Notes from 10/7/20 Deliberative Conversation on Policing

Option 1: Increase Accountability

Benefits	Drawbacks/Trade-offs
- Some go into law enforcement (LE) for the wrong reasons. - Ending access to military-grade weapons. LE make decisions for safety of officers, but don't always consider community. - Independent board – could hold more accountable. - Maybe input from citizens could help? Ongoing relationship with police, where they feed info about the community and police feed information about LE work. - Body cameras are universally a good idea. - Can't see a reason not to have recorded. - Review of body cam footage could be purview of CRB - CRB – How would you know it's just "a few bad apples" without external review? - Qualified immunity – if LE had alternatives and didn't take them, should have to face consequences. - Tracking – So often after the fact, hear that this officer had all these other complaints with no consequences. - LE are public officials, so increased openness within capacity of jobs would be warranted. - Potential to restructure unions? - Police culture can be an issue – protect your own, violent crimes can cause them to protect each other. - Should some of these positions be elected? (Police Chief) would require them to build community trust. - Psychology of how people work under stress. If could be educated in training, that could assist LE.	- Experience has been good with most officers in the community. - Most respond positively with training. - Military weapons – can keep LE safer, so difficult to make the decision not to accept when it could keep officers alive. - Independent board (CRB) – untrained civilians, how would they know if it's the right or wrong decision? - LE are citizens of community/neighbors. - Citizen Review Board sounds like a good idea, but I'm not going to a doctor's office to tell the doctor how to treat people. - Constant body cam recording – data capture could be difficult. - Body cam footage can be manipulated. - Effect can multiply over time, so it can be difficult to capture/fix based on individual issues people have and extrapolate. - End of qualified immunity – they are making split-second decisions.

Option 2: Confront Persistent Racial Discrimination in Policing

Benefits	Drawbacks
- Every one of us has bias. People are designed genetically to make patterns out of things. Often we do that without much information. - As citizens we have to acknowledge that LE have biases. They're humans. They're functioning in an extremely stressful environment and have to develop self-awareness of this topic. - The culture of this country was built on a bias, and it's so engrained we don't even realize it. - Intensive training for senior LE and intentional practice can have benefits - You find the money and time to do training if you think it's a priority. - To be treated like a human is first and foremost. If you're not treating people the way you or a family member would want to be treated, it's a problem. Looking at some of the situations, it looks like LE aren't treating people as a life. - This has been happening for so long. White people have the responsibility to make the change at this point. - There should be a level of parity in LE mirroring the community (i.e. Topeka is 10% Black, force should mirror that)	- Don't think simple cultural diversity training will do enough to root out systemic racism. - Can take policing and see disparities, but the question to ask is how much is due to the bias of the LE or the system. What percent of disparity is based on LE bias? How effective is training in decreasing? - How do you find time and money to offer intensive training? - Seems to go into defunding the police, but police need more money to be able to focus on training and situational training. Maybe smarter allocation of funding. - Some neighborhoods have disproportionate level of violent crimes, and it's important to police at high levels. - Need to identify type of discrimination occurring. One can infer discrimination based on disparity, but it's not definite.

Option 3: De-Escalate to Create New Responses to Nonviolent Problems

Benefits	Drawbacks
▪ Domestic violence – good people sometimes do bad things ▪ Truancy – having LE in charge of this can cause negative first interactions for children with officers. Can cause dissonance in learning. Can end up in juvenile court. ▪ Truancy – issue is schools are so poorly funded. Needing to call an officer can point to issues with family. ▪ Domestic violence – could be take off LE plate except in actual violent situations that need to be ended in moment. Team approach would be better. Advocates, crisis intervention, etc. ▪ Would it help to have foot patrols, community assistance with policing? Or should it just be informal network? Is this a strategy to help fill in gaps if police are defunded or lose funding? ▪ Training for LE on when to call in others, ex: mental health, domestic violence, etc.	▪ Domestic violence – women and children die. People have to be protected. ▪ There has to be a balance. I worry that lumping domestic violence in with other offenses could be an issue. ▪ Truancy – officers present in schools for safety/school shootings ▪ Crisis Intervention Team – Topeka is not an altogether safe place to be at 3 o'clock in the morning, so could be safety issues based on taking LE with guns out of equation. ▪ Neighborhood watch can have very concerning results due to empowering "vigilante"-types.

Reflection

What ideas hadn't you considered before?
- Learned a lot of what I don't know about how LE works.
- Option 3 – was unaware of what a more holistic approach to policing could look like.
- Discussion more about community management instead of policing – lots of problems in community – some social issues, some violent crimes – as a community is there a different way to manage these issues (rather than using original system of policing)?
- Police in schools, and how that has evolved over time.
- Difference between how elected and appointed/hired police officials might behave.

What common ground did we see?
- The system is broken.
- Seemed to have a lot of agreement about the complexity of the issues.

Who was missing from the conversation?
- Law Enforcement officer.
- Someone who does not believe there is racial disparity/systemic racism.
- Strong advocate for disbanding police.

Which ideas seemed most likely to reduce issues of racial discrimination with LE?
- Making sure LE looks like the community and has good representation.
- Increased accountability could help both LE and help community to understand LE.

What ideas could increase or decrease public safety?
- Neighborhood watch model could potentially decrease public safety.

What questions still remain? What work do we still need to do as a community?
- Have to think about the decision-makers. They could benefit from this discussion.

What could you learn more about as an individual?
- Learn more about efficacy of bias training in LE and whether that has affected disparity.
- What really affects decreasing crime? Ex: mentoring.

General comments:
- This was completely different than discussing things on the internet in writing.
- Really appreciate everyone's perspective.