

YOUNG ADULT DINNER DIALOGUES



The City of Los Angeles
HUMAN RELATIONS
COMMISSION



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sponsorships

Los Angeles Police Foundation

Hugo Soto-Martinez, Councilmember, 13th District

Kevin De Leon, Councilmember, 14th District

Oakwood Recreation Center

El Nido Family Centers

Central City Neighborhood Partners (CCNP)

Proyecto Pastoral

East Los Angeles College

Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department

Human Relations Commission

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LA Civil Rights



The Human Relations Commission

Mission and Significant Projects

The Human Relations Commission envisions a Los Angeles free of racial and identity-based discrimination, where all residents live with dignity and feel empowered to participate in civic life.

The Human Relations Commission is known for incubating the following programs and activities:

- The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
- LAPD's LGBTQ Cultural Competency Policy and Procedure
- The Transgender Advisory Council, which was the first of its kind in a major metropolitan city
- EmbRACE LA, which saw 100 dinners on the subject of race across the City in one week
- The replacement of Columbus Day with Indigenous People's Day
- The Day of Religious Pluralism Resolution
- The Youth Ambassador Program
- The Watts Gang Task Force

HISTORY OF THE YOUNG ADULT DINNER DIALOGUES

**2018–
2019**

- A 2018 Los Angeles Police Department survey shows a significant lack of trust in the LAPD by the African American community.
- The Dinner Dialogue Pilot Program holds dialogues with that community from June 2018 to June 2019.

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**2020–
2021**

- The Minneapolis police murder of George Floyd erodes community trust. LAPD requests the reconvening of dinner dialogues.
- 2021: City HRC releases Dinner Dialogue Pilot Program Report and LAPD adopts the HRC recommendations.

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**2023-
2024**

- City HRC reconvenes the Dinner Dialogue Program, now with young adults, ages 18-24, and patrol officers across the four LAPD Bureaus
- **26 total dinner dialogues, 135 community members, 139 LAPD officers**

STUDY DESIGN AND ROLES



01

City HRC: Recruited participants, designed prompts, and provided skilled facilitators

02

LAPD: Covered logistics such as venue space, catering, and scheduling officer attendance

03

Only audio was used during the creation of the report and all participants were anonymous

STUDY DESIGN



- **Facilitated discussions with pre- and post-conversation surveys**

STUDY DESIGN



- **Methodological pros and cons**
 - **Conversational constraints**
 - **Varying levels of trust in different areas**
- **Nevertheless, conversations were calm, constructive, and even at times empathetic**

“What is the number one problem between civilians and LAPD officers?”

abuse of power accountability activists bias bigotry **communication**
conflict connection cultural sensitivity dehumanization disagreements **disconnection** disregard disrespect distrust
education empathy engagement excessive force existence expectations **false information** fear
gangs generational judgments harassment history human rights violations **inequality** insecurity integrity **interaction**
intimidation lack of oversight loyalty mass incarceration **media**
miscommunication misconceptions misinterpretation mistreatment
mistrust **misunderstanding** misuse overpolicing **perception** perspective
police brutality politics preferential treatment presence **profiling** racial inequality racial profiling **racism**
relationships **respect** responsiveness shared responsibility **social media** superiority complex
surveillance systemic protection traffic stops trauma **trust** understaffing
understanding unfairness upbringing values

Findings:

Police-Community Interactions

1. Early interactions and changing opinions
2. Traffic Stops
3. Identity and community relationships

Findings:

Hurdles to Improvement

1. Geographical Differences
2. History, George Floyd and the Media
3. Recruitment and Overwork

Findings:

Improving the Relationship

1. Mutual Respect
2. Mental Health Support for Officers
3. Community Engagement

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Officer Morale

- Establish a bridge or program of feedback between “top brass” and “rank-and-file”
- Offer department-wide resilience training to all personnel to combat the effects of primary and secondary trauma
- Increase access to mental health services for officers.
- Acknowledge the history of policing in Los Angeles and the way it impacted the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2

Training and Education

- Ensure training is consistent from the academy to the field, and from neighborhood to neighborhood.
- Provide trauma-informed training, particularly in de-escalation. Officers should be trained on how to respond in the face of fear, rudeness, disrespect, etc., which can be symptoms of historical or personal trauma.
- Provide training for cultural competency and effective communication to all personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3

Improve Community Engagement

- Continue to decrease pretextual stops and publicize disaggregated stop data
- De-prioritize enforcement actions of non-criminal offenses, particularly in low-income neighborhoods, to decrease stress on officers and community members
- Continue to invest funding and resources to support community based organizations in projects promoting community safety
- Develop a community engagement plan

RECOMMENDATIONS

4

Support Alternative Response Models

- Continue to develop a separate traffic division with unique vehicles and uniforms to address moving violations
- Enhance mental health crisis response teams by expanding services 24/7
- Explore alternative enforcement actions for nonviolent crimes & consider creating a holistic approach with a social work/mental health lens
- Develop a strategic response plan with community safety partners to improve coordination & deployment of alternative crisis response teams
- Continue to implement LAPD's long standing policy of a hands-off approach to immigration and immigration enforcement

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Constructive conversation is possible and plays a central role in the building of trust.
- Community members left with an improved view of officers; officers with an increased understanding of community members' feelings.

“ When I walked in, I didn't know what to expect...This was amazing. Every officer should do this.
Police Officer, Valley Bureau, Galpin Motors, North Hills

”

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Historical and personal trauma involving officers still affects community members. Some noted that treatment has gotten better through the years; others disagreed. All felt that it needs to be acknowledged and addressed.
- Ultimately, community members want officers they can trust and officers want to be trusted.

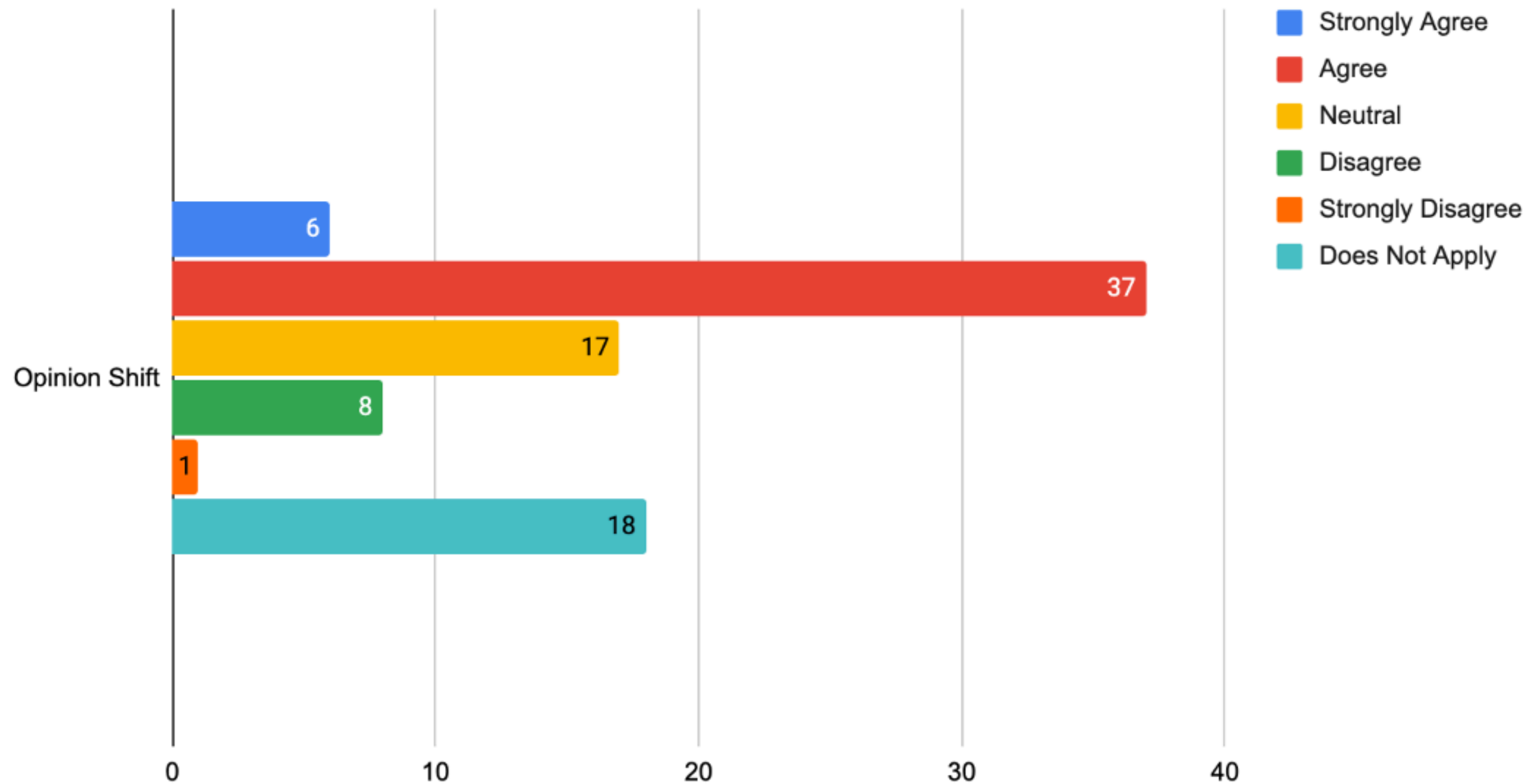
“ A lot of people don't like cops because it really reminds them– it's a genuine reminder, a valid reminder of what happened in the past, you know, maybe to a family member, maybe to groups of people. So, yeah, I think that's why spaces like this are important because hearing you and not seeing you in your uniform humanizes the whole experience.

Community Member, West Bureau, Oakwood Recreation Center, Venice

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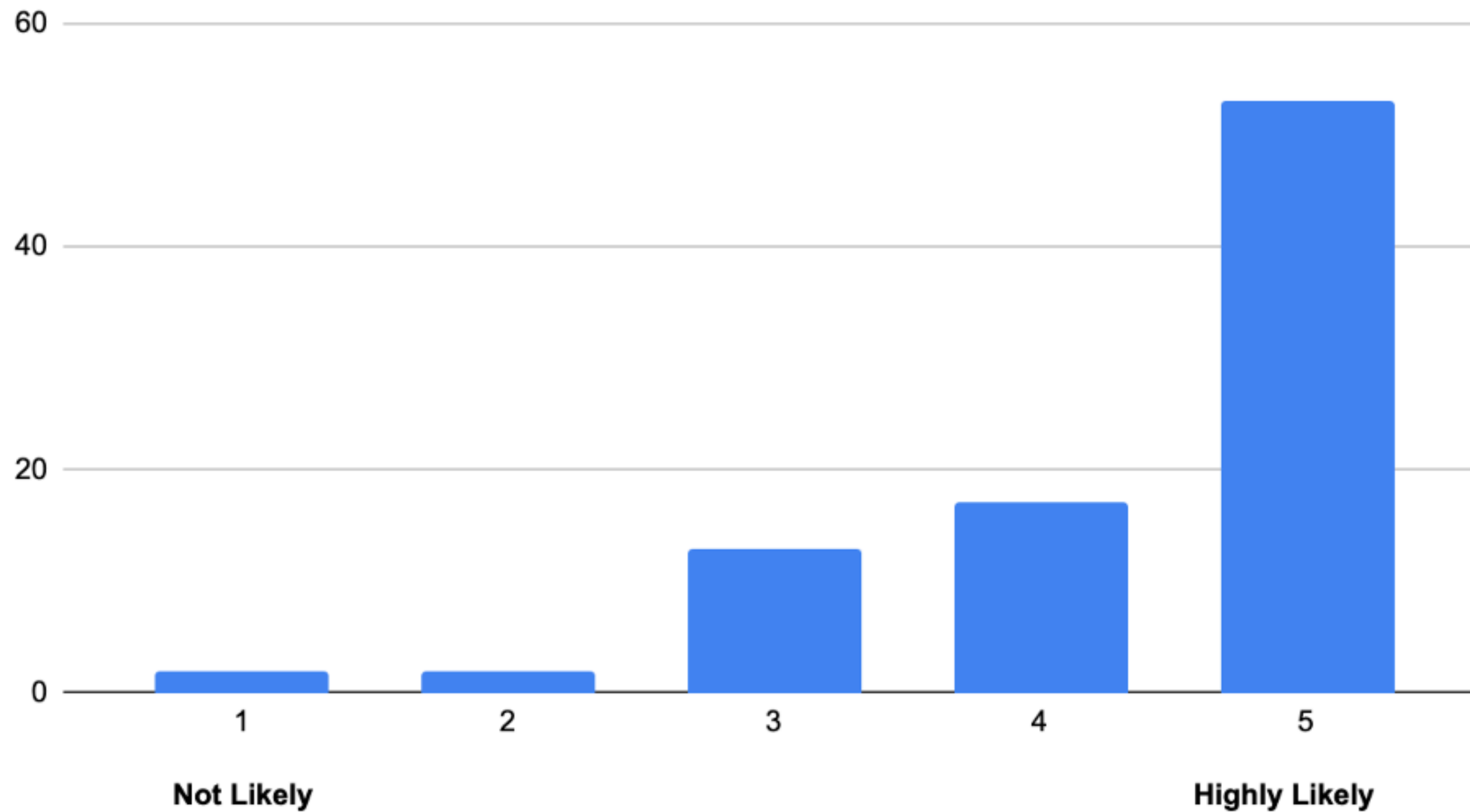
BENEFIT OF DIALOGUE

If you entered the room with a negative opinion of police officers, did this conversation improve your opinion of police officers?



BENEFIT OF DIALOGUE

How likely are you to participate in another conversation like this?



FINAL WORDS

“ I think [we change the relationship by] working on generational trauma on both sides, police side and community side. We as officers need to work on not stereotyping – that’s probably very hard to do. We can start by understanding... by giving the next person a chance.”

–Police Officer, Valley Bureau, Galpin Motors, North Hills

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LAPD's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Division

Police Chief Michel Moore (Former)

Deputy Chief Ruby Flores (Former Commander Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Division)

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