

**Application for Chief of Police
Denver Police Department
City and County of Denver
Position Paper**

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Thank you for the opportunity to outline how, if appointed Chief of Police of the Denver Police Department (DPD), I will build upon the strategies that have been most effective over the last six and a half years in advancing the primary mission of the DPD, which is to prevent crime in a respectful manner while demonstrating that everyone matters. I will highlight the improvements I intend to implement to ensure that the DPD not only continues forward as a premier law enforcement agency, but also an agency that operates with cutting edge policing strategies. Equally important is being an agency that embodies a culture of service and respect for the neighborhoods and communities we serve.

During the past six and a half years, under the leadership of Chief Robert White, the Denver Police Department has had a strategic focus on improving police/community relations as a cornerstone in preventing crime. I understand through my training and experience that residents who are engaged, with the police and with each other, tend to create safer neighborhoods that experience less crime and disorder. One simple, but concrete, example of how the DPD contributes to this stability occurred under my lead in 2015. During the weekly CORE meetings, it became apparent to me that the Baker and Hampden neighborhoods were experiencing high amounts of property crimes in consecutive reporting periods. Through collaboration with the District Three command staff, it was identified that one of the key factors contributing to these crimes was doors being left unsecured by residents. Upon holding the District accountable to this information, a plan was formulated to send officers into the affected neighborhoods to make positive contacts with citizens who left garage doors open, while politely explaining the hazard this creates. The results of this targeted crime prevention effort showed a significant reduction in burglaries and auto thefts in weeks when officers spent more time interacting with the community in this manner, and generated numerous compliments from the residents. As a result, this methodology has expanded to the entire district, as well as other parts of the city.

As the Deputy Chief of Operations, I am familiar with the individual personality, crime trends, and patterns in Denver's 78 neighborhoods. I work closely with DAU personnel in my regular duties, and together we conduct regular crime statistics review to assist with response planning. I estimate that I have conducted more than 250 of these meetings during the last six and a half years. This type of repetitive action has proven effective at identifying crime patterns in very early stages that might not otherwise be detected. I believe that this kind of knowledge can only be gleaned through an investment of time and experience. This is one of the unique strengths I have honed that will certainly be an asset to the Denver communities if I am selected to be its next Chief of Police.

In addition to embracing data-driven policing methods that fully utilize our analysts, I have also been an integral part of the development of several innovative and comprehensive community outreach efforts aimed at crime prevention. One important partnership that I am particularly excited about is the Junior Achievement "JA Kickstart Your Future." This program offers middle and high school students an opportunity to attend a week-long event focusing on entrepreneurship, healthy relationships, successful money management, and career exploration. In the midst of the gang violence that gripped northeast Denver in the summer of 2015, I collaborated with the Director of Junior Achievement with the specific goal of bringing the program to Northeast Denver, which was one of the focal points of the violence. The intention was to draw kids who might not otherwise have this opportunity, and to offer it as an alternative to gang involvement and crime. Since that time, the program has positively impacted more than 100 Denver youth and expanded to include Southwest Denver as well, which has also experienced gang violence.

Crime prevention through enforcement operations is another important tool, but it is my belief this work must be implemented with care to preserve community trust. Traditional policing such as

“zero tolerance” can result in over-policing of our neighborhoods with negligible impact on crime, ensuing more harm than good. However, I do believe crime prevention strategies paired with enforcement operations can be both ethical and effective if done well. The Mayor’s Impact initiative of 2015 is one such example. In early 2015, Mayor Hancock created an impact team to respond to a spike in gang violence and I was appointed Co-Chair. This team coupled enforcement with outreach and support services. Through the collaborative efforts of local, state and federal law enforcement partners, as well as state and federal prosecutors and an array of NGO and private organizations, we were able to stop the cycle of retaliatory gang violence. The city saw an 87% reduction of gang related homicides from 2015 to 2017, and the many partnerships established during this collaboration are still in place today. A key component of this effort was the Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC), which I participated in the development of, and has been recognized and replicated nationally as a model for addressing violent crime.

Because of the obvious success of the effort described above, the impact team approach has been adopted as a model for addressing other issues the DPD experiences, and this type of work should continue. Our enforcement efforts have been significantly enhanced through collaboration with federal partners and we continue to reap the benefits while addressing violent crime. Due to lack of cooperation by witnesses and victims in gang homicides, these are some of the most difficult cases to solve. We worked with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) to assign a federal agent to the DPD Homicide Unit. The partnership is intended to help hold accountable those involved in serious violent crimes by ensuring all avenues of prosecution are exhausted, and most importantly, that dangerous criminals do not go free because of their intimidation tactics. Other key relationships solidified through this approach to problem solving are those with Denver Public Works, Denver’s Road Home, Parks and Recreation, faith-based organizations, and many others who work alongside the DPD to problem address issues related to homelessness throughout the city.

Another priority for the department is to continue to establish legitimacy within certain segments of the community. The DPD makes more than half-a-million contacts every year. Each of these contacts presents an opportunity to have a positive impact in the community. Every officer of the department should be striving to make professional, positive impressions during their daily interactions regardless of the circumstances. Even enforcement actions, if handled professionally, can result in a positive opinion of the agency. By demonstrating compassion and empathy, and preserving dignity and respect during our daily interactions, we will enhance our ability to sustain healthy and meaningful relationships in the communities we serve. Data collection will be deployed soon, and utilized as a mechanism for documenting this work. Stressing the quality of contacts rather than quantity of contacts will mitigate any potential negative impact on proactive time that completing data cards will cause. Acknowledging that a very small percentage of the population is responsible for much of crime, neighborhoods that have felt scrutinized by a heavy police presence will now reap the benefits of positive interaction through these contacts.

Equally important is internal legitimacy. Officer relations are currently an issue, and there is much room for improvement in this area, as having an engaged workforce is crucial to the success of the organization. Realizing that implementing change in an organization the size of the DPD successfully requires the buy in of line-level personnel, we must do a better job when implementing changes. As Chief, I would enhance internal communications and ensure accurate information is shared with personnel in a timely manner. In today’s times, we are no longer reliant on sending a message through the chain of command. Department issued smart phones can be utilized for direct and real-time communication from the command staff. In addition to technological methods of communication, face

to face interactions with officers will be a priority for the command staff. In short, soliciting feedback from our sworn personnel on decisions that affect them, and acting on that feedback when possible, is a responsible way to lead, and is crucial to establishing trust internally.

It is my belief that education and training are key to enhancing police service. It is imperative to stand behind programs that are deployed in the field and to remain committed to excellence. Each training, internal and external, must be vetted. Material must be consistent with our mission, values and principles and emphasize preserving human life through de-escalation. Additionally, the DPD employs officers who are capable and eager to learn. Therefore, focusing our efforts on teaching officers what to do, rather than not what to do, pays off in dividends. This is especially crucial for the contacts we make with our residents who suffer from mental health issues, our chronically homeless and our youth. Just one example of this is the work that pairs mental health clinicians with officers trained in crisis intervention, which provides groundwork for police to not only understand, but relate to, the people we contact.

I also strongly believe in succession planning. I have served most of my career as a mentor and it is something I excel at. In fact, nearly half of the current commanders were my direct reports at some point in their careers. As highlighted in the results of the most recent employee engagement survey, job satisfaction relies heavily on defined career paths and is a mechanism for officers to advance within our agency. It is a disservice not to foster leadership skills and promote team building within our ranks. As Chief, I would formalize a mentorship program. Additionally, this work will also enhance our ability to recruit, hire and retain qualified candidates, which is something police departments are struggling with across the nation.

Acknowledging that we have finite resources, utilizing force multipliers maximizes our ability to serve a City that is growing exponentially with current staffing. The work of Chief White to right-size this department must continue to be built upon. The DPD currently employs a robust team of analysts who excel at problem identification and finding solutions that are quantifiable. Additionally, civilian report technicians have contributed greatly to our ability to respond to community needs. Under my lead, the DPD will continue the expansion of civilians, who serve as experts in their fields, to improve our effectiveness through more efficient utilization of police resources. This allows our officers to remain on patrol and proactively engage the neighborhoods they serve. Additionally, we will boost collaborative efforts with public and private entities to address disorder issues that create negative issues for communities. For instance, transportation companies, hotel staff, retail loss prevention staff and private security companies are ready-made partners we can engage and train to further our reach in the community.

In closing, the leadership of a police agency directly impacts the success or failure of the entire organization. Establishing and maintaining a police department that is considered professional, ethical, just and fair by the community it serves should be not only be the goal of the Chief of Police, but also of every member of the organization. This can be attained by creating a culture of service to others. I have learned that there is no substitute for experience and I have acquired an appreciation for the dedication and commitment that it takes to lead this police department. I will conduct this work through empowering employees, especially those in supervisory and command positions, with the authority necessary to carry out their roles in support of the overall mission. My willingness to learn from every situation that I face has helped me grow as a police professional, and I fully recognize that the role of Chief is to serve. I will accomplish this by remaining engaged and continuing my record of tenacious, dedicated service to the city, the department, and the entire Denver Community.