



February 22, 2017

Dear City Council Member,

With a growing population, increases in mental health issues and substance abuse needs, and policies of incarceration at the national level proving to be overly burdensome, the administration remains committed to criminal justice reform efforts to reduce mass incarceration. Colorado has recognized the necessity for change and taken some steps to address it, but we must do more at the federal, state and local levels.

As our department transformation continues I want to take a moment to keep you updated and share some existing and planned efforts we have in motion specifically related to our 2017 strategic focus of staff and inmate safety, managing jail population, and engaging our community – key aspects of our criminal justice reform work locally. City Council plays a critical role in these efforts, from increased staffing to diversion programs and more. We are grateful for your partnership.

Staff and Inmate Safety:

Our staff is our most valuable asset and creating a safe environment for both staff and inmates is of critical importance for the DSD. We are committed to ongoing improvements which include continuing to evaluate our staffing levels in relationship to jail population and other department needs. In 2016, we increased our staffing by 200 deputies and have another four recruit academies planned for 2017 to fill another 120 positions. For our existing and incoming staff, we've provided Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) and plan to offer ongoing refreshers to build more awareness and staff development, including additional wellness resources. This coupled with increasing leadership engagement and assessing our recruitment and retention practices should strengthen our ability to attract and maintain a strong workforce.

The department is also working to strengthen our Transition from Jail to Community program framework in order to focus on jail integration of key areas such as cognitive skill building in education and employment, trauma-informed treatment practices, mental health and substance abuse resources. With these areas directly impacting the interconnectedness of managing jail population, we're developing a data-informed approach in partnership with key stakeholders.

Jail Population and Community Engagement:

Managing the surge in Denver's growing population has certainly impacted an increase in the jail population, along with an increase in assaults across a broad spectrum. We fully recognize and are



addressing these challenges holistically through a multi-faceted engagement strategy. One approach is to maintain a strong, active partnership with the Crime Prevention and Control Commission (CPCC). CPCC was specifically created to establish a broad-based criminal justice group focused on reducing recidivism and the growth of our incarcerated population by developing diversionary programs and alternatives to sentencing. Over the years CPCC's work has played a key role in how the DSD manages and engages with its incarcerated population. In recent years, the CPCC convened a data workgroup of subject-matter-experts from Denver's public safety agencies to help identify factors that may be impacting jail population. Currently, the data workgroup is aligning various data sets managed by multiple criminal justice agencies to identify potential opportunities to reduce jail population. The data workgroup reports through the Justice Coordinating Committee, which is made up of subject-matter-experts from the multiple agencies that impact incarceration across the criminal justice system.

This data workgroup in alignment with our newly forming community Sheriff Advisory Board will fortify collective efforts to address the growing capacity challenges within our jails. It is important to us that we developed a transparent and equitable process for Board Membership, and we are pleased to share that we received a dynamic applicant pool representing a wide-range of subject-matter-experts from our community.

Recognizing that there are complexities that exist as we manage the efforts, we are also in the midst of reviewing all internal and external committees that have intersection points to these topics, and are developing a full spectrum governance structure to ensure a smooth and inclusive transition to a balanced perspective. Our community is a much needed partner as we embark upon these milestones, and we are eager to wholeheartedly embrace the engagement. Including, but not limited to, community input on developing Board focus points such as: gender responsiveness, minority over-representation, and creating a complimentary communications campaign.

We will continue to keep City Council and community partners updated on our progress in building an inclusive and transparent framework with sustainable outcomes for those we have a privilege to serve.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Firman".

Sheriff Patrick Firman