



**City of Takoma Park, MD
Reimagining Public Safety Task Force
Ambassadors Focus Group Report
May 2021**

LINK Strategic Partners (LINK) conducted a focus group composed of City of Takoma Park, MD (Takoma Park) stakeholders who had applied to participate on the Task Force to Reimagine Public Safety but who were not selected to serve, so that their considerable experiences can help inform the work of the Task Force.

Interview Script and Questions

The LINK facilitators introduced themselves and outlined the purpose, structure, and guidelines for the discussion. Focus group participants introduced themselves and responded to the following questions.

What is your relationship with the City of Takoma Park?

Participants in the focus group have lived in Takoma Park for periods ranging from 16 to 31 years. They are racially and ethnically diverse and represent a cross-section of Takoma Park: employed, retired, renters, and homeowners. One participant has worked with the Takoma Park Police Department in the past.

Several participants were pointed and specific in describing their interactions with members of the Takoma Park Police Department. Attendees emphasized that they are “very invested” in the work of the Task Force and stated their wish that their experiences, some of which were “unpleasant”, be considered in this work.

What is the perception of “public safety” in your community?

Public safety means people need to feel safe and not feel afraid of the police. It’s both being physically safe and feeling safe. Residents should not have to feel afraid of the authorities who are supposed to protect them. Public safety means that regardless of your ward the police will monitor and protect that area.

Public safety means regardless of a person’s race they are treated the same as any other person. Participants state they perceive significant differences in how they are responded to based on their being people of color or white. A specific example is repeated traffic stops of a Black resident on their way to work despite their being a known community leader. This resident now walks to work rather than drives to avoid the stops.



Public safety includes effective communication between police and the community, and collaboration in resolving big and small problems. Takoma park police are on the front lines but there must be strategies other than increasing surveillance that reduce crime.

Public safety means a strong community with residents who look out for and help one another. It means a place where police are not the only option for help, as neighbors are there to support as well. We heard that “our communities need to be strengthened” and economic development is a key to a stronger community.

Public safety in relation to our schools means that police are seen as part of the general community all the time, not just when kids are in trouble. It could be as simple as just saying hello to kids on their way to school or being at a career day or an assembly.

Takoma Park has launched the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, what do you believe should be the focus of this task force?

Show us how you are analyzing the data and specifically how you got to your conclusions so your recommendations are more meaningful.

It’s not a matter of training one officer or all officers on any one thing. We can’t just plan on training the police on all these issues. We need more connections for auxiliary services.

We need other types of professionals who can address the situation and ride along with the police. We have to join forces with mental health professionals and drug addiction professionals. This community is filled with these types of professionals who would step up to serve if there were a way to do so.

Our police need to avoid arresting people if there is an appropriate alternative. This includes decriminalizing certain actions and changing policy.

If you were in leadership and charged with reimagining what public safety looks like in Takoma Park, what would you do? What are some goals/initiatives you would want to focus on?

The goal is to make the community stronger, to improve communication and build relationships of trust and confidence among the community and the police. It’s unrealistic to ask the police to “be all things to all people” and then “shackle” them rather than developing resources to assist with responding appropriately to non-policing calls does not resolve issues.

One participant observed that when people are afraid, they often don’t make the best choices. The uncertainty inherent in encounters between the public and the police is the beginning of fear, which can lead to outcomes ranging from misunderstanding to tragedy. Skilled, trained support



that can be deployed to assess and resolve non-criminal, non-violent situations is a recurrent theme and ideal for all the participants in this focus group. Their goals include:

- Increase connections to auxiliary services and referral services to offer alternatives to police response.
- Rationalize police assignments to limit the hours in a shift or reduce overtime to avoid fatigue. “No one is at their best at the end of a 12-hour shift.”
- Communicate the logic behind policy decisions and implementation.
- Research and explore alternative policing models including an unarmed force. It is unrealistic to expect the same person to be a peacemaker and trained for combat.
- Clarify the roles of Takoma Park Police versus Montgomery County Police.

What is the single best piece of advice you can provide us as we continue our work with the Takoma Park community?

Participants’ advice reflected the concerns they shared throughout the discussion:

- Takoma Park police need mental health professionals assigned to the police department to support them.
- We need economic development over more surveillance.
- We need to find ways to avoid arresting people if there are other options available.
- We need to decriminalize a lot of our drug arrests.
- Ask the police what are the major challenges that they feel ill-equipped to handle.
- I would like relationships to be better between officers and the community.
- Listen to the different residents of Takoma Park. I can see officers in some neighborhoods a lot but in other neighborhoods I never see them.
- We should allow police officers to rent in various apartment buildings with the knowledge they would protect the residents in that building.
- We need to know exactly what the police do on a daily basis.
- We need the police department to communicate better with us.
- We need more positive interactions with police.
- If you’re going to choose to have our own Takoma Park police department, then we need a dispatcher within Takoma Park as well.

**City of Takoma Park, MD
Reimagining Public Safety Task Force
Takoma/Langley Crossroads Business Walk
July 2021**

A variety of community engagement activities have informed the work of the Takoma Park Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety. In response to an invitation from Kayleigh Gunnoud, Executive Director of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority Inc., members of the Task Force and co-facilitation staff met for a Business Walk at Takoma/Langley Crossroads (Crossroads).

During the Business Walk, Task Force members engaged approximately eight businesses, including owners and staff. Businesses visited included professional offices and retail establishments. The business owners and staff contacted were racially and ethnically diverse and multigenerational. They made observations and expressed concerns over a range of issues. Their feedback is categorized in the following themes and suggestions:

The Built Environment

- Upgrade lighting throughout Crossroads to improve visibility, attract customers, and increase safety.
- Provide financial support to restore and improve Crossroads' infrastructure.
- Provide financial incentives to upgrade storefronts and make Crossroads look as vibrant as it is.
- Upgrade the parking lot with STOP signs and speed bumps to promote safety and reduce accidents.
- Develop and implement a plan for traffic control and parking alternatives during the Wednesday Farmers' Market.

City Services

- Develop and implement a plan for increased trash pickup following the Wednesday Farmers' Market to improve health and safety.
- Investigate options for trash pickup on business sites in addition to common areas to improve health and safety.
- Work with business owners to develop and implement a plan for referring persons in need of support to deal with mental health issues, substance use, or homelessness.
- Investigate options for installing cameras and closed-circuit TV to monitor and reduce/prevent drug sales around Crossroads.

Policing

- Enforce "No Parking" in the striped zone in front of Crossroads businesses.

- Restore regular police patrol car drive-throughs to deter crime and loitering.
- Resume the informal community-police interaction that took place pre-COVID-19 to continue to build relationships of confidence and trust among businesses and the police, including frequent business walks/visits.

Return on Members' Dues/Investment

- Improve communication among Crossroads businesses and the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority Inc. regarding the return on investment for paying member dues to the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority Inc.
- Explore opportunities to improve communication with the Hispanic community.
- Highlight the role of Crossroads in exploring new ideas for the business community.

In concert with community engagement activities such as focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and Community Listening Sessions, the Business Walk provided direct input to the deliberations of the Task Force.

City of Takoma Park, MD Stakeholder Audit Report April 2021

In February 2021, LINK Strategic Partners (LINK) and Expectant Advisory conducted an audit of nine City of Takoma Park, MD (Takoma Park) stakeholders and three focus groups to inform our work with the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. The list of stakeholders was provided by Takoma Park and individuals were contacted via email or phone and asked to participate in a 30-minute phone interview facilitated by LINK. The following report summarizes the key takeaways from these discussions.

What is your relationship with the City of Takoma Park?

Stakeholders included retirees, volunteers, members of the city council, educators, business leaders, renters, homeowners, and clergy. Interviewees have lived in Takoma Park for periods ranging from two years to their entire life. In addition, we heard from individuals who were not residents of Takoma Park, but were closely affiliated with community organizations focused on local initiatives. There was consensus among stakeholders that Takoma Park is a good place to live.

What is the perception of “public safety” in your community?

Stakeholders shared a broad range of perceptions of public safety. We heard the need to identify a working definition of “public safety” and what that means for the City of Takoma Park. There was general agreement that people may default to policing when they are asked about public safety and that there is currently over-reliance on police to meet all needs. Several residents spoke of police as keeping the community safe by being guardians rather than warriors. We heard that public safety must also include quality-of-life concerns, economic justice, housing, recreation, clean water, clean air, behavioral health support, and more. Several residents raised the question of how to reimagine public safety into component parts that will meet a diverse range of community needs.

Takoma Park is launching the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, what do you believe should be the focus of this Task Force?

The Task Force should strive to develop a comprehensive and forward-looking definition of public safety as it relates to the City of Takoma Park. Stakeholders suggested that the Task Force partner with City Departments throughout the process and prioritize the needs of residents, especially in marginalized groups and communities.

To do this, stakeholders recommended that we create many entry points for community engagement, including exploring opportunities for feedback such as community meetings and surveys. Stakeholders recommended that the Task Force ensure that voices from underrepresented minority and youth communities are included in the process and create a

structured safe space for residents to share their concerns and experiences. This process must recognize the tension that underlies discussing policing and police reform.

We also heard that providing Task Force members with necessary background information, education, and research is a critical part of equipping them to do their jobs. This should include policing data, budgeting information, and detailed overviews regarding the roles of city agencies and how those roles intersect with supporting public safety. We heard that this information sharing must not only take place within the Task Force, but also for Takoma Park residents overall.

We heard the need for a comprehensive approach to dealing with the existing system of over-reliance on police. Stakeholders recommended that the Task Force discussions include topics such as: structural disadvantages of disinvestment in marginalized communities, lack of educational opportunities, and allotment of community resources.

If you were in leadership and charged with reimagining what public safety looks like in Takoma Park, what would you do? What are some goals/initiatives you would want to focus on?

Residents expressed the hope that there will be some specific, short-term goals for immediate action, and visionary, longer-term goals the community can work on and build towards a safer and more livable community. There is a hope that the Task Force might develop revolutionary recommendations that would go beyond existing structures and frameworks, to outline a blueprint for the future.

Specific suggested initiatives identified included effective communication, cultural competency, and implicit bias trainings annually and a complaint process that is timed, completed and reported out to the community. The Task Force can also reconsider when police are appropriate responders to complaints and identify opportunities to redirect responsibilities and funding to indicated professionals/agencies. Stakeholders suggested a review, and revision as necessary, of the policies and procedures concerning the use of force, government services, and budgeting.

What is the single best piece of advice you can provide us as we continue our work with the Takoma Park community?

Stakeholders advised the Task Force to embrace and reflect the diversity of Takoma Park community in all aspects (socio-economic status, race, age, gender, etc.).

They reminded the Task Force that change is going to be controversial, and Task Force members should not shy away from bold progress.

They advised the City that the work of this Task Force cannot “end” as of June 4, 2021. The City must be committed to a continuing journey and ensuring that resources are equitably shared amongst communities.

And finally, they reminded the full Reimagining Public Safety team that the pandemic makes it hard to reach some populations, so it's important to actively target outreach through community organizations, tenant associations, and other neighborhood institutions.



**City of Takoma Park
Reimagining Public Safety Task Force
Takoma Park Police Department Focus Groups
April 27 – 28, 2021**

I. Introduction

LINK Strategic Partners (LINK) conducted two focus groups with members of the Takoma Park Police Department (TPPD) to inform our work with the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. Two times were offered to allow for participation of TPPD staff who work different shifts. The invitation was circulated to all members of the department who were asked to participate in a one-hour Zoom discussion. Both conversations were facilitated by Michael Akin of LINK, and he was joined by Cordell Carter of Expectant Advisory (EA) on April 27 only.

The sessions opened with a welcome and introductions of the TPPD participants and the facilitators. The format for the sessions was outlined and guidelines for discussion were established. As with our other stakeholder sessions, the report below captures overall themes and feedback without attributing comments to individual participants.

II. Warm Up.

The focus group participants were asked to share a little bit about themselves: why they joined TPPD; their role; how long they have been a member of the TPPD; and what the term “public safety” means to them.

Participants have been members of TPPD for periods ranging from approximately one year to 36 years, as well as retirees from the Department. They have a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences, and represent different functions within the department.

Participants expressed their initial reason for joining the force. Most of the reasons consisted of their desire to protect and connect with people, and ultimately making a difference within the community. Members explained how some have had a desire to be a police officer since childhood, some indicating an interest in following in their fathers’ footsteps. They spoke of the job “striking a chord” in them and of their love for meeting and talking to people. Participants spoke of wanting to put resources where they can do the most good, helping people who can’t help themselves, and helping people find a way to make a better life.

When asked to define public safety, participants described it as a function carried out by a group of men and women specifically chosen to lead, educate, and help others resolve issues, and to help people come to safe solutions. In its most basic form, public safety is “helping others”. This can be done in ways such as taking reports, walking people through the processes of the criminal justice system, listening to those within the community, holding events to build community, and in directly responding to calls for service when they come in. Public safety is found in the presence of trust. There must be trust between this appointed group and their community in order to be effective. There was a unanimous sense that this trust is in short supply which is “making our jobs harder than ever before.”

III. Gauging Strengths and Challenges in the Community.

Participants were asked to speak about how has their work has changed during the years they have served in the TPPD. What are the challenges they are facing and where do significant gaps and unmet needs exist?

There was mutual agreement that scrutiny and accountability for law enforcement has significantly increased over the years. It was expressed that while this is understandable, it also adds more pressure and anxiety while on the job.

Participants shared the various kinds of calls police officers receive that are “not really police issues” but that they are expected to respond to when the community calls. Examples included calls around mental health crisis, about residents who have their “water turned off” and want to know where to turn, people who call police to lodge a “civil complaint” against someone, and neighbors with a noise complaint that “could likely be solved with a knock on the door or getting to know your neighbors” vs. a police response. Participants brainstormed that a response to this challenge could be creating and encouraging the use of more 24/7 non-emergency services to answer calls for power outages and things that law enforcement does not necessarily have control over, additional mental health resources, and a renewed focus on “neighbors learning to be neighbors”. Rockville’s and Gaithersburg’s 24/7 non-emergency dispatch options were mentioned as example of jurisdictions offering 24/7 non-emergency dispatch services effectively.

Participants described their struggles with receiving backlash for the wrongdoings of officers in other counties and states as taxing, while respect and trust for law enforcement decreases around the nation. They used different words, but we heard from nearly every participant a version of this sentiment from an officer: “we can do 100 things right that get no attention at all, but we live in constant fear that one mistake – even when it happens in a department across the country – will make it impossible for us to do our jobs.” Another officer remarked that the approach has

gone from “being as active and engaged as possible in community-based policing” to “stay back, have as little contact as possible and do not end up on YouTube.” Another officer stated that “two or three years ago TPPD was being held up as *the* example of community-based policing, both by local officials and national experts, and today we can’t do *anything* right even though our approach hasn’t changed.”

Participants offered reflections on how “there are clearly issues in policing that need addressing”, and also a frustration that there is “a lack of recognition for all the good that police officers do daily”. There was a sense that “we do the work that no one else wants to do and that we are called to do”, and “then we are criticized for doing it”. Participants stated that it is becoming more difficult to recruit and retain new police officers. It is getting harder and harder both to sell the job and to keep talented entry level officers, especially with the current state of morale, pay scale limitations, and the prolonging of retirement due to a lack of covered healthcare after one leaves the force. “Some officers stay longer than maybe they should or want to, as they can’t go without healthcare. This limits advancement pathways.” One participant with experience in recruiting asked “What do I say to sell this a good career? Honestly, what do I say in this current environment?”

Participants said they often fear misconceptions surrounding specialized units such as bike police and the K-9 are leading to changes that don’t take into account how these units actually operate and how important such units are to the recruitment process.

Members of the group encouraged the task force to remain open-minded and to consider “what is actually happening in Takoma Park PD” vs. “the awful things shown in the media from across the country.” They stated that “the goal should not be to punish officers” but to “find better ways to serve the community”.

Focus Group Members’ Direct Quotes During the Discussion

- There’s a lot less respect for police now. More accountability for police now. We just went through the ABLE [Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement] instructor course.
- More accountability is good overall. I think body cameras are actually really good.
- However, it’s hard when cameras catch an officer doing something stupid in another state or city, and we are directly impacted by backlash.
- There is a lot less trust for police. Before people would trust what a police officer would say and now it’s always in question.
- The new generation of police officers is very different. They will only really be here about five years and then they will leave. They don’t want to be here and deal with what we have to deal with.

- I was in recruiting for 11 years, but I can't sell this job anymore. I can't convince people to do this. You have to put your life on the line.
- The pay scale is ridiculous. There are people who haven't worked nearly as long and only make \$10 less than me.
- I could have retired ten years ago, but if I retire, I can't get healthcare. I have to wait to retire so I can actually qualify for Medicare.
- People really misunderstand the K-9 unit. Our dogs are more often used for finding missing items or people. However, the perception is that we sic dogs on people.
- There are critical things (like K-9) or bike police, but funds get cut. These are specialty programs that actually help recruit interested applicants.
- Many changes are media-driven and unrealistic. People think that all police are racist and want to beat people up. If you look at the number of interactions with police versus actual moments of use of harm, it's actually miniscule. However, the video of bad behavior paints everyone with the same brush.
- The media actually makes it harder for us to get good people to join the force.
- We'd like the task force to be open-minded about what we do and how we do it. The overall goal shouldn't be to punish the police, but to find better ways to serve the community. When you say things like "freeze the police budget" it just sounds like punishment and not helpful. Our goal is to better serve the community.
- It's not just punishing us; the long-term effect is actually killing morale and then we are less likely to go the extra mile for our communities.
- We get calls about getting the neighbor to turn their music down or even calls about when their electric will get turned back on. A lot of the calls should be more common sense.
- We get a lot of mental health related calls. The person generally isn't a danger to themselves or others, so I'll call the crisis center so I can respond alongside a mental health crisis counselor. But this approach is often left up to the judgment of the officer, and often we don't have the time or space to make that call.
- Many things we deal with just aren't police matters, like a civil dispute. However, they want us to engage in conflict for them.
- Rockville and Gaithersburg have 24/7 dispatch functions. In Takoma Park, the police are the only ones with a 24/7 dispatch option, which means we are the ones who always have to be "on". There is a non-emergency number option but a lot of times people don't use it and they actually want to talk to the police anyway.
- It would be good to have a crisis number/ support option that was also a 24/7 option.
- Another county has a great 24/7 online option for non-emergencies.
- It's difficult when people want immediate answers for something that's not immediate.

IV. Improving Engagement with the Community.

Participants were asked what opportunities they see in engaging the community and working together. What would support them in better meeting some of these opportunities? The police are called for everything, what recommendations for alternative solutions would they like to see the Task Force consider?

Participants pointed out that it would be effective to share the reports of our police department, specifically our use of force reports which are very low. Helping the public become more aware of the laws surrounding use of force may provide clarity to the community from the police office perspective as well as informing them of all the continuous training that TPPD undergoes. Helping the task force to get direct experience with law enforcement would be beneficial to understanding the scope of the work to inform holistic solutions.

Participants voiced their concern about the physical and emotional toll of being a police officer. “Carrying multiple pieces of mandated equipment for twelve hour shifts in every kind of weather condition wears the body down fast.” “I don’t want to look militant. But each year we are required to wear more and more items...this doesn’t always fit on a belt.” As in the previous section, it was mentioned that some officers experience mental and physical burnout but “cannot retire because they cannot afford healthcare”.

Referring to the police officer pay scale, some participants stated that new police officers on the force have received an increase in their starting salary to help with recruiting, while officers that have served for years are being paid equal to and sometimes less than new recruits.

There was much discussion about “how great it would be for officers to live in this community”. There was a sense that “we don’t make enough to live in most parts of Takoma Park and we make too much to receive subsidized housing.” One officer indicated that “financial equity is a very big priority in Takoma Park...but not when it comes to Police as we are not a popular group to advocate for.”

The issue of vandalism against police came up in the discussion. Members expressed their feelings towards such graffiti as “discouraging and hurtful” to police officers as members of this community, and would appreciate actions being done to have it taken down promptly when on government property. Finally, some participants spoke of the “old and cramped” space that the Police Department operates out of as needing renovation and repair, but that was matched with a sense that “any new money spent on police is seen as automatically ‘bad’ even it spent on areas of clear need.”

Focus Group Members Statements

- They [members of the public] need to see the overall numbers of complaints against our agency and even the numbers of use of force. Those numbers are very low. We even consider/report someone turning on a taser (which was not deployed) as a use of force. We take a very liberal definition of use of force. This is a good thing. More departments should do it. But we get no credit for it, and it's often used against us. We just need the context to be considered.
- We had 20 complaints in 2020 just because we became even more strict about how we define "use of force."
- Does anyone on the task force have training specific to the use of force by police? People don't understand what the laws are around when and where someone can use force. For example, MD just passed laws that actually make things much fuzzier around when/where force can be used. We would love to cover this in detail with the task force.
- It would be helpful for community members to be part of the community police academy and learn more about what the training protocol and policies actually are. We should open this up as an option when COVID protocols allow.
- There is so much the task force just won't see. I have to carry so many pieces of equipment on my body by law, but then I get complaints that I look too militant.
- Should someone be in the police department for 25 years? There's so much burnout. We work 12 hour shifts and come out in all weather. We can't retire because we can't afford the healthcare.
- They greatly increased the opening pay for officers but didn't adjust the scale for other officers, so someone who has been on the force for a long time is barely making more than a new recruit.
- When someone sprays "fuck 12" on a government building, and it is left up on the building for so long it is so demoralizing. We get freedom of speech, but when this is left up on the government building where we work, it sends a clear message.
- They have redone so many other departments, but they won't fix the police floor. We have mouse problems.
- Police officers can't live in the communities anymore. Either I can't afford to live in the community, or I make too much so I can't be in subsidized housing either.
- We have silent supporters, people who try to communicate on the side that they appreciate us, but those voices are so quiet by comparison.

V. Closing What is your single best piece of advice for the Task Force?

- Please review our current policies. Our detectives and police force really do want to serve the community. Review our data and records.
- Two years before Covid we got so many praises for our force. However, even with a great record, national incidents punish us as well.

- Please don't come with pre-conceived notions of what actions you want to take. Let's work together.
- We've done a lot of work to track each officer and identify what trainings they've done. We even have an advance alert system now that tracks officers with multiple incidences in a specific time frame and flags it for us to talk with them. This doesn't necessarily mean the officers are doing something wrong, all of the incidents could be justified, but it does allow us to have a discussion to gain more information and to not wait until something happens to react.
- A few examples of how our hands are tied:
 - ATV operator riding up and down the street without a helmet. A complaint was called in and we responded. The person on the ATV flipped off the officer, drove up on the sidewalk and sped away. We have a no chase policy, which we understand, so there was really nothing we could do. The person who called was upset that we didn't "do anything."
 - We had two girls who stole something from a store, and who we later learned committed a much more significant crime involving hijacking a car. We were called to the store where they stole items and a stranger actually approached and said they didn't want us to arrest them and that they would pay for all the stolen items. I do get the instinct to help, and it can be good. But often people are jumping in with limited information or defaulting to the police should default to "doing nothing", which is an approach that will have consequences at some point.
- Don't expect the police to be the be-all and end-all; there's too much going on when we have to make split-second decisions; we are good at what we're trained to do.
- None of us come to work with ill intentions or criminal intent; we are following a dream, a passion. And we want to make it back home to our families too.
- Sometimes we can't "just" pass off an issue to a non-police function for follow up. Other services don't follow through on their commitments; we need get the flow all going in the same directions-no dropped balls.
- We can do a better job appreciating the police and the job they do; may come to a time when we won't have the qualified people we need.
- Our officers are good and want to help people. When we do things the right way, don't make it seem like we were wrong. This is a bigger job than 9-5. We are trying to be proactive. Treat people with respect.
- Remember every day we're learning something new; personalities are different; good demeanor meets good; under the uniform is a regular human being.
- When you look at numbers [data], put them in context and consider the complete picture, not just what you want to read into it.

- The very nature of our profession is to respond to different situations and make split-second decisions.
- We don't want to come to work and become a viral video. "Let's not be on YouTube tonight" has become a very real mantra for police. That can be good...but it can also mean we are hesitating to engage in times when that is called for.
- Across the country every agency is desperate for people to trust again. But how willing are they to trust when they are bombarded by the media? We need better policing plus community willingness to see and support good policing. Officials love beating up on police on TV, and then calling us for support when they need us for their issues.
- The majority of reform empowers criminals and removes consequences.
- We need investment in both directions.
- We need to not let progress in Takoma Park get lost in the national conversation.
- We took the job because we believe in it and are out here doing it. We need support from the powers that be across the board.
- We want to be here, doing the job we were hired to do.