

Themes from the HPD Staff Survey

Note: The frequency of comments on each topic is provided to give a general idea of the prevalence of each theme. The survey and conversations were not designed to be statistically representative of the department and quantitative values should not be assigned to the trends identified. This is qualitative data and any counts should only be used as a reference, not as data.

Concerns about the emotional state of HPD Employees

(112 out of 185 had comments on this topic)

- The top trend in the survey comments were feelings of being demoralized and unsupported
- Many respondents used strong language to emphasize how low morale is, such as the worst it has ever been
- Some words that respondents used to express their feelings were worn down, stressed, under pressure, tired, frustrated, hurt, exhausted, nervous, overworked and demotivated by the current climate and ongoing conversations about policing
- Many feel scared that they will be indicted
- Many expressed that they do not feel heard or supported by leadership and that they are being asked to go it alone with no guidance in a stressful time
- Many expressed fear for their personal safety while doing their job
- Many expressed worries about losing their jobs due to community demands
- Many feel a divide with the community and that the national narrative is taking a negative toll
- Some expressed a concern that employees are looking at moving to other Cities that have Councils that are more supportive or at leaving the profession all together
- Many expressed stress from being an essential worker and having to be physically present at work during COVID-19
- Many feel the City and City Council have not acknowledged the fact that HPD employees have been here through COVID-19, exposing ourselves and our families. Many people were upset that the City provided COVID-19 upgrades to City Hall when majority of the employees are working from home, prior to upgrades in other departments city wide where employees have remained at work through the pandemic.
- Several people felt abandoned by City Council when some members stood outside the HPD lobby doors with protesters as staff had to chain the doors for employee safety. Many were upset that Council marched against us and then called for help when protestors were at their house.

Concerns about increases in crime and changes in criminal prosecution/policies

(112 out of 185 had comments on this topic)

- Many respondents expressed concerns about increases in crime, including gun and gang violence, property crime, drugs, robberies, and traffic violations
- Some noted that many community members may not be aware of high crime levels
- Many expressed a frustration and concern at new laws that decrease tools to address crime, including offenders being released and cases not getting charged
- Many expressed concerns about how the DA handles cases
- Some specifically expressed concerns about changes to the emergency bail schedule

- Some expressed that changes in legislation have been hard to keep up with or confusing
- Some respondents discussed mental health issues in the community and felt they should not be responding

Ideas and concerns related to community relations

(102 out of 185 had comments on this topic)

- Many feel that HPD is professional, committed, and sincerely cares about the community
- Many feel that there is a positive connection to community and support from the community, and some suggested building on those positive connections
- Many feel the City could be doing a better job communicating with the community about the demands of modern policing and the focus on community policing
- Many expressed concern that the current conversations are negatively impacting or driving a wedge between HPD and the community, due to the large emphasis on negative things without much conversation about positive things
- Many feel that they are doing good work that often isn't done in other cities,
- Some suggested there is room for improvement, but also that the good work doesn't get recognized
- Many suggested improving methods of reporting positive impacts to the public
- Many feel the public has unrealistic expectations, and there are opportunities for education on police programs and policies
- Many are frustrated with the comparison to the national narrative
- Some suggested utilizing professional staff resources to connect the community to resources and programs
- A smaller number of respondents commented on creating opportunities for HPD to listen to and learn from the community
- Many would like the community to know the incredible standards it takes to be hired by Hayward Police as well as the CALEA Standards.
- Many suggested bringing back the Hayward Police Department open house post COVID-19.
- Several people brought up the positive impacts the Community Academy had on the community and felt like it should be done more often.
- Many people suggested utilizing resources such as YFSB more when community members are not comfortable talking to officers and are reporting non-emergency issues.
- A number of people feel that SROs are important to the schools and should be brought back in. They feel like if there was more education on all of the things they do the public would want it.

Concerns about a lack of staffing

(101 out of 185 had comments on this topic)

- Safety issue
- Pressure and stress of large work loads
- Not using professional staff
- Many talked of understaffing, not enough to cover beats, need more to address crime and traffic related issues
- Doing a poor job of employee retention – steppingstone/training department

- Vacancies and frozen positions have made it worse
- City continues to grow and staffing levels have been at the same level for 20 years
- Haven't done a great job of keeping competitive with other Departments – pay and benefits
- Staffing shortages are causing employees to suffer from burnout.
- The City has implemented hiring freezes in several units without looking at the impacts it has on service to the community or to the units that have the frozen positions.

Concerns about Council and City Leadership's lack of knowledge about HPD

(95 out of 185 had comments on this topic)

- Increase trust by providing more information about what HPD does
- Most respondents do not feel supported by City Council (most of the comments were directed toward City Council, though some were for City Executive Leadership as well), and feel they are being treated based on what is happening nationally instead of locally
- Many feel that Council easily dismisses employees, and that Council is displaying lack of leadership, presence, and courage to support HPD
- Many felt that the City Council and City Management undervalue HPD and are expressing opinions and making policy decisions about how HPD should function without focusing locally (versus nationally) and taking the time to learn about what the job entails
- Many feel that the City Council and City Management does not acknowledge the community support HPD has
- Some worried that City Council comments are undermining public trust and confidence in law enforcement
- Some expressed concern at Council's inconsistent application of the policies (they pick and choose when they want certain policies to be used). Council Members and the Mayor will often forward complaints from community members when officers or professional staff are acting within policy and expect staff to make exceptions for certain people.
- Some expressed a desire for staff from other City departments to gain more knowledge about HPD operations
- Many would like the Council and community members to see the bigger picture regarding defunding the Police Department. This not only affects sworn officers, but also affects the professional staff and the ability to maintain staffing levels.
- Many feel that City Council speaks out and draws conclusions on units within the Police Department without meeting with the units and understanding what services each one provides to the community. They also do not understand the impact that separating certain units from the Police Department will have on that unit's ability to serve the public, specifically the enforcement aspect with Animal Control.
- Many employees would like the Council to know that they not only live and work in the city of Hayward but they spend their money here too.
- Employees would like City Council's support to continue to grow and have more positive changes within the community without dismissing certain suggestions and changes.
- Many employees feel that the Council's comments suggest they are anti-police, which encouraged community members to threaten and disrespect officers and professional staff.

- Many feel that City Council does not see or acknowledge that their officers and professional staff are hurting. We do not come to work for the pay check and we are not robots. We joined our professions to help people and not hurt them.
- Many feel that City Council only interacts with HPD employees at community events, but does not make efforts to get to know the staff or visit the department. Many have suggested Council members do ride alongs/sit alongs in all of the units.

Concerns about resources

(68 out of 185 had comments on this topic)

- The number one concern related to resources was the poor condition of the Police Department facilities and workspaces
- Some respondents talked about a desire for more training opportunities, including outside trainings
- Some discussed the lack of technology like drones and other new technology that would keep officers and community members safe
- Some talked about poor quality equipment that breaks frequently
- Several discussed a need for better ergonomics at workstations, especially for report writing
- Other resources included 360 wellness support, a Covid workplace system, a mobile mental health unit, and vehicles
- Many employees fear for their safety/lives for when a large earthquake hits Hayward. They feel that the building is not safe enough to withstand a large disaster putting many employees lives at risk, and in turn having negative effects on responses to the community.

Concerns about homelessness

(61 out of 185 had comments on this topic)

- Homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse were often listed in the respondents top three safety concerns in Hayward
- Some mentioned that they would like the City to let HPD staff be involved in these conversation
- Some expressed frustration that they cannot address community complaints due to the pandemic
- Some noted the amount of time officers are spending on this issue and feeling as though they aren't making much of an impact

Other concerns

This category varied widely and included Covid-19, concerns about a disconnect between PD and other City departments, unsanitary work conditions, fear of losing jobs because of defunding, an increase in disrespectful behavior from Hayward community members towards Officers, a call to reevaluate calls that HPD goes to because they are putting Officers at risk for civil liability, too much bureaucracy working with other City departments, lack of community access to affordable housing and health care, poor traffic engineering, and poor schools.

Relevant Quotes on Each Theme

Concerns about the emotional state of HPD Employees

- "I have some anxiety about job stability, with police budget being cut, perhaps my job won't be viewed as essential."
- "New officers are leaving, veteran officers are leaving, officers on the promotional lists are leaving."
- "I am more concerned about my safety when I am out in uniform. I don't know how the public feels about policing when they see me."
- "I see productivity declining based on the current climate and lack of support from city leaders. Officers often second guess themselves when making decisions because of the current political environment."
- ""I feel as though I am being forced to pick a side that I fall on. I feel like most people know there is a problem nationally with policing, however here in Hayward we do a great job to ensure that everyone is treated with respect. I feel like if we voice our support for PD then we are being viewed as racist. I feel as though we are looked at as outsiders in the city that we work to serve and protect and that our safety means less than political statements."
- "I believe the conversations about defunding us are causing officers to look at other departments with a more pro police city council, better equipment and facilities, better pay and benefits. I also know that some officers are considering changing their careers."
- "Morale is terrible, even for professional staff. We give our all to this department and helping people in this community. To read all the social media posts from people who want to become city council members tearing us down is very hard to get through. We did not get into our professions to hurt people and the way these people talk about us, you would think that was the case."
- "Our employees have been stressed to the max with the current conversations and political agendas of numerous city council members, city management, and non-community members who have been heard, yet no one has taken the time to hear our side of this national conversation. Maybe this is the first step. Our employees are tired of getting blamed in the media, social media, and now by our own city managers for things that happened in the nation. However, HPD employees come to work every day ready to serve this great community, but we rarely get a thank you from city management and city officials. We get a ton of support from community members but it would be nice to get that same support by our city leaders."
- "Cops are scared more than ever now."
- "Makes it difficult to work in an environment where you do not feel support and it's a us vs them."

Concerns about increases in crime and changes in criminal prosecution

- "The new laws coming out are making it difficult for the officers to do their jobs."
- "The recent decisions by the Alameda County District Attorney's Office are also a huge concern."
- "Employees are confused as to what the new laws have restricted them from doing. This is not a department problem, rather a state government problem."
- "It's making it more difficult for Officers to do their jobs with an impact, knowing that the arrests aren't going to hold. With penalties becoming more lax and sentences being reduced. It is also increasing the level of crimes and the severity of them and the targeting of crimes against law enforcement."

Ideas and concerns related to community relations

- "Return to community outreach. Become more transparent with what services HPD has for the community through media, commercial, bill boards etc."
- ""I feel the department is doing a good job of hiring a diverse staff which is reflective of the community it serves. I hope that continues."
- "I believe, overall, we have a good communication with the community. Between Patrol and District Command division, we continuously build good relationships with the citizens and business owners through meetings and gatherings."
- "There is SO much good done by our department that goes unnoticed."
- "Can we move forward to have officers focus on criminal matters and look at other resources to direct for non-criminal behavior."

Concerns about a lack of staffing

- "Staffing levels too low and have not been adjusted to meet population increases over past 4 decades."
- "Police Staffing is far below an acceptable standard for our per capita based on a city of our size and continued population growth. This has created an environment where officers do not feel safe and do not feel supported by command staff and by the elected city officials."
- "Employees getting burned out due to staffing shortage."
- "Officer safety since I respond to calls solo. Personal safety - sometimes I work late solo and I walk to my car while it is dark out."
- "The public appreciates the police and deserves a quality police department. There is high crime and plenty of violence in the city that requires more police officers than we currently patrol with."
- "The city is busy, and we can't change that. Our minimums should be raised and the beats should be restructured into more. The population has grown a great deal since the structure/outline was last mapped out. Bottom line we need more cops and more beats to disperse load. This demotivates officers from being proactive."

Concerns about Council and City Leadership's lack of knowledge about HPD

- "I don't think city council members or some members of the community know much about HPD (e.g. being CALEA certified, having a counseling department). HPD has a lot of progressive things that city council doesn't realize. I also think city council are having conversations and trying to make decisions without engaging HPD employees"
- "City leadership appeasing to political push from anti-Police groups, and making decisions that will negatively impact law enforcement's abilities to better serve and protect Hayward residents."
- "Chances for people to know the different departments within the city, so there is a greater understanding of the big picture of what is happening at HPD, and within the city."
- "We need our leaders to build bridges and show the community that we are good for them and that what happens elsewhere is not indicative of what happens in Hayward."

Concerns about resources

- "Space is a priority. We are short on space and need a more effective method of resolving it."

- "We have a dilapidated police department building, with potential carcinogens/black mold in paint, insulation, and other old construction."
- "Workplace stations are inadequate and we need to make sure equipment works"
- "I would make sure our officers have every tool they need at their disposal, including use of drones, because knowing what we are walking in on can be lifesaving for both officers and community members."
- "Equipment/computer systems that are rarely work and cannot be fixed in a timely manner."

Concerns about homelessness

- Feel the City is "failing to really look into, recognize, and acknowledge the growing severity and number of homelessness in the community, many of which suffer from mental illness and/or drug and alcohol addiction."