. This is the complete list of all questions we received; we believe it represents an unambiguous statement of our community's concerns, dissatisfactions, and policy choices. Please review the list closely, and then continue our forum conversation by:

- [Expressing your public safety concerns through emails to our elected officials and the forum panelists](#). We recommend that you reference the DMNA Public Safety Town Hall Forum in the subject line of your emails.
- Speaking at one of two city council hearings on the city's budget. This is an urgent, time-limited opportunity to affect a critical decision on public safety. The mayor's proposed budget already includes significant reductions in law enforcement funding, and the city council will be seeking further cuts to the MPD allocation. If you want to speak against these cuts—or for them—you will need to sign up immediately for one of the available speaking slots on November 16th or December 2nd. Use the following link to sign up; scroll down to select which meeting you prefer. <http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/onlinemeetings/attend-citycouncil-meeting>

A recording of the Town Hall portion of the DMNA Annual Meeting is available [here](#).

Questions Asked by Moderator:

Questions asked of Mayor Frey and/or CM Fletcher:

- What role does MPD play with respect to the overarching public safety strategy within the city of Minneapolis now and into the future?
- The most significant overarching theme from the questions that were submitted pertain to people not feeling safe in the city due to car-jackings, strong arm robberies and gunfire. What is the short-

term plan to address this pressing issue? Are either of you considering the proposal from Operation Safety Now?

- The Mayor has submitted his budget to the City Council for approval. What are the most important pieces of the budget that pertain to public safety?
- There are obvious concerns with the direction of the city of Minneapolis and the impact to our national reputation due to recent events. Chicago, which also has their own problems, has brought on a new Chief Marketing Officer to work with local business to improve the Chicago's brand and to lure visitors and businesses back to the city. What is being done in leading us through this type of process to positively impact the city moving forward?
- The need for police reform is almost universally supported in the city of Minneapolis. What concrete progress is being made in addressing this pressing issue right now and what are the plans for the future?

Questions asked of Mayor Frey, CM Fletcher, and/or Inspector Peterson:

- The concept of “defunding” or shifting funds from MPD to other forms of public safety investments assumes that the activities such as overdose calls, emotionally disturbed persons, and domestic abuse calls will be handled by other agencies. Can these truly be in-lieu of calls or does MPD need to accompany these other agencies which negates the savings?
- Chief Arradondo has stated that due to budget constraints and a loss of sworn officers that MPD is now one dimensional. What does that mean and how does it impact public safety?
- Hot Rodding in the city and beyond is not only dangerous but it also symbolizes to a great degree of a sense of lawlessness. There have been two focused actions that have been very much welcomed and effective. Can you outline how this strategy came about and the results? Secondly, how can this strategy be leveraged against other issues within the city?
- Please address if there are any plans for a beat cop to be placed into the Mill District neighborhood that is already in place in the Northeast Neighborhood? If there isn't a plan, then what are the steps that the community boards can take to put this into action?
- [Follow-up question] There was mention earlier of three different [MPD] classes that are coming on line [and] we've had a lot of discussion today about the short-term issue that we're facing. How long does it take to recruit a class and have that class go from day 1 until they're active on the street?

Questions asked of Board Member Cowgill, Chief Ohotto, Chief Brook Blakey, and/or Shane Zahn:

- We are once again facing a homeless crisis that is impacting our parks and transit system. There are a number of people here tonight that are now afraid to use these important features of the city. What actions are being taken in order to both help those in need and increase safety?

- Metro Transit stations and train stops in Minneapolis have become pain points for public safety issues. Obviously, there are several critical stations within the DMNA perimeter. What is the department doing to ensure safety at these stops such that the residents and the visitors who wish to use public safety safe?
- What role does the DID play with respect to public safety downtown and do you this role expanding and changing in the future?

(Unasked) advance questions:

- Chief Arradondo announced that he is planning to start the new-year with 531 sworn officers, a 73 person reduction from 2020 in order to adapt to budget cuts. The Minneapolis city charter from the 2010 census requires over 600 officers and the 2020 census will show that this number will need to increase based on the significantly rising population. How does the city plan to reconcile these cuts with the city charter that requires far more officers per capita?
- There are many people that signed up for tonight's call that believe that the city council is moving down the wrong path with respect to the police and are concerned that their voices are not being heard. How can we make sure that the citizens within the DMNA are being heard?
- The current budget for MPD is \$184MM. What is the projected MPD budget needed to adequately address the public safety issues that we are currently experiencing in Minneapolis?
- How does the Mayors budget proposal address the safety issues in Minneapolis? How will the addition of 3 recruiting classes have a significant short- and long-term impact on the safety issues that we face and the culture of the MPD?
- How does the Mayor's budget impact the homeless crisis that we are experiencing as a city?
- What is your stance on the public safety portion of the Mayor's budget?
- How has COVID impacted the financial position of the Metro Transit System and the Parks and Recreation Department?
- What investment is needed to become more proactive versus reactive? And what will this investment do to decrease the response time to 911 calls?
- There has been a great deal of discussion surrounding the concept of Defunding the MPD and investing those funds in other forms of public safety. How much money are you proposing to shift to these other forms of safety and where does this leave the MPD with respect to the total number of officers?

- There are now multiple groups that are actively working alongside MPD to positively impact public safety such as MAD Dads, Violence Interrupters and Downtown Ambassadors. Are there early results that can be reported on? What are the longer-term plans to expand these types of programs?
- Operation Safety Now has proposed a short-term plan to address the dramatic increase in violent crimes that we are currently experiencing. What is your position on the implementation of this plan and if you are not aligned with this plan, what is your plan to address this issue?
- Slightly over a year ago Chief Arradondo was requesting an additional 400 officers and we are now down over 130 officers from that period. What is the ideal size of the MPD to deliver on the safety needs of the city?
- There is broad consensus that change is needed within the MPD. What are the necessary changes that have been identified, what action steps have been taken to date and what progress has been made to date?
- In which ways are the MPD, MRPD and Metro Transit collaborating to enhance deliver on the safety needs across the city?
- How has the Ambassador program impacted Metro Transit Safety statistics?
- We have experienced several instances of civil unrest / rioting since the tragic death of George Floyd. What have we learned from these experiences and what will be done differently moving forward?
- The drag racing and large group gatherings have contributed to a sense of lawlessness in the city. There was a recent coordinated effort to address this issue which is very welcomed. What other actions will be taken to address the drag racing issue and the sense of lawlessness.
- Hennepin and Nicollet Avenues are the main business and cultural arteries of the city. There is a growing number of people that will view these areas as “no go” zones which can have a dramatic impact on the financial health of the city. What is being done to aggressively address this concern?
- What is the plan to decrease the violence among young people? What additional resources can we provide them to engage in constructive behavior?
- I no longer feel safe walking around the downtown area in my own neighborhood. I have heard many excuses but few solutions. I do not agree with our city council that defunding police is the right answer and actually believe their narrative has encouraged more lawlessness. We need compassionate, common sense policing. How can we get there in the next 90 days or less?
- There’s a lot of discussion in Minneapolis about the best way to provide public safety in a way that keeps everyone safe and feeling secure. For downtown specifically, how important is a visible presence vs other strategy like quick incident response, non-law enforcement interrupters, technology-based security systems, etc.?

- I am concerned about the approach taken, thus far, by the city council in their assessment of the changes needed in public safety. Minneapolis downtown residents are not feeling adequately represented in their concerns. How are you taking a data driven approach to assessing changes in public safety to ensure the voice of your constituents is being heard as a whole and not just the vocal minority and extreme viewpoints?
- How can the City of Minneapolis and the City Council better engage with the “majority” of your residents who want both police reform and improved community security, and do not favor abolishing the MPD?
- What can we do to make our downtown community safe for all?
- How bad do things need to get downtown before Minneapolis city government will adjust course?
- What actions are being taken to protect downtown Minneapolis residents, businesses, and visitors, regarding short- and long-term planning?
- What can be done about the loitering and aggressive panhandling in front of the Target store on Nicollet Mall? It goes on 7 days a week?
- Downtown and neighborhood streets appear to be unsafe. I support the use of violence interrupters and efforts to provide options to prevent problems. However, the crimes that we are seeing, require a deterrence by police officers. When will we see more police officers on the street to deter these crimes?
- What is the one thing that you are stopping and one thing that you are starting as a team as we head into 2021?
- Will we ever have to witness the rioting and looting that took place on Lake Street and the 3rd district and on Nicollet Mall?
- What / is there a contingency plan for the city and downtown businesses in preparation for potential unrest after Election Day?
- On October 8th over 60 residents expressed their concerns to the Public safety committee. It was proposed, as a short term emergency solution, that the city hire temporary part time officers from other agencies. Is this an option that is being considered and acted upon?
- Can we have greater enforcement of both bicycles and scooters that would keep them off the sidewalks where they are endangering both humans and pets?
- Please detail what specific measure are being taken to support and help our city’s homeless population and assist them with developing job skills and longer-term life skills?

- Can you elaborate on the public engagement process that the city has been laid out and how groups such as ours can appropriately represent thoughts of the 50,000 people within our community?
- How can our community support best practices and public safety in our neighborhoods?
- We know that MPD needs to be reformed but we need to change the public perception of MPD. Can we retool the message of defund the police to something more positive?
- How can we more effectively use the 2nd street substation to meet neighborhood needs?
- Cowgill and Ohotto - Waterworks is going to open in the near future. This area of the city, including the Stone Arch Bridge, Mill Ruins have seen an increase in drug dealing, gang activity and theft. We need residents and visitors to feel safe coming downtown. How are you looking to address this growing problem and prevent this space from becoming an attractive nuisance?
- Mayor and SF - Chief Arradondo announced that he is planning to start the new-year with 531 sworn officers, a 73 person reduction from 2020 in order to adapt to budget cuts to MPD. The Minneapolis city charter from the 2010 census requires over 600 officers and the 2020 census will show that this number will need to increase based on the significantly rising population. How does the city plan to reconcile these cuts with the city charter that requires far more officers per capita?
- Mayor and Steve Fletcher – There are grave concerns about public safety now and moving forward. How does your recent budget submission impact public safety within the city of Minneapolis? Are there critical imperatives that must be approved?
- Councilman Fletcher – As you review the budget that has been submitted by Mayor Frey with respect to public safety, are there areas where you are aligned and are there areas of concern for you?
- What is the plan to address non-violent crimes that never get investigated after the victims file police reports? These victims deserve to feel safe from such crimes as harassment, invasion of privacy, identity theft, fraud, and other non-violent crimes whereby the victims don't get physically hurt, but get hurt by decreased safety and fear for their life. Will there be investigators assigned to non-violent crimes?
- To improve safety on Metro Transit trains, will there be efforts to not have the trains be "homes" for the homeless and those suffering from drugs and alcohol? Will a new fare-paying system be set up that enables only fare-paying customers to board trains and thereby increase safety for passengers? Using the "Text for Safety" feature for reporting incidents on trains should not be a normal way of life for passengers on a daily basis. The incidents should be prevented to begin with by establishing a new system that doesn't allow troublemakers to board trains to begin with.
- What is the plan to address any riots that may arise as the result of any presidential voting result discrepancies that could occur? With the delay in getting the true results of the vote count due to absentee voting, how will potential "voting unrest" be handled?

- Will there be enforcement of the law that was just passed to not have any poll watchers try to intimate voters at the polls?
- Mayor Frey – you have been asked many times by media if you support defunding MPD and you have always answered “it depends on what you mean by defunding.” Therefore, please answer this specific question assuming the standard definition of defund which is to fund an entity less than what it was funded before – do you support reducing MPD’s budget in any way, shape or form?
- Chief Ohotto – over the last 3+ years the park board has threatened to cut your budget, reduce police, replace police with civilian workers, not fill police vacancies, and prohibited any collaboration with MPD. How has all of this affected your officers’ morale and ability to carry out their law enforcement duties?
- Mayor Frey: Law enforcement resources in Minneapolis are dangerously low. Nonetheless, there is broad support for your budget proposal on LE. How can we most effectively express this support to the city council?
- CM Fletcher: There have been serious and recurrent crime and disorder issues in our neighborhood and we have greatly appreciated your work to address some of the specific issues. But intervention-by-council member can never be an effective substitute for a well-managed city-wide public safety system, with centralized management responsibility and a clear line of political accountability. Nor can the kind of issues we are facing be prevented or immediately addressed by mental health workers or community volunteers. What is your position on neighborhood-based community policing?
- MPRB (Ohotto or Cowgill): The central riverfront has become the most popular public space in downtown Minneapolis, for both residents and visitors. Recent acts of public disorder, vandalism, and serious criminality, on the Stone Arch Bridge, at Mill Ruins Park, and elsewhere on the central riverfront, are damaging the very heart of the downtown public realm. How well is this problem understood by the MPRB, and what it is doing to increase its protection of these areas?
- MPD: There are strong sentiments in the community on the need for a robust law enforcement presence, but also on needed reform of MPD. We understand the many obstacles to finding this balance, and we understand that leadership within MPD is essential. How can our community most effectively support reform-oriented MPD leadership?
- Metro Transit: Personal safety and public disorder on public transit have had enormous negative effects on the city's reputation. To its credit, Metro Transit began to seriously address this problem even before this spring and summer's pandemic conditions and social unrest. But those conditions have exacerbated the problem... and resolving the problem is fundamental to the city's recovery.

How will you ensure that public transit will become a safe and pleasant experience for residents and visitors?

Questions from chat room:

Note: The chat room served several purposes during the annual meeting, but included questions and (numerous) comments about public safety issues. The decision rule used for including a chat entry in this list was that the entry had to pose a question intended for use in the forum.

- Is Steve Fletcher for or against defunding the police?
- Council member Fletcher. Why has the short-term rental ordinance taken so long? I think we've been waiting almost a year.
- Councilman Fletcher: Are you open minded enough to be convinced to not defund the police?
- Councilmember Fletcher. Do you stand by the pledge to defund the Minneapolis Police Department? Do you still support the charter amendment the council put forward? Do you still believe the police chief should report to the entire city council, rather than the mayor? And do you still believe the leader of the public safety entity you would propose to create should not have a policing background?
- Wondering if there is a way during this meeting to conduct a straw poll regarding defunding the police.
- My question is why was it essential to shutter these MPD units if they were very important? Is it to do with not having enough people in place or a shift in \$ to other non-MPD organizations?
- Councilman Fletcher - Most people believe that policing is an integral part of public safety. And most people do not support unprofessional or bad police officers. But most of us believe strongly that there are dedicated and professional police officers who provide a vital service to our community. But the narrative that we have seen presented by the city council appears to strongly advocate defunding / dismantling the police force. This stand has fueled the perception that Minneapolis does not support police. And that it has no alternative to this need. These makes no sense to most of us. Why can't you and the city recognize this reality and - 1) Make a public stand that expresses support for our city's police department 2) say that this position does not condone bad players or inappropriate police activity and in fact tis behavior is NOT acceptable and will not be tolerated 3) the city council in committed to working WITH Chief Arradondo, the Mayor, residents and businesses to form a unified front...
- What are you doing about Kroll and the internal issues with him supporting bad cops, rehiring them and telling them to 'let us see how bad it can be without us
- What about enforcing loitering laws? Too many people hanging out in an area doing nothing but harassing people trying to get to work or home.
- Councilmember Fletcher. So are you saying you still support the charter amendment as it was submitted to the Charter Commission?
- What can be done to reform Minneapolis police off-duty work? The program is fraught w serious issues. Officers are often paid in cash. There is very little record keeping of which officers are posted up where, etc. Officer Chauvin is now facing serious IRS issues in addition to being an accused

murdered, due to his under the table off duty work. He was known as a “warlord” within the department for his role in dishing out the off-duty jobs. Venues like First Ave are also discontinuing their relationship with MPD. This greatly reduces the footprint of the MPD and is a direct assault on Kroll and the Federation, because it is the Off-Duty work that really makes being a Minneapolis Police Officer a lucrative gig. They don’t get paid well, particularly in their early years and often work 80 plus hours a week when you include the off duty hours. A boycott of businesses that use off-duty officers is currently being organized. Please see the recent audit conducted by the city.

- Mr. Fletcher: You prematurely made an announcement to defund the police before researching these pie-in-the-sky resources you speak of. Yes in an ideal world, mental health workers and social workers could respond to these calls. That is not reality. When a call comes into 911, it is very chaotic. You never know what you will be responding to until you arrive on scene. You cannot send in a community member without having a police officer beside them. Fire department won't even respond until officers' radio the scene is safe. Do you think Sally, the social worker, is going to respond at 3 a.m. alone to a mental health call?
- How will the candidates deal with the loud traffic outside the Downtown Cabaret every night?
- Have you considered that increased police presence may actually deter crime? The lack of visibility by the police downtown has been quite apparent, leading criminals to become more and more emboldened by the response of Steve and other members of our local government calling for less and less police. This situation will only worsen with the shift of funding away from where new need it the most.
- Can we get officers to walk a beat? Be in the neighborhoods. Know when things are off and act accordingly.
- [Probably not a panelist Q, but close] The union, HR structure of hiring, reviewing and promoting all need revision and transparency. So let's reform. Let's make it transparent. And let's support the police officers we have. Who would want to work in the city of Minneapolis right now? They are fleeing to the suburbs. If you had a son or daughter on the force, wouldn't you want them working elsewhere? We need to thank and support the officers that are left to serve us and continue to push the mayor and chief to show us reform so we don't lead a national disgrace again.
- Mr. Mayor - who will determine as a threshold issue which 911 call is for an armed officer and which is for a mental health worker? You can't rely just on the 911 caller's information because their info is limited. Also, you simply can't send out a social worker on their own to a purported mental health call because often a mental health situation involves potential violence to others, which means you need an actual cop. So how will any 911 dispatcher know when to send a cop and when to send a health worker?
- How can residents and neighbors support the city in the implementation of policing and homeless strategies?
- What is being done to get businesses to come back downtown?
- Changing the policies are terrific. But how will bad performing police be held accountable beyond just documenting it? If you fire them - that they don't win in arbitration. Documenting accurately with detail has been a criticism in the past regarding leadership doing this consistently.

- [Shane] Zahn, what about the small bodega shop on the corner of 2nd Ave and 2nd Street, it seems like a front for drugs. Is it on the radar with MPD? We've been harassed there on more than 1 occasion.
- When it's safe to come back Steve?!? We live here. We'd like it to be safe NOW.
- CM Fletcher, you talk about engagement, violence interruption and disruptors ... and you just mentioned increase in policing. But you have told the rank and file police officers through a high profile announcement that the city council wants to end their jobs. How is this narrative helpful? What can't a public partnership be presented that includes the police department? And the rest of the community?
- Mr. Fletcher- Three weeks ago I spoke to the City Council Public Safety Committee and in the brief two minutes I was given, I proposed a plan to hire part time officers to fill the IMMEDIATE need our city has for boots on the ground. We cannot continue to rely on mutual aid and the National Guard every time there is a ruling from Judge Cahill. We cannot continue to work the officers we do have into the ground because we will not have a new class of recruits until 2022. We can hire temporary, part time officers NOW. We do not have to pay benefits or into retirement and will save millions in overtime costs. Lt. Kroll said on KSTP he is open to this plan and willing to negotiate with the Council to make this happen. Your response is still to have more community responders?
- How can we get more CPS in our neighborhood? I've sent messages to Renee Allen and Luther Krueger and have not had a response.

[Link to Public Safety Town Hall Forum speakers and panelists](#)

[Link to sign-up form for November 16th and December 2nd budget hearings](#)