

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DATA ANALYSIS

DISTRICT TASK FORCE ON JAILS & JUSTICE

Phase 1 Report

District Task Force on Jails and Justice Community Engagement Data Analysis 2019

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Introduction

This report gives an overview of the community engagement work completed in service of a grant awarded in December of 2018 by the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants of the government of the District of Columbia. It is intended to provide information to the public at-large, participant contributors, and policymakers.

The purpose of this stakeholder engagement project is to help the city understand community input about a potential new jail. Community engagement is one portion of this project, in addition to an analysis of current incarceration data in DC Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities (see separate Data Analysis Report), and the convening and operation of the District Task Force on Jails and Justice.

This effort comes on the heels of multiple city-driven efforts to consider or plan for a new jail, including a recent design proposal bid process which was halted before results were made public. These efforts have been predicated on the age, structural limitations, and maintenance costs and concerns of the current jail, known as the Central Detention Facility (CDF). They have largely not included community engagement. At the time of the closing of Lorton Prison, there was limited engagement undertaken by the Bureau of Prisons in service of considering the construction of another prison in the DC area.

The community engagement for this project was designed and conducted by the National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens (NRNRC)¹ in partnership with the Council for Court Excellence and the Vera Institute of Justice. Engagement took place between March and August 2019. All community engagement findings are reportable to the District Task Force on Jails and Justice for consideration in making recommendations. These findings are also reportable directly to the public in this report. Reporting has included updates at Task Force meetings, an interim report, access to raw data in the form of transcripts, and a summary presentation.

NRNRC developed a three-part community engagement strategy that addressed key stakeholder groups and produced quantitative and qualitative data for consideration by the Task Force. Engagement took place across the city, in person and online, in an effort to make participation accessible to all city residents and community members. Approximately 2000 individuals participated during the engagement period from March through August 2019.

Our goal for this engagement period was to compile a community vision for the future of justice in DC. In order to achieve this goal, we worked to provide a dynamic set of opportunities for stakeholder interaction and input.

Data collection was framed by two main questions:

- What needs does your community have regarding safety?

¹ The National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens is a nonprofit network of individuals returning from incarceration with a dual mission of advocacy and client-centered care.

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- Should we build a new jail and how should we handle incarceration in the District of Columbia?

Importantly, these questions, and the goal to articulate a community vision for justice, situate the decision about building a new jail within a broader context.

The decision to build a jail cannot be made in isolation from how residents feel more broadly about safety in their community, and how the jail fits into other investments or approaches to this understanding of safety. These framing questions informed the topics used to solicit feedback in all three engagement events.

The following pages will present an overview of the design of the study, summary findings from each engagement event, and a brief conclusion.

Methodology

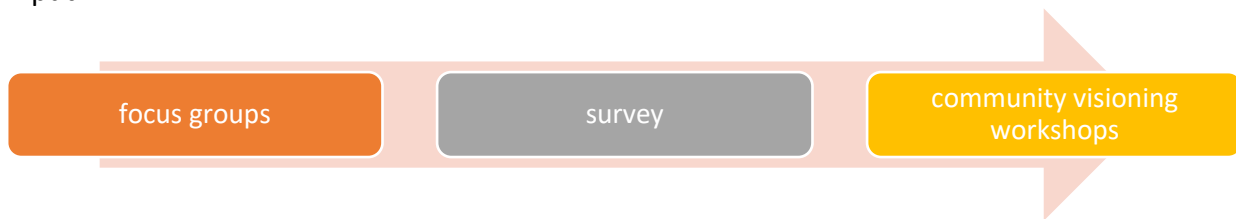
Research Design

Based on our goal to articulate a community vision for justice, we designed our engagement around two topic areas, Community Safety and Incarceration, represented by our framing questions.

Community Safety	Incarceration
Why we asked for feedback To understand community needs for safety To place incarceration feedback in context	Why we asked for feedback To determine public support for a new jail To reimagine justice in the District
What we asked What needs does your community have regarding safety?	What we asked Should we build a new jail and how should we handle incarceration in the District of Columbia?

This framing considers a reimagining of justice in the District, and would allow us to gauge support for a new facility in the absence of a particular proposal. In order to avoid biasing the results in favor of the status quo, we sought responses that left the conversation open or explicitly probed the use of incarceration more broadly. We knew we would need to understand people’s specific needs regarding safety, as defined by them, and their desired delivery of address for those needs, without a presumption of support for or consensus on building a jail.

Our design featured three engagement methods to capture both quantitative and qualitative input:



These methods were designed in sequence, with the majority of focus groups completed by the time of the survey development, and the majority of surveys and focus groups complete at the time of the community workshops. Focus groups were designed in part to contextualize the input from the survey. For example, while the survey asked respondents to rate their sense of safety, the focus groups allow us to understand the contributing factors to these ratings as well as different perspectives on the definition of safety. In addition to gathering further input,

workshops were designed to share information and build on the data analysis and committee work underway in the project.

Using mixed qualitative and quantitative methods produced high levels of participation and rich information. It also allowed for multiple ways of interacting with the community: electronically and in-person; briefly, at length, and over a period of time; and privately and with others. This range of opportunities ideally made participation more accessible.

Focus groups kicked off engagement with a face-to-face format designed to target specific stakeholder groups for feedback. These included:

- returning citizens
- families of those incarcerated and formerly incarcerated
- people currently incarcerated in CDF and CTF
- community advocates
- service providers
- DOC staff
- crime victims and victim advocates
- neighbors of the jail
- family shelter resident

Focus groups allowed for detailed exploration of opinions and reasoning that helped inform the final details of the remaining engagement pieces. In addition to the opportunity for nuance, these open discussions made space for topics that may not have been scripted in the guiding questions. Focus groups took place primarily in public library meeting spaces, to boost accessibility. Other times we would meet particular stakeholder groups in an appropriate location, such as on a unit in the jail or at the DOC staff training facility.

The community survey was developed to enable a wider reach among the community as it requires no administration time (at least online) and can reach those without the time or other resources to attend focus groups. The survey also provided the opportunity to compare responses across demographic or stakeholder groups.

Community visioning workshops represented a return to face-to-face engagement to allow particularly interested individuals to sustain their engagement, as well as bring others to the table who had not yet participated. As with the focus groups, workshops included DC community members at-large, not just residents, to account for those who work or study in the city. Workshops were held near Metro stops and during weekday evenings to encourage participation. In contrast with the focus groups and survey, the workshops were structured specifically to present contextual information about DC and incarceration to inform a robust discussion. The information was delivered in a 30-minute presentation and included a history of the use of incarceration in the District as well as 2018 DOC population data analyzed by the Vera Institute of Justice as a part of this project. This presentation responded to calls from some focus group and survey participants for more information, some citing their need for more information as a reason for abstention from opinion.

To reduce bias in responses, information about the current jail facilities was provided only briefly in invitations to participate in focus groups and the survey. During community workshops, participants were provided with much more information, as the goals of these events were to share information as well as collect input.

We used the following methods to gain stakeholder participants: Professional networks (including those of the researchers and Task Force members), Department of Corrections administrative staff, community organizations and advocacy groups, listservs, Twitter, city community relations officials, DC Council community relations officials, paper flyers, as well as the personal and professional networks of prior participants. Recipients were encouraged to share among their networks. We also produced access to these opportunities among stakeholder groups with barriers to participation, by holding focus groups within the jail, for example, or offering activities and snacks for children.

The focus groups and survey were designed to be confidential and anonymous, respectively, to mitigate the risks of participation for vulnerable populations and encourage candid responses. In this study we intentionally included incarcerated participants, considered vulnerable in research, and protect other groups such as DOC staff, crime victims, shelter residents, and families of the incarcerated. No participant is identified in this report. Confidentiality and anonymity were communicated to prospective participants in an effort to encourage these populations to participate. Specific focus groups were planned for distinct target populations that may not feel comfortable sharing outside of that group, for instance, crime victims. In the case of the workshops, participants were not asked to agree to confidentiality, although we did not collect identifying information.

Data Collection

Data collection began with focus groups in March. These focus groups were designed to include 90 minutes of semi-structured discussion based on a set of guiding questions related to community safety and incarceration. Each focus group, with the exception of the one in the family shelter, produced audio recordings that we transcribed. The natural flow of conversation was encouraged with minimal interruption in order to solicit ideas in an open-ended fashion with general prompting (e.g. “what does your community need” versus “does your community need housing”). An introduction to the project, the purpose of the study, and an agenda were provided to participants before the recorded data collection.

All focus groups were to be confidential, meaning: collection of consent forms separate from demographic information collection and available only to the researchers; audio recording only available to the researchers and only for the duration of the project; transcripts include no identifying information; participant signed agreement not to identify other participants outside the group.

We completed 14 focus groups during this first phase, then continued with 7 focus groups after the development of the survey in order to reach stakeholders that we had previously been unable to schedule. Feedback from these initial 14 focus groups informed the creation of the survey tool. In total, this collection method took place over five months, from March 29th to August 21st. DC community members regardless of residence were invited to participate in order to include those that work but do not live in DC.

The second phase of data collection began in June when we released a community survey. To promote a high rate of response and completion, the survey was designed to take 5-10 minutes. The topics and answer options for the survey drew on focus group discussions about community needs and perceptions of safety. For example, the survey asks whether the respondent communicates with neighbors about safety based on the recurring focus group theme about knowing one's neighbors. In total, 48 optional questions were included in the survey: 34 closed questions, primarily using a Likert scale, 3 open questions, and 11 demographics questions.

Survey participation was anonymous and limited to DC residents only, screened by an initial yes/no question on residency. We chose to survey DC residents only, because of the proportion of questions based on neighborhood or government investments. We did not ask for participant addresses to verify residence to maintain anonymity, so it is possible some respondents falsely claimed DC residence to gain access to the survey. Due to distribution method, it is likely that the survey oversampled individuals whose profession relates to the justice system.

The survey used SurveyMonkey to deliver an electronic version of the survey, which was intended to be the primary collection format. We also used paper surveys to canvass at events, which we chose based on appropriateness for surveying, likelihood of stakeholder attendance, and location in Wards with disproportionate justice involvement. In total we canvassed at 9 events, bringing in 285 responses. The online survey separately collected 1,503 responses, not including those who said no to DC residency or viewed but did not complete any survey questions. A Spanish version was available online but received only one response. The survey was online from June 25th to August 5th, and event surveys were collected between June 15th and July 27th, for a total of seven weeks of survey collection. For a copy of the survey, see [Appendix 1](#).

The third data collection phase took the form of two community visioning workshops. Following a 30-minute informational presentation, the workshops featured breakout discussions on topics under consideration by Task Force committees, during which participant ideas were taken down on chart paper. Each group was given a brief introduction to the topic and a set of guiding questions for these 15-30 minute discussions (see [Appendix 6](#)). Finally, participants were asked to submit vision statements about the future of justice in DC. The data collected during these events was the most limited, due to the relatively small number of participants (just over 50), and due to the collection method (brief notes and individual statements).

Following the engagement events, the Task Force held a Town Hall meeting which served as an additional opportunity to share opinions directly to Task Force members. Many of those who submitted testimony had also participated in an engagement event.

All three engagement events used samples of convenience, meaning we relied on participants who were easy to reach instead of random which could have produced a more representative sample of the DC community. Therefore, we cannot generalize about the city's preferences as a whole. We mitigated this limitation by analyzing survey responses by subgroups. In addition, the project was designed to target particular stakeholder groups rather than simply the population at large. One benefit of our sampling method is that we had a large number of very

willing participants and robust conversations among interested and invested parties. Our survey responses were almost certainly boosted by respondents sharing among networks with a high likelihood of completion.

Research Ethics

Research ethics required consideration because of our intentional inclusion of vulnerable populations, in particular, incarcerated participants.

We took steps to consider the following for focus groups:

- Are the benefits, risks, and incentives transparent and clearly communicated?
- Will the research be conducted in understandable language?
- Are the risks for incarcerated participants the same as risks for other participants?

Incarcerated participants were informed that their participation or nonparticipation would not affect or influence the length of their sentence, their parole, or any other aspect of their incarceration.

Other stakeholder groups required special consideration for participating in-person, such as crime victims and family shelter residents. These stakeholders and others were offered the opportunity to participate in focus groups exclusive to that stakeholder group, to provide a safe space for sharing input and experiences.

The following principles served to guide our research design, data collection, and analysis.

Guiding Principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We honor and seek the perspective, expertise and lived experience of each community member.• Participation in and during focus groups and surveys is voluntary.• Strict confidentiality is maintained when appropriate and comments are anonymized.• Mitigation of participation barriers (e.g. childcare, transportation, location of events) will enable robust and representative engagement.• The encouragement of authentic and naturally-derived input deserves thoughtful development and demonstration of a shared commitment to positive outcomes for all District residents.• Transparency as to our purposes, procedures, and expected outcomes is critical for building relationships of collaboration.• We recognize the value of <i>sustained</i> community involvement.• We acknowledge the harm delivered by the past and current system, and by past efforts for reform that have not borne fruit, and conduct this work with according humility.

Data Analysis

Data analysis processes varied for each data collection method. Comparisons between findings from different events were considered when appropriate, as in cases where the qualitative data enhanced or elaborated quantitative results.

Focus group transcripts were coded using open codes that were condensed and saturated over the course of the events. These codes helped to demonstrate the frequency with which we heard certain themes. Additional information was at times included in understanding this data, such as the category of stakeholder present or expressions of skepticism. Using these coded themes, we were able to summarize the data from focus groups, complemented by direct quotes and details about nuanced arguments drawn from the transcripts themselves.

For the survey data analysis, seven questions or question groups were analyzed as a part of this study. Each of these was analyzed according to key demographic subgroups, such as Ward of residence, race, history of incarceration, or identity as a crime victim, in order to make comparisons and determine significant results. From 1972 total survey responses, we eliminated 52 that indicated non-residency and an additional 133 that indicated residency but did not complete other questions. For a full summary of survey analysis methods, see [Appendix 3](#).

Community workshop notes were analyzed using the codes from the focus groups to produce a consistency in analysis. The results mapped well onto these codes. Submitted vision statements were considered according to these same codes but are better understood as complete statements.

Reporting of Findings

In addition to this report, the complete findings of the engagement period were delivered to the Task Force in the form of a presentation. A summary of findings is also included in the Task Force Phase I report, *Jails & Justice – A Framework for Change*.

Findings—Focus Groups

Sample

Focus group participants represented a range of ages over 18. Participants were primarily Black and male, which can be attributed to the three large groups that were held in the jail that were almost exclusively Black and male. Every Ward was represented, with particularly good representation from Wards 4-8. Half of the participants identified as justice-involved², versus 37% without such experience (15% unknown), and most had family who were justice-involved. Those who self-identified as crime victims made up 61% of our sample while only 25% identified as not a victim of crime (14% unknown). A full profile of participants can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Theme Findings

The following themes are organized according to the two guiding questions, Community Safety and Incarceration/New Jail. Participants offered many similar ideas on both topics across most focus groups. This is not to say that most groups reached consensus.

Main themes in the Community Safety category include housing, community closeness (knowing neighbors), mental health resources, supports for youth, and reduction/reform of policing. One participant noted that “safety is when everyone in the community has everything they need to survive and thrive.”

Main themes in the Incarceration/New Jail category include opposition to jails or a new jail, support for a new facility, programming and conditions of incarceration, decarceration and alternatives, reentry and DC’s prison population. The key ideas in these and other recurring themes are outlined in the section below.

² Justice involvement was limited to personal experience with arrest, conviction, or incarceration.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

“Safety is when everyone in the community has everything they need to survive and thrive”

Close-Knit Communities

- knowing one’s neighbors
- being involved
- looking out for one another

“I feel safe in my community when I know that the community is mine. They have my back and we are all in this together...People know who they can reach out to in the community where they live.”

“If you see something say something’... conditions us to live in ambient fear”

“Child next door that doesn’t have a healthy family, that’s my responsibility”

“If you know everyone, then you know that’s just Johnny and that’s how Johnny behaves, and we know how we can take care of the situation”

Participants spoke frequently of the desire and need to know one’s neighbors. Some suggested that in decades past this was more common. Some suggested that this is something that they have and that it is what makes them feel safe. Participants spoke about knowing that their neighbors were looking out for them and their kids. Many mentioned block parties and other neighborhood events as strategies to build this neighborhood closeness. Participants called for more public spaces for communities to use for gathering and spending time together. Discussions of this theme often presented knowing neighbors as a way to reduce incarceration since people would be less likely to call the police for non-threatening situations if they knew the people around them and could understand their behavior, needs, and support networks.

Housing

- affordable
- safe
- stable

“[I] work with youth from 18 to 24, connecting them to housing resources in DC which is very difficult”

“The tide does not help all boats to rise when gentrification comes along”

“Lack of housing, lack of housing stability and lack of jobs makes people unsafe and feel unsafe”

“A building where I used to live... They did not know you could call the shelter, and instead they were advising tenants to call the police. People are not paying attention. They did not know there’s an avenue to handle this and have it not be escalated to that point”

When prompted to suggest what their community needs to be safe, participants repeatedly pointed to housing. It was one of the most frequently mentioned needs and often accompanied descriptors like affordable, safe, and stable. Participants discussed issues with the health, safety and availability of public housing in DC. There were mentions of including on-site social workers in public housing buildings and reducing the surveillance and policing of those spaces. Participants talked about dealing with conflict and issues in shared housing, especially in resolving the issues without the use of the police, acknowledging that usually the police are called for any number of occurrences.

Police

- fewer police
- better training
- alternatives

“A lot of people do not feel like the police are here to keep them safe”

“We have way too many resources for 911 to be 311”

“At one time the police grew up in the community, too. Instead of locking you up, if you misbehaved we take you home to your mother. If your parent didn’t come, your neighbors came”

“We need to try to empower neighbors to deal with conflict”

“Often the neighborhood that I belong to there is hyper policing. Young folks and people of color live in fear of those police. Because we’ve often seen violence occur because of who was called for the situation instead of alternatives like mental health workers who have more experience. Police address situations of mental health needs with violence and force, which can get folks killed”

I have a number of loved ones who have come into contact with police and it’s done more harm than good”

“When you all got rid of the Boys & Girls Club you pretty much took away that community understanding about humanizing police. Because those officers at the Boys & Girls Club when I was a kid, they genuinely cared about you. They fed you when you got in trouble, they were the first ones on the scene. And they said, let me talk to this kid, I know what’s happening with him”

Many participants stated that they would feel safer with fewer police. Many called for increased resources for alternatives to police, such as a mental health support, social services, community violence interrupters, and community dispute resolution. Several participants mentioned neighborhood patrols and “orange hats.” Mentions of police included some calls for

no police, as well as a few calls for more police to serve as a deterrent to crime. Many said that police needed to build trust and stronger relationships with communities, especially communities of color. Many of these conversations centered on improvements to policing and alternatives to police. Suggested improvements included better training, especially regarding mental health awareness and de-escalation, and ensuring police know the neighborhoods they serve by living there, walking in neighborhoods and talking to residents rather than patrolling only in cars. Others spoke of not expecting police to do everything for a community, but using other resources including during conflict and crisis, such as building neighborhood capacity for responding to issues.

Support for Youth

- basic needs
- schools
- parenting and mentoring
- jobs, programs, and activities
- trauma care
- alternatives to justice system involvement

“At one time we had organizations helping the youth and just walking people home”

“I deal with folks who are incarcerated at a very young age because there are not systems and support in place for children who have been exposed to trauma”

“I think more resources should be put into the community that engage with youth to stop thinking that I got to get it one way or another, cause my parent on their back foot”

“A lot of kids they don’t have parents. A lot of them are locked up like we are. Because their parents are locked up, a lot of the kids are on the street”

“Children are being criminalized at a very young age and that is determining their outcome of their lives. So how do we get to the root cause, which is poverty, housing, health care”

Participants pointed to a need for more programming to support and develop youth interests and leadership. Improving schools and educational opportunities was another key theme. Participants also mentioned wanting to see employment and skills development beyond summer jobs, more mentorship programs, and a focus on less policing and more use of diversion programs for youth.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment

- high need among and outside incarceration population
- local, accessible services
- decriminalization

“I might be out on the street doing what I used to do because I don’t have the money or I don’t have the resources for that medication, or that housing, or even to catch the bus to my mental health clinic”

“If someone is misusing drugs I want an alternative that offers intervention”

“A guy exposed himself to me, but I don’t trust that a responding officer will send that person to DBH instead of arresting them”

“We should have a trauma center on every other block”

Mental health needs and resources were discussed with high frequency. Participants expressed frustration that many people with significant mental health needs end up in jail, as if mental illness is a criminal offense. They spoke to this as an issue of people not getting what they need in the community, and also to say that incarceration is not a healing environment. Participants talked about trauma services and their availability, using trauma-informed practices and training, resources for early identification of trauma in a school setting and school-based trauma care, and focusing resources on neighborhoods affected by violence. Along with mental health, substance abuse was a common theme, with similar concerns about availability. Participants again expressed frustration with treatment often only being delivered in a jail setting. Others expressed dismay about the availability of drugs.

Jobs and Economic Opportunity

- local opportunities
- quality, stable jobs
- training

“You can do resume writing programs, and job training programs. What comes after that? We go into a place and work for probationary credit and they aren’t hiring”

“People that have criminal backgrounds have great skills and certifications and cannot utilize them because of their record”

Participants frequently brought up the need for better employment opportunities, including localized employment, fair wage jobs and job training. Opportunities for returning citizens were emphasized.

Reentry

- housing
- jobs
- connections to services
- stigma and barriers
- mental health

“I get out in 2 months and I’m scared to death”

“We need to help give them the tools to deal with life and also with the challenges to be a returning citizen”

“I got 7 months. I’m walking out the door and I got family with housing but that don’t mean that I can go there. I got mental health problems. They may not be ready for that”

Reentry was a frequent topic, especially around addressing stigma and barriers to success, and access to jobs, housing, and support services. Participants cited the need for robust transition programs that demonstrate a partnership with community resources.

Community Empowerment

- investment, adequate resources, and fair allocation
- solutions for communities, by communities
- local decision-making power
- information sharing and transparency
- leadership and organizing

“We need to get more resources to Ward 8 and Ward 7”

“We got a lot of angry people in our city who were born and raised here. And we feel like we’re still on the waiting list and they can come right here and get all the resources”

“Create forums for community members to meet, and brainstorm because my solution for my little neighborhood in Ward 5 is probably not going to be the same as somebody who’s in Ward 1”

“We’re not getting to the root of anything”

“As long as the money going to your area, you’re not worried about their area. Ain’t no kin to me so I don’t care if they kill each other”

“You have to break the information out and put it in layman’s terms”

“Creating a place where everyone can provide input and feel a part”

“I believe in the power of information and the power of sharing in the community. Not just talking about crime but also about positive impact and what are community activists and organizations doing in the community”

Community empowerment was a consistent theme in the focus groups and the workshops, both as a means to ensure tailored solutions specific to community needs, adequate resources and fair allocation, and to reduce and resolve incidents that may otherwise lead to justice system involvement. Empowerment came up in many ways, including dissemination of information and transparency about resources, increased local decision-making power, more access to resources based on need, and greater local leadership and community organizing. Conversations on this theme emphasized neighborhoods developing their own solutions and systems. These discussions also brought up the disempowerment and displacement brought

about by gentrification. Participants drew a direct line between community empowerment and their vision for the future of justice in DC.

Other Themes

- privilege
- green spaces
- neighborhood maintenance
- daycare
- fewer guns

“It’s one thing to have those who can’t afford to take care of their lawn, there are programs that you can recommend that they get acquainted with. It’s another thing for those who own this property and live somewhere else to let their property just fall because they’re waiting to make a profit a couple of years from now”

“I feel safe just to name it – because I feel white and privileged”

Less frequent but recurring themes related to community safety included neighborhood maintenance, such as street lighting and cleanliness, access to parks and art, availability of day care, and decriminalization of quality of life offenses.

INCARCERATION/NEW JAIL

“We have to be more innovative and think out of the box”

Abolition and Anti-New Jail Views

“I am completely against the jail unless other resources are brought to bear to bring the incarceration rates down”

“Why do people continue to believe...when for the last 40 to 50 years the city did not fund the facility to keep it up to code, to make sure the ceiling wasn’t caving in, to make sure people’s constitutional rights were not violated”

“I don’t want no jail, but...people are going to be in jail because the system is designed for it. So...I would like to see resources coming into the jail, like education resources, job training, financial literacy, just being treated as human from your officers”

“They don’t need a new jail. Let’s let this building be what it’s supposed to be—a correctional treatment facility”

“I don’t want anyone to go to jail. I don’t know anyone who has been helped by jail”

“I really feel that the community needs more programs on the outside of the institution before you bring them on the inside of the institution”

Discussions of whether to build a new jail frequently evoked passionate rejection of the idea. There were a variety of points made in opposition to a new jail. Some called for abolition and others thought of abolition as an ideal to strive toward. Participants spoke of a belief that jails do not help keep communities safe, some noting that the jail’s existence did not come up in conversations about community safety. Others stated that jail time does not heal the community or victims in many cases. Discussions included concerns about the harm jails cause and that jails are used to warehouse Black people, some citing this as a reason they could not condone the use of jails. Some did not believe that a new jail could be meaningfully different than any current jail, particularly over the long term. For example, some would not support a new jail because even if they supported a reimagined facility, they did not believe it would actually happen. Others sought increased and improved resources for the existing jails.

Views in Favor of a New Facility

“It’s infested with whatever you can think of”

“It needs to be rehabilitation, reentry and so many other things. We don’t even want to call it a new jail”

“Definitely have to get rid of CDF”

“If we really examine the current needs and the current reasons people are incarcerated we can create a kind of jail that can address those common themes”

“We need a bigger place for treatment, and we need a smaller jail”

Like the views expressed in opposition to a new jail, views in favor were varied and nuanced. Many participants shared that they would be in favor of a new jail conditionally. Others spoke of a new facility that was not a jail, or that is conceived of entirely differently. Many participants were broadly concerned with the conditions in the current jail, especially the Central Detention Facility (CDF), and the urgency of addressing them. These concerns were thrown into particular relief in the focus groups held among those incarcerated in the jail and working in the jail. Sometimes these concerns motivated a desire to build a new facility, but also to fix urgent issues immediately. Some believed that jails are inevitable, either because they believe detention to be necessary in some form, or because they believe that the systems that drive incarceration will never change. Many but not all of these views contributed to support of a new facility or of significant changes to the existing facilities. Most frequently, the reasons cited for a new jail were current conditions of confinement and inadequate design features including air conditioning and ventilation, pest control, mold, food quality, and healthcare. These conversations included suggestions of decarceration and community alternatives to incarceration, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, mediation, restorative justice, and community service. Often urgency came up in these conversations, in that people

were unwilling to wait for a new jail to see these conditions addressed. Participants gave examples of the atmosphere they imagined, often citing examples abroad.

Other Views

- land is too valuable
- wrong question
- need more information

“It’s much more than a yes/no answer”

“The writing is on the wall”

“Not does DC need a new jail but how do we keep people out of jail? Why are they coming back to jail? How can we make our jail smaller? That’s a question that should be circulating”

“We’re focusing on a new jail and we need to focus on youth programs, elderly programs, reentry programs”

Some participants did not believe they were qualified to determine whether the District needed a new jail or felt they needed more information in order to decide. Others believed that a new jail was inevitable, frequently citing the value of the land where the current jails are located and the recent nearby developments.

Philosophy of Incarceration and Decarceration

- rehabilitation over punishment
- alternatives and investment

“We can stop incarcerating in records numbers. We have to be more innovative and think out of the box. We have to do more alternative to policing and prisons”

“Other countries have figured out a better way. In this country we have not done that”

“In terms of acts of violence there are so many steps along the way where there are warning signs, and other steps can be taken”

Discussions of how the District should handle incarceration frequently included a desire to emphasize rehabilitation rather than punishment. Some suggested that the District consider the models of other countries. Others believed that incarceration was not an effective way to address harm and the needs of victims or those accused or convicted. Investment in prevention, as well as broader use of de-escalation tactics, came up repeatedly. Participants suggested offering targeted programs as an alternative to arrest and detention, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, and restorative justice.

Programs and Services for Those Incarcerated

- reentry
- accessibility of programs
- relevant job training
- mental and physical healthcare
- better training for officers

“Make it a part of your sentence to go through a transition before being released. Make it a part of your sentence to go through treatment program before being released. Make it a part of your sentence to deal with your mental health before being released”

“I really feel that the community needs more programs on the outside of the institution before you bring them on the inside of the institution”

Discussions about incarceration raised ideas about improvements in the programs and services provided in jail and prison, even with feedback about jail not being a place that people want others to receive services intended to promote healing. Frequent mentions went to relevant, thorough job training, education opportunities, and preparation for release. Participants called for equitable accessibility of these programs among different populations. Some called for better training for jail staff, and for better services for mental and physical health. These discussions also included suggested improvements to post-release reentry services.

Conditions of Confinement

- health and safety
- noise
- quality of food and recreation
- environment

“Bologna sandwiches every day and cookies...Whoever is making these meals and making these decisions can’t be thinking about our health”

“I wouldn’t watch my son or daughter throw away that much food every day and not reassess how I’m buying groceries”

“Those living conditions cause the inmates to act out...Treat me like an animal, that’s what you’re going to get”

“[Staff] live here, too”

Discussions of incarceration consistently produced dismay at current conditions of confinement, particularly at CDF. These conversations were framed by a sense of urgency and concern for human dignity. Participants called for improvements in temperature control and ventilation, noise level, pest control, and other hazardous conditions like the presence of mold, as well as quality of food, recreation, and services. Others called for greater availability of programs across age groups.

Prison Population

- closer to DC
- new facility in DC
- decarceration

“For those coming out of prison, let them do the last 6 months or a year in DC and get acclimated to the city”

In considering building a new jail, participants frequently brought up the lack of local confinement among DC residents serving prison sentences. Many expressed dismay about the policy of sending DC residents across the country to serve prison sentences, noting the negative effects on communities, families, and incarcerated individuals. Some believed that this population should be brought closer, while others called for a new facility to house them on the same site as the jail or nearby. Participants pointed to the difficulty of returning to the city after a long separation in terms of finding services as well as reconnecting with family. Others emphasized their beliefs in a need to reduce this population. Some called for a return some months prior to release.

Skepticism

- will we be heard?
- will action be taken?

“No matter what we say, it’s going up”

“We are not going to be a part whether they build or don’t build one”

There were participants in most groups who vocalized skepticism about the project, especially whether the Task Force recommendations would reflect the views in the room, among affected communities, and in the community-at-large. Participants were also concerned about the impact and achievability of any recommendations. This was especially widespread among the three focus groups made up of participants who are currently incarcerated.

Conclusions from Focus Group Data

The main findings from the focus groups robustly address the framing questions. With regard to needs for community safety, participants came up with numerous, often detailed suggestions and ideas. From these responses, we see that people conceive of community safety as both relational and resource-based. They also think about safety in terms of the management of their communities including information accessibility, policing, and decision-making power. Clearly, participants are very concerned about housing, jobs, mental wellness, and community empowerment. The most prominent theme in community safety was knowing your neighbors, and a number of ideas surfaced for promoting this closeness. Many people called for fewer police or had suggestions for an improved police presence.

On questions about incarceration, participants felt varying levels of qualification in answering. Most people are very concerned with the conditions in the current jails. Many people do not think we should build a new jail and many others believe we should build a new jail to replace the CDF, suggesting a deep lack of consensus on the topic. Many people believe there should be no jail at all, although they disagree about the realistic nature of this proposal. Finally, race was a consistent thread among topics in reference to generational trauma, access to resources, and the very high and disparate outcomes and impact of incarceration on Black people in DC.

Limitations of Focus Groups

Despite the use of a sample of convenience, we were successful recruiting participants from key stakeholder groups. Still, we cannot generalize about demographics or stakeholder groups because of the small sample size and lack of a random sample. Further, we cannot tie responses or preferences to demographics, although we can connect some to particular stakeholder groups (for example, currently incarcerated, crime victim advocates, neighbors of the jail, and DOC staff). Still, the small sample size for each of these stakeholder groups means we cannot easily generalize about the opinions expressed.

While we do not always know exactly how popular an idea is within a focus group (we did not conduct straw polls), we can still see patterns of recurrence across focus groups and connect them to themes in survey responses and workshop feedback. The open-ended discussions also allow for nuance and unveil reasoning behind ideas and opinions.

Findings—Survey

Sample

According to a survey question about referrals, for which 1,250 participants responded, 25% identified receiving the survey through a listserv, 29% through social media, 16.5% as at a special event, and 31% from another source, primarily forwarded through neighbors, friends, coworkers, or the online platform Nextdoor.

Despite having a large sample size for a survey of this nature, this survey ultimately draws on a convenience sample of people connected to the Task Force. This creates two main concerns when interpreting these results: 1) That participants are naturally more reflective of individuals who may follow issues related to criminal justice in DC, which may not be a reflective of a more general sample of DC residents; and, 2) Our sample is not a representative sample of the District, and in fact shows some under- and overrepresentation of certain categories of DC residents. For example, women are nearly twice as likely as men to have filled out the survey. Similarly, participants who identified as Black accounted for 30% of our sample, compared to 40% of the sample identifying as White, and 2% of the sample identifying as Latinx. This is in contrast to the estimated American Community Survey census demographics, in which Black residents accounted for 48%, White residents account for 41%, and Latinx residents accounted for 11% of DC's population.

Approximately 69% of our sample has a bachelor's degree or higher compared to an estimated 57% of the population of DC. Finally, not all Wards are evenly sampled, and the same issues of over- and underrepresentation persist in every Ward that is sampled. For example, according to the ACS 2013-2017 estimates, Ward 7 is 92% Black, 2% White, 1% Asian and 5% Latinx. Our sample who identified living in Ward 7 or in a zip code within Ward 7, is 72% Black, 16% White, 1% Asian, and 0% Latinx.

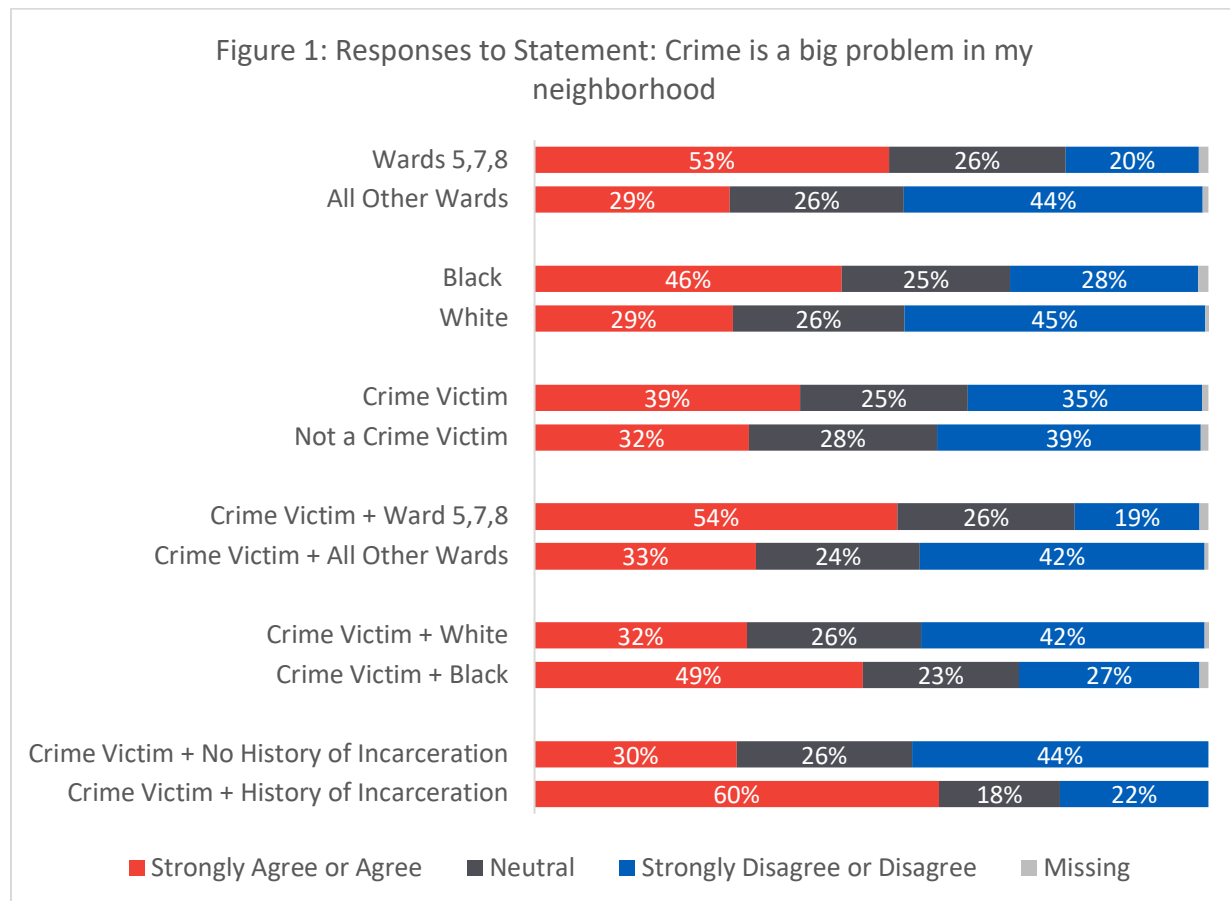
While the lack of a representative sample in the survey impedes our ability to make generalizations that extend to the entire population of DC, we nevertheless have a large enough sample to draw insights on the opinions of a critical groups. To address issues of bias in our sample, we provide subgroup analysis based on Ward, Race, and Race and Gender, with the goal of highlighting key differences between groups which may otherwise be obscured in the overall sample.

For a full sample description, see [Appendix 4](#).

Subgroup Results

For verbatim descriptions of every question assessed, see [Appendix 3](#).

There is a divide among how participants see crime as a problem that needs to be addressed in their neighborhood, largely facilitated by three factors. Specifically, residents of Wards 5, 7, and 8, and Black participants were more likely to see crime as a large problem in their neighborhood. Similarly, self-identified victims of crime were more likely to see crime as a problem in their neighborhood, though when disaggregated by Race and Ward, we see that these results tend to only be a few percentage points higher than the overall descriptions by Ward and Race. In considering the significant difference in responses between crime victims with and without a history of incarceration, it is interesting to note that 69% of our sample with a history of incarceration has also been the victim of a crime. See [Appendix 5](#) for all subgroup results and statistical significance.



Irrespective of subgroup, only a small minority of responses see incarceration as the best means of handling someone who is arrested, and very few see the jail as making the District safer. At least 70% of every subgroup analyzed disagreed with the statement “incarceration is the best way to handle people who get arrested.” Even among subgroups who are the most likely to see crime as a big problem in their neighborhood, they are unlikely to see jail as the best solution. For example, among crime victims from Wards 5, 7, 8, 72% disagreed with the

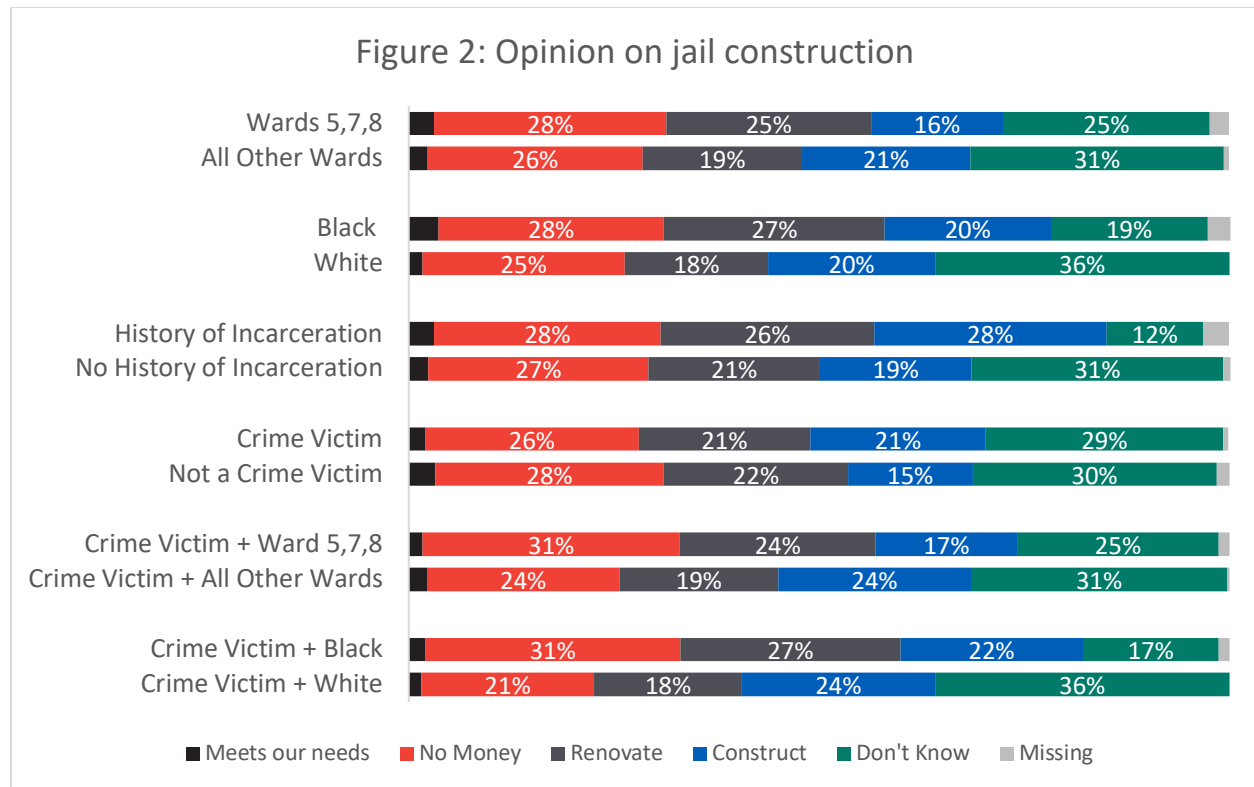
statement, with a significant difference from the 78% of crime victims from all other Wards who disagreed with the statement.

We see similar patterns emerge when participants are asked about the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement “we should hold people in jail prior to conviction only if they pose a high risk to community safety,” for which at least 66% of all subgroups agreed with the statement.

Slightly more complex were responses to the statement “having a jail makes the city safer.” For every group, the simple majority of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, though in the cases for some subgroups, the number of neutral responses could sufficiently tip results between agreeing or disagreeing. This is particularly true among crime victim subgroups, suggesting for subgroups of crime victims, this is a more complex question. For example, among crime victims disaggregated by Ward, among those from Wards 5, 7, and 8, 20% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 23% were neutral, and 55% strongly disagreed or disagreed. In contrast, among participants from all other Wards, 24% agreed or strongly agreed, 31% were neutral, and 45% strongly agreed or agreed.

Finally, when asked directly about jail construction, the clearest conclusion is that very few people think the current facility is meeting the needs of the District. Despite this, how participants think funding should be allocated in response to that is far more complicated. Combining responses about renovation and construction, there is often a simple majority of responses by subcategory supporting some kind of investment in the jail. However, for nearly every subcategory between 25% and 33% say they “don’t know” and between 15% and 30% do not support any funding for the jail. Furthermore, focus groups suggest there is a nuanced difference between supporting funding for new construction vs. funding for renovation, and that combining the two categories broadly into a supports the jail category may be reductive.

Figure 2 below shows a subset of responses to the opinion on jail construction. See [Appendix 5](#) for all responses by subgroup.



Black participants or participants who have had contact with the jail, either through a history of incarceration or for any reason, are the least likely to respond with “I don’t know.” The suggests an overall much stronger opinion on jail construction, though responses remain relatively split between no money, renovation, or construction. Crime victims are slightly more likely to advocate for construction than non-crime victims, though in general both groups report high levels of “I don’t know.” Disaggregating crime victims by Race and Ward shows relatively similar patterns as overall results by Race and Ward.

Conclusions from Survey Data

The survey findings offer clues to answering the framing questions. First, they suggest that community needs for safety differ by Ward. There is a divide among participants in terms of how much they see crime as a problem in their neighborhood, and this divide appears strongest among differences by Ward, Race, and contact with the jail. Very few participants see jail or incarceration as a means to address crime, even among participants most likely to report crime as a problem in their neighborhood. Even fewer participants indicate a preference for investments in jail over alternative approaches to criminal justice or alternative investments in social services, education, or job training programs. Neither a preference for alternative investments, nor a view that the jail does not promote safety, necessarily suggests that participants do not support construction or renovation of a facility.

Ultimately, opinions on the jail are divided and complex. Very few participants believe the current facility is meeting the needs of the district, however there are often even or nearly even divides among subgroups between participants preferring renovation, construction, that no money be dedicated to the jail, or stating that they do not know. It may be that participants generally do not see the jail as supporting safety, nor do they want individuals to be housed in an facility they see as not meeting the needs of the District, but that ultimately they would prefer to see crime addressed through an expansion of alternatives.

This lack of clarity mirrors the variety in viewpoints from the focus groups. The details of the focus group conversations may help us understand the many “don’t know” responses. Quite a few focus group participants expressed conditional opinions, for example that they would only support building a new jail if it was tied to certain design features or decarceration goals. Others felt they needed more information in order to make a decision.

Limitations of Survey Data Analysis

There are two key limitations to keep in mind in this analysis:

1) As stated in the introduction to this section, this survey used a convenience sample. It may be there are unobserved characteristics among individuals referred to this survey through Task Force member networks or attendance at one of the events where data were collected. As such, any bias due to these features will be reflected in our analysis and the extent to which this influences our results is unknown.

2) Although we tested several different subgroups in this analysis, it is possible that other combinations of say, educational attainment, crime victimization, and Ward of residence provide still more divergent results. In particular, additional measures of criminal justice involvement, or family criminal justice involvement, may help to discern patterns among those who have contact with the jail, and their association with jail construction and safety. It is outside of the scope of this report to test all possible combinations, though our observations of most of these different subgroups do not vary widely in their opinion on jail construction.

Many respondents were grateful to have the opportunity to share their opinion. Some respondents expressed frustration in the comments section that closed answer options provided were too narrow or binary, reflecting an awareness of the complexity in these issues. This concern shows the value of the focus groups where we are able to parse out the range of opinions on various topics. In fact, the survey was derived from the common themes of the 14 focus groups that were conducted prior to the survey.

Other respondents sought more background information about the current state and use of the jails to inform their opinion. As with the focus groups, we provided only limited information in an effort to reduce bias. Survey participants were more likely to have no opinion on questions about jail construction than focus group participants. It may be that those willing to give up two hours of their time (versus ten minutes) to offer their opinions felt more strongly about those opinions.

Findings—Community Visioning Workshops

The 50+ workshop participants represented every Ward in DC. Many of these participants had not participated in a focus group and some had not completed a survey, meaning this event brought together previous and new participants. Participants were very interested in the history and data presented.

The data from the workshops includes small group notes from each session on decarceration, local control, facilities and services, and community investments and alternatives to incarceration. A full set of guiding questions for each topic can be found in [Appendix 6](#).

The ideas brainstormed during these workshops mapped well onto themes from focus groups. Calls for housing and mental health resources, diversion and restorative justice, education quality and availability, decriminalization and local control, all echoed themes from the focus groups. During the workshops there was skepticism about whether the project recommendations would reflect the views in the room, similar to skepticism expressed in focus groups. New ideas on familiar themes included suggestions for reducing or eliminating the surveillance and police presence in affordable housing and adopting the “Houston model” of diverting 911 calls to appropriate non-police resources.

Data from the workshops also includes individually submitted vision statements reflecting on “what is your vision for the future of justice in DC?” Responses ranged from single notion “abolition” and “healthy black people,” to detailed framework:

“A DC where residents are the designers of our own systems of safety and accountability, focused on mutual aid and connections between neighbors. An end to destabilization caused by displacement and gentrification and the use of police to remove communities of color from their homes. A focus on healing from trauma, in which punishment has no place. Resources allocated based on community priority.”

“I envision a community where: investment in youth, schools, employment opportunities, housing, etc. Only incarcerate people when absolutely no other option — increased diversion and restorative justice; discontinue incarceration for technical parole violations, eliminate racist over-policing, significantly reduce length of sentences, don't incarcerate people with mental illness, restore local control.”

We can see in these examples key themes that also emerged in the focus groups, such as knowing neighbors, housing, changes in policing, investment in schools and youth, and others. These examples and others also specify outcomes based on race. Statements often addressed enthusiasm for alternatives to incarceration, as in “justice means having ways to deal with conflict and crisis without putting people in cages.”

Although the vision statements often mapped onto these themes, they are better understood as complete ideas. We collected 33 statements, and while a brief summary of recurring ideas can help give a sense of what was said, it is not a useful sample to analyze deeply. Interestingly,

familiar themes came up in the small group notes and submitted visions from the workshops, even though at least half³ of the participants had not participated in a focus group. All 33 submitted visions can be read in [Appendix 7](#).

³ 9 of the 34 workshop participants who completed a demographic survey form marked that they had participated in a focus group. Another 18 did not complete the form.

Conclusion

The detail and range of topics and opinions provided in the above findings sections demonstrate a robust set of ideas, productive discussions, and challenging choices, more often in concert than not. A small number of higher-level findings emerge from the data collected as a whole:

- Participants do not believe the current facilities are serving their needs, yet they do not agree about the best course forward.
- There is urgent concern over the conditions in the current jails.
- Demand is high for community investment in housing, mental wellness, youth programming and basic needs, jobs, and alternatives to police.

These findings contribute directly to our understanding of 1) community needs for safety and 2) understanding preferences about a new jail and incarceration in general. Together they hint at a community vision for justice focused on investment outside of the criminal legal system.

That said, the nuance and details of these higher-level findings is deeply important to understanding them, especially when we attempt to compare particular subgroups, or understand binary answers to complex questions. With so many responses divided between renovate, construct, and no funding, the overall opinion on a new jail among participants is hard to describe. In general, it appears that people do not want anyone to be housed in a facility they don't see as meeting the needs of the District and would prefer to see crime addressed through an expansion of alternatives and prevention.

Among the 21 focus groups with 177 participants, many themes recurred regularly in groups regardless of stakeholder identity. This was also a notable finding among survey respondents belonging to different subgroups. Overall, differences in response based on demographics or stakeholder affiliation were not as pronounced as may be expected.

Finally, in considering the sum of findings in this engagement process, it is important to reiterate expressions of concern offered in each of the three engagement events that participants would not ultimately be heard, either by the researchers, Task Force members, or decisionmakers. This brings up opportunities for further engagement based on this report and other project findings.

Opportunities

This study included the participation of nearly 2000 individuals, from a range of key stakeholder groups. Participants at in-person events were highly engaged, leading to conversations of compelling depth and breadth. Altogether, the findings offer a lot to consider.

Still, we can see a number of opportunities for further engagement. These could include: presentation of more information about the use of incarceration in the District, similar to the highly appreciated community workshop presentations; solicitation of input from underrepresented groups such as Latinx individuals, youth under 18, and families of the currently incarcerated; solicitation of more specific feedback now that areas of particular concern have been identified; solicitation of feedback on this report and on the recommendations from the Task Force; and collaboration on future planning and implementation of any adopted recommendations. Participants themselves, often expressing gratitude for the opportunity to engage, called for more such opportunities.

Further engagement has the potential to:

- respond to participant calls for more information;
- consider higher-level discussions as well as deeper detail on the ideas suggested;
- address skepticism in the process and provide opportunity to respond to this report and Task Force recommendations.

Appendix 1: Survey

District Jails and Justice Project

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to complete this community survey for the District Jails & Justice Project. This survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete. All answers are entirely anonymous.

We need your feedback in order to make sure the future of justice reflects the needs and wishes of District residents. The current DC Jail is facing numerous structural concerns, both regarding health and safety and regarding its 40-year-old design. The time is now to discuss whether or how to build a new jail in DC, what services can be provided most effectively in the community, and what investments best serve the diverse priorities of our residents.

This survey is being conducted by the National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens in partnership with the Vera Institute of Justice and the Council for Court Excellence. Funding for this study comes from the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants. You can find more information about this project, including other ways to participate, at www.courtexcellence.org/task-force.

In order to fill out this survey, you must live in DC. Do you live in DC?

District Task Force on Jails and Justice Community Engagement Data Analysis 2019

Community Safety and Justice

Q1: For each statement, mark the appropriate rating.

	Very unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Somewhat safe	Very safe
During the day, how safe do you usually feel in your home?	1	2	3	4
on the street?	1	2	3	4
on Metro or buses?	1	2	3	4
in the local parks?	1	2	3	4
After dark, how safe do you usually feel in your home?	1	2	3	4
on the street?	1	2	3	4
on Metro or buses?	1	2	3	4
in the local parks?	1	2	3	4

Q2: How would you rate the quality of life in your neighborhood? Very low Low Moderate High Very high

Q3: For each statement, mark the appropriate rating.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
My neighborhood is safer now than it was five years ago	1	2	3	4	5
I communicate with my neighbors about neighborhood safety	1	2	3	4	5
Substance abuse is a big concern in my neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
Crime is a big problem in my neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
Having a jail makes the city safer	1	2	3	4	5
DC should have a local prison instead of using federal prisons around the country	1	2	3	4	5
We should reduce the number of people we send to jail in DC	1	2	3	4	5
We should hold people in jail prior to a conviction only if they present a high risk to the safety of the community	1	2	3	4	5
The current criminal justice system in DC is working well	1	2	3	4	5
DC should be diverting more people who are arrested to programs outside of incarceration	1	2	3	4	5
The fact that DC does not have control over parole decisions is a big problem	1	2	3	4	5
The fact that DC does not have its own prison facility is a big problem	1	2	3	4	5
Incarceration is the best way to handle people who get arrested	1	2	3	4	5
I believe DC needs to be tougher on crime, meaning more police, more arrests, and longer sentences	1	2	3	4	5
We should invest more in restorative justice as an alternative to incarceration	1	2	3	4	5

Q4: Choose the statement that best matches your opinion:

- The current jail is serving our needs in DC.
- The current jail is not serving our needs in DC, we should build a new jail.
- The current jail is not serving our needs in DC, we should renovate the jail so that it meets our needs.
- The current jail is not serving our needs in DC, but I do not support spending money on a jail.
- Don't know

Q5: Which way do you prefer that justice be served?

- by putting people in jail
- through options other than jail

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Q6: Choose the statement that best matches your opinion about building a new jail in DC:

- I support building a new jail to replace the current jail I support renovating the existing jail facilities I prefer that money be spent in other ways

Q7: Between the two options, which should the city invest in more?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Jails | or | <input type="radio"/> Crime prevention |
| <input type="radio"/> Jails | or | <input type="radio"/> Social services |
| <input type="radio"/> Jails | or | <input type="radio"/> Community supervision such as probation or parole |
| <input type="radio"/> Jails | or | <input type="radio"/> Drug treatment in communities |
| <input type="radio"/> Jails | or | <input type="radio"/> Programs for at-risk youth |
| <input type="radio"/> Jails | or | <input type="radio"/> Job creation |
| <input type="radio"/> Jails | or | <input type="radio"/> Schools and education |

Q8: In just a few words, what would you identify as the two greatest strengths of your neighborhood?

Q9: Briefly, what are the top two unmet needs in your neighborhood? How should they be addressed?

Q10: Are there other comments that you would like to share?

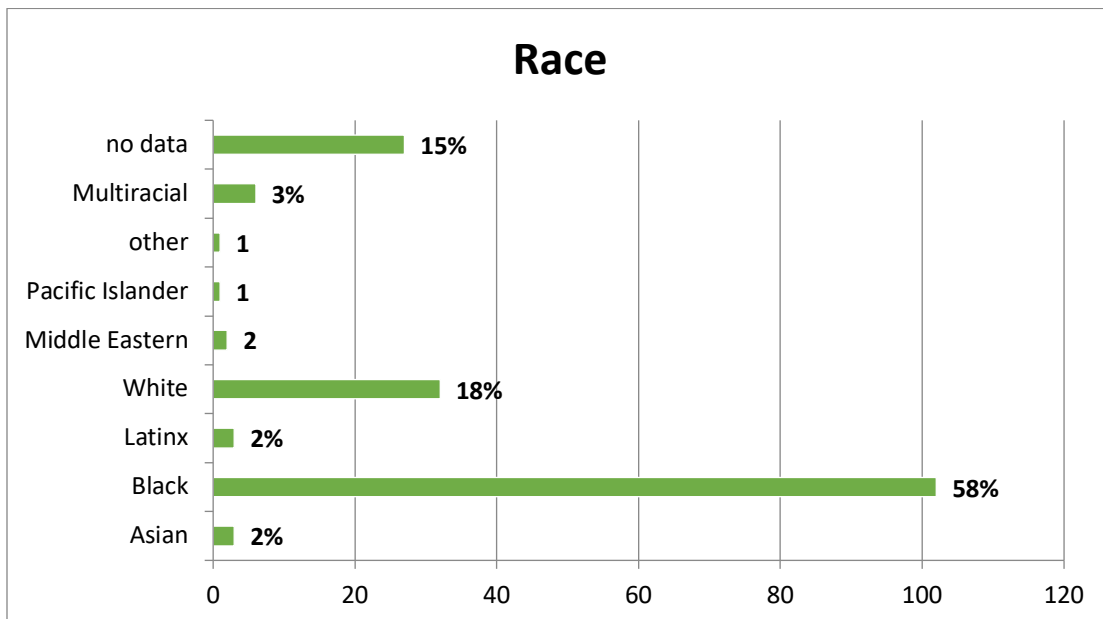
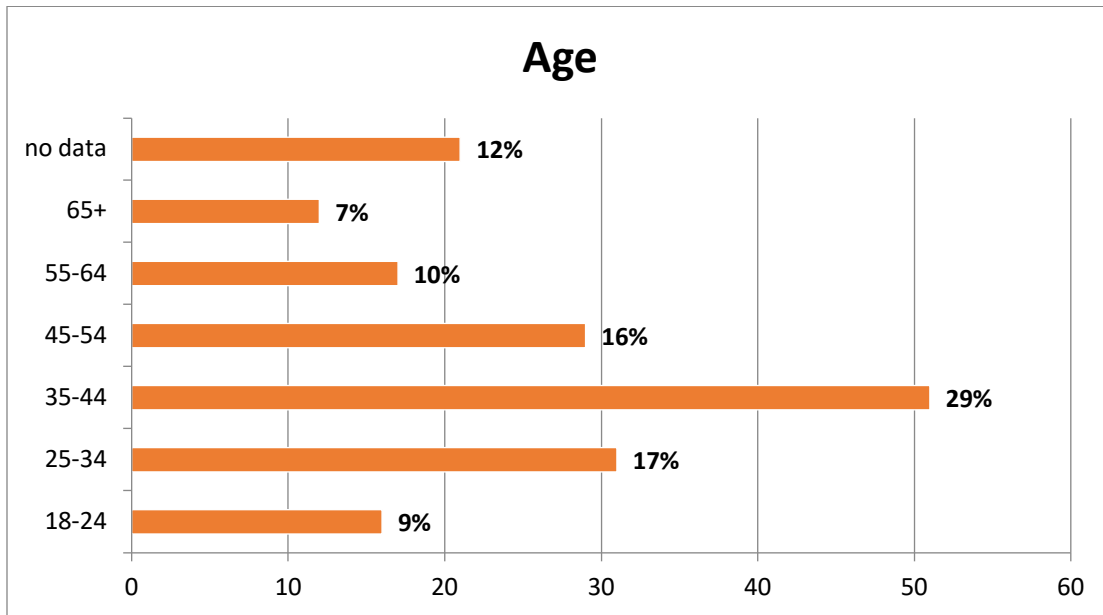
Demographic Questions

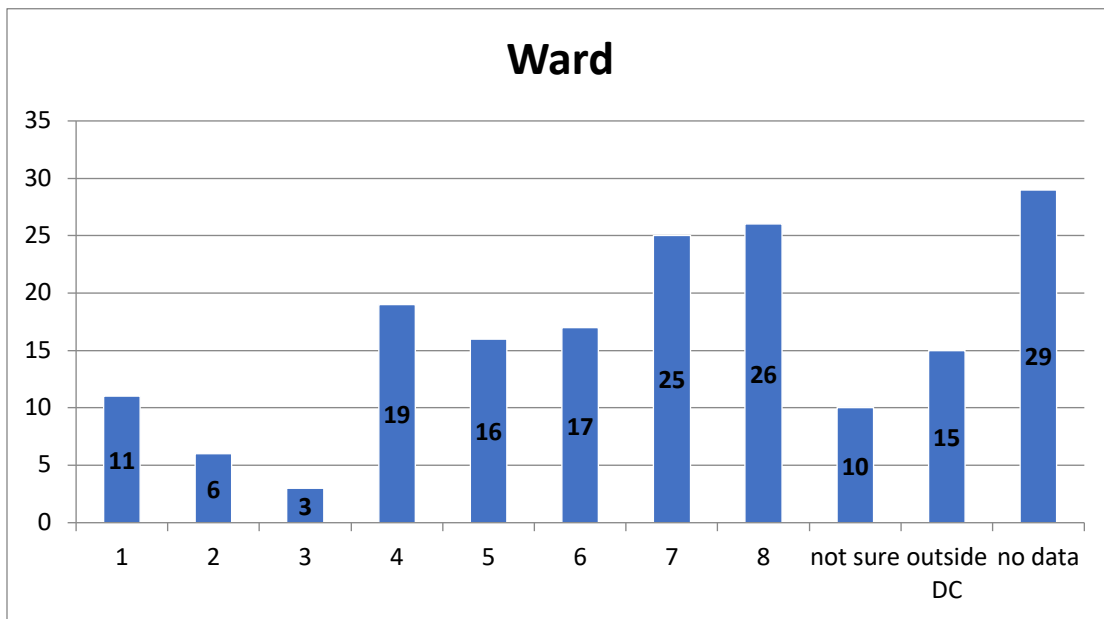
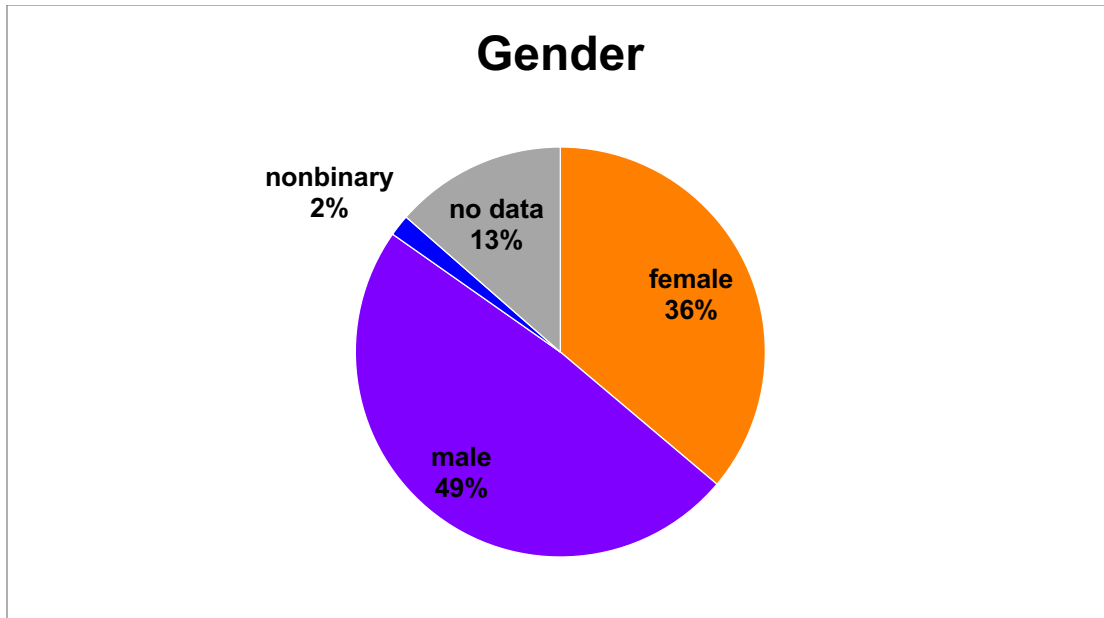
1. What is your age range? <18; 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65+
2. What is your gender? _____
3. How do you identify (circle all that apply)? Black or African American; White; Latinx; Asian; Native American; Pacific Islander; Middle Eastern/North African; Another: _____
4. Which Ward do you live in? 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; Not sure (include zip code): _____
5. How many years have you lived in this neighborhood? <1; 1-2; 3-5; 6-10; 11-20; 20+
6. Circle the education level you have completed: some high school; high school diploma or equivalent; some college; 4-year college degree; graduate degree or professional degree
7. Have you ever been...? (circle all that apply): arrested; convicted; incarcerated; none
8. Do you have a family member who has been...? (circle all that apply) arrested; convicted; incarcerated; none
9. Have you been to the DC Jail in the last five years? (including awaiting trial, serving a sentence, as a visitor, to volunteer, for work, and other) yes; no
10. Have you ever been a victim of a crime? yes; no
11. How did you hear about this survey? Event _____; Listserv _____; Social media _____; Other _____

Thank you for participating!

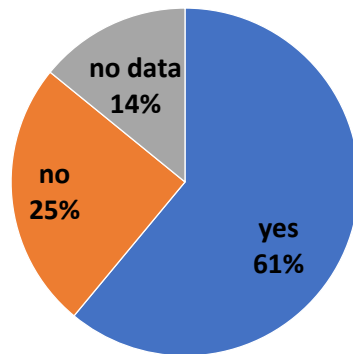
Appendix 2: Focus Group Participant Profile

Demographic information collected from participants (177 total).

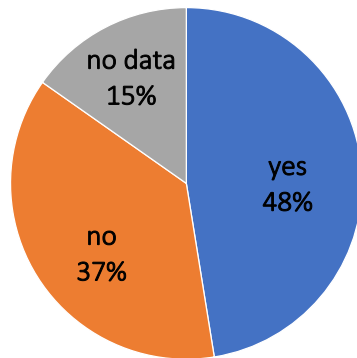




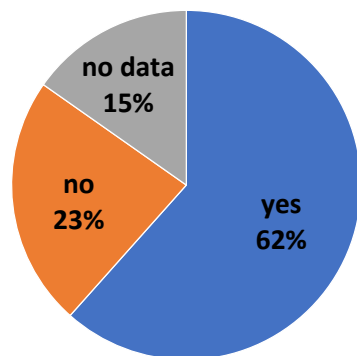
Crime Victim



Has been arrested, convicted, or incarcerated?



Has a family member who has been arrested, convicted, or incarcerated?



Appendix 3: Survey Analysis Methods

For every target question, chi-squared tests with Monte Carlo simulations were run to test for statistically significance differences in responses.⁴

The following subgroups were tested for each question:

- Wards 5,7,8 vs. All Other Wards
- Black vs. White
- Black + Male vs. Black + Female
- White + Male vs. White + Female
- History of Incarceration vs. No History of Incarceration
- History of Incarceration + Jail in Last Five Years vs. Not in Last Five Years
- Crime Victim vs. Not a Crime Victim
- Been to the Jail in the Last Five Years vs. Not
- Crime Victim + History of Incarceration vs. Not Crime Victim + History of Incarceration
- Crime Victim + Ward 5,7,8 vs. Crime Victim + All Other Wards
- Crime Victim + White vs. Crime Victim + Black

Although we are primarily interested in participants views on jail construction, we believe it is vital that responses to this question are understood in the broader context of how the participant views their needs for safety in their community, and how they see construction of the jail fitting into that. Therefore, we analyze answers to a subset of questions pertaining to participants views on crime and safety in their neighborhood, views on the whether the District should take a tougher response to crime, views on how incarceration and jail address safety, and ultimately participant opinions on jail construction and their preferences for alternative investments.

The following seven questions were analyzed for all subgroups above. With the exception of the question pertaining to participants opinions on jail construction, and a series of binary questions of alternative preferences, all questions involved a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to neutral to strongly agree. Note that we omit subgroup level responses for the investment preferences questions, as between 80% – 95% of all subgroups selected the non-jail option in every case.

Questions:

- Crime is a problem in my neighborhood.
- My neighborhood is safer today than it was 5 years ago.
- I believe the DC needs to get tougher on crime, meaning more police, more arrests, and longer sentences.
- Having a jail makes the District safer.

⁴ Monte Carlo simulations were used per the guidance on how best to produce a reference distribution when test conditions are not specified, per the recommendations give Hope A. J. in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. For more, review the article here: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2984263>

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- Incarceration is the best way to handle people who get arrested.
- We should hold people in jail prior to conviction only if they pose a high risk to community safety.
- Opinion on Jail Construction (Select the statement that best matches your opinion):
 - The current jail is serving our needs in DC.
 - The current jail is not serving our needs in DC, we should build a new jail.
 - The current jail is not serving our needs in DC, we should renovate the existing jail so that it meets our needs.
 - The current jail is not serving our needs in DC, but I do not support spending money on a jail.
 - Don't know.
- Investment Preferences: Between the two options, which should the city invest in more?
 - Jails vs. Crime Prevention
 - Jails vs. Social Services
 - Jails vs. Community Supervision such as probation or parole
 - Jails vs. Drug Treatment in communities
 - Jails vs. Programs for at-risk youth
 - Jails vs. Job creation
 - Jails vs. Schools and education

Appendix 4: Survey Sample Description

Table One: Survey Demographics		
	N	%
Race		
Asian	41	2%
Black	541	30%
Latinx	34	2%
White	716	40%
Other	64	4%
Multi-Racial	77	4%
Missing	314	18%
Gender		
Male	494	28%
Female	919	51%
Nonbinary or genderqueer	21	1%
Missing	353	20%
Educational Attainment		
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	1,229	69%
High School Graduate or Equivalent	234	13%
Less than High	25	1%
Missing	299	17%
Crime Victimization		
Yes	935	52%
No	564	31%
Missing	288	16%
Ward		
1	190	11%
2	87	5%
3	124	7%
4	221	12%
5	191	11%
6	372	21%
7	175	10%
8	153	8%
Missing	275	15%
History of Incarceration		
Incarcerated	130	7%
Not Incarcerated	1,364	77%
Missing	293	16%

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Been to Jail in the Previous Five Years		
Yes	340	19%
No	1,164	65%
Missing	283	16%

Appendix 5: Full Survey Subgroup Analysis Results

Table 2: Subgroup Analysis, Crime is a problem in my neighborhood					
	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Missing	P value
Wards 5, 7, 8	53%	26%	20%	1%	<0.01
All Other Wards	29%	26%	44%	1%	
Black	46%	25%	28%	2%	<0.01
White	29%	26%	45%	1%	
Black, Male	43%	25%	30%	1%	0.4
Black, Female	48%	24%	26%	2%	
White, Male	32%	22%	44%	1%	0.6
White, Female	29%	26%	45%	1%	
History of Incarceration	53%	24%	23%	1%	<0.01
No History of Incarceration	36%	26%	38%	1%	
Crime Victim	39%	25%	35%	1%	<0.01
Not a Crime Victim	32%	28%	39%	1%	
Been to Jail For Any Reason in the Previous Five Years	35%	25%	41%	0%	0.169
Has not been to jail in previous five years	38%	26%	35%	1%	
Crime Victim with a History of Incarceration	53%	21%	26%	0%	0.035
Crime Victim with no History of Incarceration	38%	25%	36%	1%	
History of Incarceration and Crime Victim	60%	18%	22%	0%	<0.01
History of Incarceration and Not a Crime Victim	30%	26%	44%	0%	
Crime Victim from Wards 5, 7, or 8	54%	26%	19%	1%	<0.01
Crime Victim from all other Wards	33%	24%	42%	1%	
Crime Victim who identifies as Black	32%	26%	42%	1%	<0.01

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Crime Victim who identifies as White	49%	23%	27%	1%	
Table 3: Subgroup Analysis, My neighborhood is safer today than it was five years ago					
	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Missing	P value
Wards 5, 7, 8	37%	37%	25%	1%	<0.01
All Other Wards	43%	43%	13%	1%	
Black	35%	39%	25%	1%	<0.01
White	47%	42%	10%	1%	
Black, Male	47%	34%	19%	1%	<0.01
Black, Female	29%	42%	28%	1%	
White, Male	52%	38%	9%	1%	0.489
White, Female	45%	43%	10%	1%	
History of Incarceration	41%	35%	24%	0%	0.08
No History of Incarceration	16%	41%	16%	1%	
Crime Victim	40%	41%	19%	1%	<0.01
Not a Crime Victim	43%	42%	13%	2%	
Been to Jail For Any Reason in the Previous Five Years	44%	39%	17%	1%	0.938
Has not been to jail in previous five years	41%	41%	17%	1%	
Crime Victim with a History of Incarceration	36%	36%	28%	0%	0.429
Crime Victim with no History of Incarceration	41%	41%	17%	0%	
History of Incarceration and Crime Victim	37%	37%	26%	0%	0.149
History of Incarceration and Not a Crime Victim	50%	29%	21%	0%	
Crime Victim from Wards 5, 7, or 8	35%	39%	25%	1%	<0.05
Crime Victim from all other Wards	43%	41%	16%	1%	
Crime Victim who identifies as Black	47%	42%	10%	1%	<0.01

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Crime Victim who identifies as White	35%	39%	25%	1%	
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Table 4: Subgroup Analysis, Incarceration is the best way to handle people who get arrested					
	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Missing	P value
Wards 5, 7, 8	9%	20%	70%	2%	<0.01
All Other Wards	7%	13%	79%	1%	
Black	9%	17%	73%	2%	<0.01
White	5%	13%	81%	1%	
Black, Male	9%	2%	69%	2%	0.49
Black, Female	9%	15%	75%	2%	
White, Male	8%	17%	74%	2%	<0.01
White, Female	4%	11%	85%	2%	
History of Incarceration	2%	13%	83%	4%	0.13
No History of Incarceration	8%	16%	76%	1%	
Crime Victim	9%	15%	76%	1%	<0.05
Not a Crime Victim	6%	17%	76%	2%	
Been to Jail For Any Reason in the Previous Five Years	5%	9%	86%	0%	<0.01
Has not been to jail in previous five years	8%	18%	73%	1%	
Crime Victim with a History of Incarceration	2%	13%	85%	0%	0.237
Crime Victim with no History of Incarceration	9%	15%	76%	1%	
History of Incarceration and Crime Victim	2%	13%	85%	0%	0.126
History of Incarceration and Not a Crime Victim	3%	9%	82%	6%	
Crime Victim from Wards 5, 7, or 8	8%	20%	72%	1%	<0.05
Crime Victim from all other Wards	9%	13%	78%	<1%	
Crime Victim who identifies as Black	6%	14%	80%	1%	0.254
Crime Victim who identifies as White	9%	15%	76%	<1%	

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Table 5: Subgroup Analysis, The District needs to be tougher on crime					
	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Missing	P value
Wards 5, 7, 8	18%	18%	63%	1%	<0.01
All Other Wards	11%	13%	76%	1%	
Black	14%	18%	67%	2%	<0.01
White	12%	13%	74%	0%	
Black, Male	11%	20%	68%	1%	0.212
Black, Female	16%	16%	66%	2%	
White, Male	20%	17%	63%	1%	<0.01
White, Female	9%	11%	79%	0%	
History of Incarceration	10%	16%	73%	1%	0.739
No History of Incarceration	15%	15%	70%	1%	
Crime Victim	16%	14%	70%	1%	0.07
Not a Crime Victim	13%	17%	69%	1%	
Been to Jail For Any Reason in the Previous Five Years	7%	9%	84%	0%	<0.01
Has not been to jail in previous five years	17%	16%	66%	1%	
Crime Victim with a History of Incarceration	9%	14%	76%	1%	0.6
Crime Victim with no History of Incarceration	16%	14%	70%	1%	
History of Incarceration and Crime Victim	9%	14%	76%	1%	0.8
History of Incarceration and Not a Crime Victim	12%	24%	65%	0%	
Crime Victim from Wards 5, 7, or 8	20%	16%	63%	1%	<0.05
Crime Victim from all other Wards	14%	13%	73%	1%	
Crime Victim who identifies as Black	14%	16%	68%	2%	0.06
Crime Victim who identifies as White	14%	14%	73%	<1%	

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Table 6: Subgroup Analysis, We should only hold people in jail prior to a conviction if they pose a high risk to public safety					
	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Missing	P value
Wards 5, 7, 8	74%	15%	11%	1%	<0.01
All Other Wards	80%	9%	10%	1%	
Black	70%	16%	13%	1%	<0.01
White	86%	7%	7%	<1%	
Black, Male	66%	20%	13%	2%	0.28
Black, Female	73%	13%	13%	1%	
White, Male	83%	6%	10%	1%	0.21
White, Female	87%	7%	5%	1%	
History of Incarceration	70%	16%	14%	0%	0.27
No History of Incarceration	78%	11%	10%	1%	
Crime Victim	79%	10%	10%	1%	0.5
Not a Crime Victim	76%	13%	11%	1%	
Been to Jail For Any Reason in the Previous Five Years	81%	10%	10%	0%	<0.01
Has not been to jail in previous five years	77%	12%	11%	1%	
Crime Victim with a History of Incarceration	52%	18%	30%	0%	0.79
Crime Victim with no History of Incarceration	76%	12%	13%	0%	
History of Incarceration and Crime Victim	76%	12%	13%	0%	0.06
History of Incarceration and Not a Crime Victim	53%	29%	18%	0%	
Crime Victim from Wards 5, 7, or 8	74%	15%	10%	1%	<0.01
Crime Victim from all other Wards	82%	8%	10%	1%	
Crime Victim who identifies as Black	85%	7%	7%	2%	<0.01
Crime Victim who identifies as White	75%	11%	12%	<1%	

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Table 7: Subgroup Analysis, Having a jail makes the city safer					
	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Missing	P value
Wards 5, 7, 8	17%	27%	54%	2%	<0.05
All Other Wards	22%	29%	49%	0%	
Black	18%	26%	54%	2%	<0.01
White	22%	30%	46%	2%	
Black, Male	18%	25%	55%	2%	0.8
Black, Female	20%	27%	52%	1%	
White, Male	33%	29%	37%	1%	<0.01
White, Female	18%	32%	49%	1%	
History of Incarceration	14%	32%	54%	14%	0.2
No History of Incarceration	21%	28%	50%	21%	
Crime Victim	23%	28%	48%	23%	<0.01
Not a Crime Victim	16%	28%	55%	16%	
Been to Jail For Any Reason in the Previous Five Years	17%	21%	60%	17%	<0.01
Has not been to jail in previous five years	21%	30%	47%	21%	
Crime Victim with a History of Incarceration	16%	31%	53%	0%	0.2
Crime Victim with no History of Incarceration	24%	28%	47%	1%	
History of Incarceration and Crime Victim	16%	31%	53%	0%	0.4
History of Incarceration and Not a Crime Victim	24%	28%	47%	1%	
Crime Victim from Wards 5, 7, or 8	20%	23%	55%	2%	<0.01
Crime Victim from all other Wards	24%	31%	44%	1%	
Crime Victim who identifies as Black	23%	31%	45%	1%	<0.01
Crime Victim who identifies as White	20%	26%	52%	2%	

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Table 8: Subgroup Analysis, Opinion on Jail Construction							
	Meets our Needs	No Money	Renovate	Construct	Don't Know	Missing	P value
Wards 5, 7, 8	3%	28%	25%	16%	25%	2%	<0.01
All Other Wards	2%	26%	19%	21%	31%	1%	
Black	4%	28%	27%	20%	19%	3%	<0.01
White	2%	25%	18%	20%	36%	0%	
Black, Male	4%	30%	27%	23%	15%	2%	0.3
Black, Female	4%	24%	29%	18%	22%	3%	
White, Male	3%	18%	14%	28%	37%	0%	<0.01
White, Female	1%	26%	19%	17%	37%	0%	
History of Incarceration	3%	28%	26%	28%	12%	3%	<0.01
No History of Incarceration	2%	27%	21%	19%	31%	1%	
Crime Victim	2%	26%	21%	21%	29%	1%	<0.05
Not a Crime Victim	3%	28%	22%	15%	30%	2%	
Been to Jail For Any Reason in the Previous Five Years	2%	31%	26%	32%	9%	1%	<0.01
Has not been to jail in previous five years	3%	26%	20%	16%	35%	1%	
Crime Victim with a History of Incarceration	3%	32%	23%	32%	8%	1%	<0.01
Crime Victim with no History of Incarceration	2%	26%	21%	21%	31%	1%	
History of Incarceration and Crime Victim	3%	32%	23%	32%	8%	1%	<0.01
History of Incarceration and Not a Crime Victim	0%	18%	32%	18%	24%	9%	

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Crime Victim from Wards 5, 7, or 8	2%	31%	24%	17%	25%	1%	<0.01
Crime Victim from all other Wards	2%	24%	19%	24%	31%	0%	
Crime Victim who identifies as Black	2%	21%	18%	24%	36%	0%	<0.01
Crime Victim who identifies as White	2%	31%	27%	22%	17%	1%	

Appendix 6: Community Workshop Small Group Guiding Questions

Decarceration:

- Who is in jail now that you think shouldn't be?
- What should our criteria be for incarcerating a person?
- What should our priorities be in terms of diversion and decriminalization?
- What else should decision makers consider when thinking about decarceration?

Local Control:

- How should we address DC's prison population? [Leave at BOP? Bring special populations home pre-release, or permanently? Which special populations? Bring everyone back to DOC?]
- Is it important address federal control over agencies that act primarily in the District? Assuming DC can't take them all back at once, which are most important/should be prioritized first? US Parole Commission, US Attorney's Office, DC Superior Court and DC Court of Appeals, Pre-Trial Services and CSOSA
- What else should decision makers consider when thinking about local control?

Community Investments and Alternatives to the Criminal Justice System:

- What community investments do you think are most needed? How should these be targeted to people of different ages? How will these minimize peoples' contact with the justice system down the road?
- What non-CJ system responses to different types of conflict and crisis do you want to see in your community?
- What supports are most important for people coming home from prison and jail in their first day? Week? Month? Year?
- How can we make sure that community services are low-barrier and accessible to all?
- What should we prioritize?
- What else should decision makers consider when thinking about community investments and alternatives?

Facilities and Services:

- What kind of facilities (detention, community-based, or otherwise) does DC need to support safety, rehabilitation, and justice, thinking about the next 50 years?
- What types of programs and services should be available to people in those facilities?
- What else should decision makers consider when thinking about facilities and services?

Appendix 7: Vision Statements from Community Visioning Workshops

A verbatim list of individual visions shared by participants at two community visioning workshops in August 2019. Participants responded to the prompt “What is your vision for the future of justice in DC?”

1	Abolition
2	Establishment of guaranteed basic levels of respect, health, education, community support, self-determination, and bodily autonomy/safety (well-being)
3	My vision of DC Jail and jail nationwide is to see more people rehabilitated, pardon and jobs without record bias
4	A safe space for all
5	No jail
6	My vision is that the system be restorative
7	Abolition of systems that use harm and violence to address harm and violence
8	Tuition scholarship for returning citizens
9	I would like to develop diversion efforts for simple assault and improve due process for revocations to prevent their detainers in the jail
10	–Racism will not play a role in incarceration –Treatment and rehabilitation will be the core focus –Prison facilities will be disbanded –DC will handle all charges within
11	Dismantling the Criminal Justice System -Divest from police -Release people who are currently incarcerated and serving time for nonviolent crimes -Change sentencing and make certain things no longer a criminal penalty -provide mental health, drug treatment in communities DE-FUND POLICE!
12	–Heavy planning on preventive services –Services which are linked to the needs of the crimes—professional –a lot of work in churches and at the community based levels
13	Healthy Black People
14	Invest in people, not prisons!
15	I envision happy and safe communities for Black children. I envision a world where Black children have access to good schools, food, health centers/healthcare, and affordable/equitable housing, where Black People can love each loudly, boldly and freely w/o surveillance and retaliation!
16	My vision is for people to have jobs and things and places to go after they get out of jail. For the future I would like to see is people get homes and people to have a place to go to when things happen they can go
17	Free transitional housing for returning citizens
18	As someone who is a victim of violent crime and has had a family member incarcerated, I want the COs to rethink how it prevents incarceration and how we rehabilitate those who are incarcerated. Bring back DC residents in BOP facilities and build the capacity of their communities to serve their needs.

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19	My vision for the future of justice in DC will be equality in housing, jobs, education and protection to all residents not just white residents. Stop the letting go of those that just got charged and let go to kill or do another crime.
20	Reimagination of communities and community responses where police, prison/jails are obsolete because community alternatives to them are flourishing.
21	My vision of justice in DC is enhancement of community based services, housing resources, mental health, education, mentorship, economic development, and trauma based services. We need to wrap our arms around all our citizens and shower each other with love, respect, and dignity.
22	I envision DC justice an environment in which there is a political investment in ensuring more people are leaving "jails" than entering!!!
23	I envision that DC is a space that feels connected by common values. The community (both ind. if possible and systematically) sees value in human life, the environment itself, their involvement in the community. Rehabilitation programs -> holistic. partner with community members. Do not lock/send people away.
24	-Local humane pretrial detention -Local, humane prison that has adequate space for educational, vocational opportunities -Serious effort to decriminalize or have lower sentences for nonviolent crimes and alternatives to incarceration, with a special emphasis on more mental health care-less incarceration.
25	I envision a community where: investment in youth, schools, employment opportunities, housing, etc. Only incarcerate people when absolutely no other option — increased diversion and restorative justice; discontinue incarceration for technical parole violations, eliminate racist over-policing, significantly reduce length of sentences, don't incarcerate people with mental illness, restore local control
26	-That arrests will be only of people posing a real threat to DC -That people's background (special needs, PTSD, addiction, etc) will be fully considered in deciding whether to charge them with a crime—rather than referring them for other therapeutic treatments -That upon conviction of a crime, the background information gathered pretrial will lead to a more individualized course of "rehabilitation" (whether mental health treatment, addiction treatment, incarceration, employment training, etc.)
27	Justice means having ways to deal with conflict and crisis without putting people in cages
28	Where programs focused on addressing justice for marginalized communities no longer exist...
29	Culturally and Spiritually rooted/aligned support towards the wellness and genuine rehabilitation of people of African descent. 1) Transform schools and support restorative justice, trauma informed care, social emotional training for ALL faculty and staff. 2) Finding out what the community wants.
30	A society where the needs of people touched by the justice system are addressed in a way that allows for restorative justice — for those victimized and those who commit offense. A system that goes to the root causes of misbehavior and brings healing.

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31	A DC where residents are the designers of our own systems of safety and accountability, focused on mutual aid and connections between neighbors. An end to destabilization caused by displacement and gentrification and the use of police to remove communities of color from their homes. A focus on healing from trauma, in which punishment has no place. Resources allocated based on community priority.
32	Restorative Justice/Community Policing
33	A system that invests in communities instead of a system that profits from the detention of people.

