Implementing the Pillars of the 21st Century Policing Task Force Report in Pittsburgh

**Pillar 1: Building Trust and Legitimacy** – Western Allegheny County law enforcement is blessed with strong law enforcement partnerships. Facilitated by the United States Attorney, David Hickton, Pittsburgh police have strong partnerships with state, local, and federal law enforcement agencies. A regional fusion center is being developed to enhance information sharing to more effectively respond to the mobility of those engaged in violent criminal activities.

In recognition of the complexity of the violence problems facing our communities, the City of Pittsburgh is resolved to attack this problem with a multi-disciplinary approach. The City has joined forces with the Allegheny County Health Department and Allegheny County Human Services in a commitment to work together in a systematic manner to reduce violence. In partnership with our generous philanthropic community, much is being done, but much more remains to do.

The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police (PBP) has taken a leadership role in this arena. Since the criminal justice system has a primary role to play, police serve as the focal point for discussions on the issue of violent crime, making police the natural conveners of the early discussions.

Our efforts to build trust and legitimacy are also demonstrated in our steadfast dedication to creating an organization that is highly ethical, accountable and transparent. The PBP has done this in several innovative formats, such as the creation of the civilian police academy which demonstrates to the public the ethical guidelines and legal precedents for our actions. Accountability is ensured by the creation of the Office of Professional Standards, and transparency is personified in the implementation of the body worn camera program, for which there are many volunteers. In addition, PBP officers spend countless hours engaging in a positive way with community oriented policing, per the guidelines of the COPS program and other curriculums. These efforts have had a significant impact on our ability to preserve the law, as citizens are more willing to accept and obey the law because they believe those who are enforcing it are doing it in a just way.

**Pillar 2: Policy and Oversight** – In addition to the Citizen’s Police Review Board, an independent agency appointed by the Mayor that is set up to investigate citizen complaints about improper police conduct, an Office of Professional Standards has been created by Chief Cameron McLay. Created in 2015, this Office serves to review the Bureau’s performance standards, examine policies, and explore best practices in order to incorporate them into training. The goals of the Office are to provide transparency, conduct internal investigations, develop knowledge of grievances, and ensure policy compliance. In 2016 the Office will undertake refinement of internal record keeping and additional oversight of pursuits and use of force in order to bring increased accountability and credibility to the Bureau.

Policies created in Pittsburgh are reflective of community values, which is inherent in the democratic process. The Bureau of Police places a high value on preserving the rights of the citizens of Pittsburgh. This is demonstrated in our professional handling of numerous protests in the city throughout the years. Additionally, we have embarked on the process of teaching Procedural Justice not only to our sworn officers but also to the community.

**Pillar 3: Technology and Social Media** – The Police Bureau is overhauling its data analysis capacity, moving toward real time crime analysis to better support officers and detectives in the field, as well as to support strategic decision-making at the command level. The goal is to move toward predictive analytics, sharing data, and building collaboration between police and elements
of the criminal justice system, human services, and other support entities. Ultimately, the goal is
crime prevention through proactive intervention, rather than reactive response and arrest. Mass
incarceration has not solved the violence problems to date; more thoughtful intervention models
are needed.

Police will be using data analytics, developed with the assistance of research partners from
Carnegie Mellon University, Allegheny County Human Services, University of Pittsburgh, John
Jay College, Duquesne University and others, to improve their capacity to more precisely define
the nature, location, and individuals driving the violence. Police will be working closely with
persons who serve as the moral voice of the impacted communities. Those engaged will be
offered opportunities including education, job training, and treatment to help them in their choice
to move away from the criminal lifestyle.

Pittsburgh police have realigned the structure and functioning of their Major Crimes Unit,
embracing the research-based best practices of the profession. The new model emphasizes strong
collaboration and communication among the detectives, Crime Analysis Unit, and zone-based
patrol officers. Since the violence shows a retaliatory pattern, the focus has shifted from simply
trying to arrest the offender in the case to a more proactive stance: identifying the next likely
victims and offenders, and intervening to prevent retaliation, where possible.

In 2015 the Bureau of Police began a massive social media campaign to better inform the public –
a sincere effort to bring legitimacy to police actions and functions – and this has created a
dialogue that increases our transparency and legitimacy. Currently our social media outreach
includes thousands of Pittsburgh residents. The Bureau of Police is also in the process of
increasing non-lethal technology.

**Pillar 4: Community Policing and Crime Reduction** – The Bureau of Police was fortunate to
be selected as a pilot site for President Obama’s National Initiative for Building Community Trust
and Justice. The process, involving implicit bias and procedural justice training and community
engagement, is intended to build trust and collaboration between police and community members
– a necessary prerequisite to violent crime reduction.

The City has been a very active member of the “My Brother’s Keeper” initiative, “to address
persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young
people can reach their full potential.” We recognize despair and hopelessness fuel criminal
lifestyle choices and help fuel violence, and we seek to close opportunity gaps that exist.

Pittsburgh police determined that over two-thirds of the city’s homicides and non-fatal shootings
follow a particularly disturbing pattern: the violence has a dramatic impact on the African
American community and is centered predominantly in underprivileged neighborhoods of color.
To more effectively respond to this all-too-common trend, the Bureau of Police is partnering with
the rest of the Allegheny County criminal justice system, government and private sector service
providers, and faith- and community-based leaders to apply a focused deterrence approach to the
most violent individuals and groups in the city.

**Pillar 5: Training and Education** – Each member of the PBP will receive Procedural
Justice/Implicit Bias Training. The customizable procedural justice curriculum is based on a
model that was co-developed by National Initiative researchers Tracey Meares, Tom Tyler, and
Phil Goff in collaboration with experienced police trainers from the Chicago Police Department.
Several PBP officers went to Chicago for the Police Department’s train-the-trainer instruction.
The components of the training are:

• Procedural Justice I – The goal of the first day will be to make training participants aware of concepts of procedural justice and how to incorporate those ideas into their daily activities, particularly during their interactions with the community. Also included in the first day of training is a segment on policing in historical perspective, which has been identified by John Jay as a critical first step in the development of the reconciliation process.

• Procedural Justice II – The second day will build upon the first, incorporating a number of simulation exercises. The goal is to teach officers advanced techniques for applying procedural justice concepts in the field.

• Procedural Justice III (Implicit Bias) – The final day incorporates implicit bias training into an overall procedural justice-implicit bias training program. Both ideas will be presented within one integrated framework. This type of integrated training has never been done before; there have been training programs in both areas, but each has been distinct. The goals of day three are to raise awareness of implicit bias, to teach officers how to recognize it, and to provide them with strategies to minimize its impact on their interactions with community members.

In addition to Procedural Justice training, the PBP has started to train officers in Leadership in Police Organizations (LPO), and this is having a profound positive effect on the performance of officers. LPO stresses ethical leadership and followership at every level, thereby creating a highly functional job environment.

**Pillar 6: Officer Wellness and Safety** – Critical incident and organizational stress take an unacceptably high human toll. Improving the way we take care of our PBP employees is a top priority, so we made Employee Wellness one of our strategic planning topics and formed an Employee Wellness Committee. The Committee proposed that a new peer support team be created, and it approved the implementation of the team’s recommendations in total. Chief Cameron McLay has created a position for an Employee Wellness and Resource Coordinator.

The established Wellness program is a dynamic part of the PBP environment, adding crucial wellness resources to the PBP community. These services have the desired impact of increasing morale and ensuring officers are in the best state to perform their duties, and this is reflected in the outstanding work performed by the members of the PBP on a daily basis.

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