

VILLAGE OF ASHAROKEN



POLICE DEPARTMENT

MELVIN A. ETINGER
POLICE COMMISSIONER

GREGORY D. LETICA
MAYOR

RAYMOND C. MAHDESAN
OFFICER-IN-CHARGE

Asharoken Village Police Department
Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative
Plan

1 ASHAROKEN AVENUE, NORTHPORT, NEW YORK 11768 • (631) 261-7400

Asharoken Village Police Department Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	Page 3
2.0 Mission Statement	Page 4
3.0 Background of the Asharoken Police Department	Page 5
3.1 Background and Location of the Village	Page 5
3.2 The Asharoken Police Department	Page 5
3.3 The Asharoken Village Crime Rate	Page 6
4.0 Goals and Objectives	Page 6
5.0 Plan Synopsis	Page 6
5.1 Evaluate and Review	Page 7
5.2 Offer the Plan for Public Comments	Page 8
5.3 Develop policy recommendations resulting from the review, evaluation and discussion	Page 9
5.4 Certify adoption of the plan to the State Budget Director	Page 9
APPENDIX B	Page 10
New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan Certification Form	

VILLAGE OF ASHAROKEN



MELVIN A. ETTINGER
POLICE COMMISSIONER

RAYMOND C. MAHDESIAN
OFFICER-IN-CHARGE

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Asharoken Village Police Department Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

1.0 Introduction

New York State has been proactively enacting legislation over the course of the past few years that is transforming the shape of the criminal justice system that we have been accustomed to. The significant reforms that are already in place pertain to bail, discovery, speedy trial, juvenile justice, reducing the prison population and the videotaping of interrogations. Following the police-involved death of a Minneapolis man in May 2020, there has been a rash of civil unrest throughout the country demanding accountability from police departments. Since that time, Governor Andrew Cuomo has signed into law the “Say Their Name” agenda which further reforms the aspects of policing in New York State. The “Say Their Name” agenda includes: 1) the repealing of Civil Rights Law 50a, which blocks police and fire departments from releasing most personnel records without a judicial order or the written consent of the officer or firefighter; 2) banning of chokeholds; 3) prohibits race-based 911 calls; and 4) appoints the NYS Attorney General as Independent Prosecutor for police-involved deaths.

In keeping with the State’s progressive redesign of the criminal justice system, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed Executive Order #203 on June 12, 2020 requiring each local government to adopt policing reform by April 1, 2021 that will “foster trust, fairness and legitimacy” within communities and “address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color” which is the purpose of the *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative*.

The Asharoken Village Police Department has been an integral part of the community since its incorporation in 1925. The officers of the Asharoken Village Police Department, in its 95 year history, have always carried out their duty based on the 1829 Peelian Principles of Policing which affirms the necessity of community cooperation in achieving the law enforcement objective. The geographical size and population of the Incorporated Village of Asharoken allows the police department to function at a more intimate level than most other departments. It is this closely connected relationship between the members of the community and the police that promotes a mutual respect for each other. It solidifies the basis of “community oriented policing.”

In keeping with the department’s dedication to the community, it is using the *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative* as an opportunity to once again demonstrate its unyielding pledge to uphold an oath while performing its duty.

1 ASHAROKEN AVENUE, NORTHPORT, NEW YORK 11768 • (631) 261-7400

2.0 Mission Statement

The Mission of the Asharoken Village Police Department has always been evident through its actions as well as its accomplishments. The department's mission statement remains the pillar and basis for achieving the law enforcement objective.

The principal mission of the Asharoken Village Police Department is to provide for the peace and security of the residents of the Village of Asharoken and to safeguard lives and property.

The Asharoken Village Police Department exists to provide the highest quality police service possible to the Village of Asharoken. In this effort, we will continue to be dynamic, constantly reevaluating and seeking further improvements. We will always be adaptable and ready to rise to meet any occasion or situation. We will go forward with the confidence to lead, while retaining the wisdom to heed advice and make change when necessary.

Through our efforts, we will endeavor to preserve life, liberty and property and to maintain the high quality of life which has become synonymous with the Village of Asharoken since its founding nearly a century ago.

The Asharoken Village Police Department will continue to enforce all of the laws for which we are responsible in a fair and impartial manner at all times. We will work in close cooperation with other law enforcement agencies in order to maintain the appropriate level of enforcement.

It is the expressed policy of the Asharoken Village Police Department that officers will use force only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain cooperation necessary to secure observance of law or to restore order. Our policy is to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary upon any particular occasion for achieving a police objective.

The Asharoken Police Department believes in the principles embodied in the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New York. We recognize the authority of federal, state and local laws. Honesty and truth must be, and will always be, the standards in all our interactions with the community.

The Asharoken Police Department will continue to strive for personal and professional excellence, dedication to duty and the delivery of quality service to the public. We are part of a team that is dedicated to the safety and protection of our community. Our actions will always reflect intelligent, sincere, efficient, and courteous service.

3.0 Background and Description of the Asharoken Police Department

3.1 Background and Location of the Village

The Village of Asharoken was incorporated in 1925 and it is located in Northwest Suffolk County, New York, between the Long Island Sound and Northport Bay. Physically, the Village of Asharoken is an isthmus, connecting the Village of Northport on the mainland of Long Island to Eaton's Neck. Much of the Village's properties lie along the shores of the Long Island Sound and the Northport Bay.

The Village of Asharoken is one of five (5) incorporated villages within the Township of Huntington, NY. As of the 2010 Census, there were 654 people residing in the Village of Asharoken, which was an increase of 5% from the 2000 Census. There are also 302 households within the Village of Asharoken. The total area of the Village of Asharoken consists of only 1.4 square miles of land, of which there are only 6.5 miles of roads.

3.2 The Asharoken Police Department

The Asharoken Village Police Department has been an integral part of the community since the incorporation of the Village in 1925 and will soon celebrate its centennial anniversary. Although the Asharoken Police Department is a relatively small police department, it operates as a very well trained and highly efficient organization. It enjoys a very high reputation for the quality and efficiency of its police organization and its personnel. The department currently consists of an Officer-in-Charge, three (3) full-time police officers, and several part-time police officers. All of the police officers of the Asharoken Police Department are duly sworn NYS Police Officers and are very well-trained and are highly experienced.

All of the police officers of the Asharoken Village Police Department have been trained to carryout their duty based on the 1829 Peelian Principles of Policing, which affirms the necessity of community cooperation in achieving the law enforcement objective.

All of the Asharoken police officers are required to maintain a high proficiency and training in all aspects of policing, including police related laws, firearms proficiency and use, safety, first-aid, CPR, etc. All of the police officers receive continued updated training in each of these categories on a regular basis.

The Asharoken Village Police Department maintains an up-to-date fleet of police rated automobiles outfitted with the latest communication equipment and mobile police computers. The Asharoken Village Police Department also maintains has a well outfitted Marine Patrol Boat that is used to patrol its waterways and its shore-line community. All of the police officers that operate the Patrol Boat have received specialize training, as well.

3.3 The Asharoken Village Crime Rate

The Asharoken Police Department has enjoyed a multiple decades long history of strong leadership, careful hiring practices and extensive annual training. As a result, the number of complaints lodged against the department are almost none.

The Asharoken Police Department has no history of ever being accused of using of lethal force, no history of using tasers, no history of firearms discharge (with the exception of euthanizing injured wild animals), no history of the use of excessive force and no complaints of racial or ethnic bias. This is very remarkable, considering that the Asharoken Police Department conducts multiple traffic stops per months, responds to a wide variety of emergency calls and provides crowd control for the July 4th celebration that brings hundreds of extra people visiting into the Village. The Village is very proud of the outstanding performance and the reputation of the Asharoken Police Department and expects to continue to do the same in the future.

The Asharoken Police Department has always been able to function at a much more intimate level than most other police departments because of the geographical location of the Village of Asharoken, as well as its small size and the population. Fortunately, there is only a single road into and out of the Village and that enables the Asharoken Police Department to very closely monitor all of the activities within the Village. The police officers are constantly patrolling the roads within the Village on a 24/7 basis to insure a visual presence to anyone driving through the Village. In addition, there is a License Plate Reader (LPR) located at the entrance to the Village. The LPR monitors and records all incoming and outgoing vehicles of the Village. The LPR data base is updated frequently throughout the day via the SCPD which provides data on vehicle owners with outstanding warrants and summonses. This equipment has also helped the Asharoken Police Department achieve the very low crime rate that the Village has experienced.

The Village of Asharoken is extremely proud that over the years, it has experienced an extremely low overall crime rate, which we attribute to the surveillance activities and the reputation of the Asharoken Police Department. There has been very little crime of any kind in the Village over the years and the Village has also experienced no violent crimes of any kind. The Village has never experienced any resident and police negative interactions, and there has never been a complaint for the use physical force lodged against the Asharoken Police Department. We also have experienced very little domestic violence issues. All in all, we are extremely happy to report that the Village of Asharoken is considered one of the safest and crime-free villages on Long Island.

The Village of Asharoken is an isthmus and is basically surrounded by water. As such, the Asharoken Police Department has also had extensive experience in responding to disasters and emergencies for weather related issues and storms. Asharoken Village Police Department also maintain a very close working relationship with the Suffolk County Police Department, the Suffolk County Sherriff Department and all of its neighboring local police departments.

The Asharoken Village Police Department and its officers also have enjoyed a very close working relationships with our residents and the members of the community. This accounts for our ability to solidify the basis of “community oriented policing.”

The Asharoken Police Department is extremely proud of its long heritage and its well respected reputation within the Asharoken Village and the surrounding communities and it prides itself in this reputation and the high regard that it has enjoyed over the decades.

4.0 Goals and Objectives

The major objective of the *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative* is to bring the community and the police together and to work through issues together, and to overcome obstacles together as well as to reinforce that sense of trust which seems to have been overlooked in some communities recently.

The Asharoken Village Police Department's goal shall continue to be the protection of life and property while safeguarding constitutional guarantees.

5.0 Plan Synopsis

In an effort to meet all or the requirements of the Governor's Executive Order, the Asharoken Village Police Department has developed the following Plan which will meet all of the necessary criteria and objectives. The Plan has actively sought the input, as well as the feedback, from the stakeholders of the community, which in turn has established a solid foundation for engagement in meaningful discussions pertaining to the expectations of the police department. The Plan will also compel the Asharoken Police Department to build upon its in-service training program regarding use of force tactics, de-escalation options and use of force reporting. This Plan shall remain a completely transparent process that will encourage significant continuing dialog within the community in which the department serves.

5.1 Evaluate and Review

A. Review the needs of the community

1. Determine the expected role of the police department and define its primary activities
2. Determine the reasons why people utilize the 911 system
3. Evaluate when and why members of the police department self-initiate interactions in the community
4. Maintain and strengthen the civilian complaint and disposition procedure against police officers

B. Evaluate current policies and practices

1. Assess model policies and guidelines promulgated by the New York State Municipal Police Training Council to determine relevancy and suitability
2. Review and make necessary amendments to department policies regarding
 - a) Use of Force – ban use of chokeholds

- b) Use of Force reporting
 - c) Public information – social media, community affairs
 - d) Internal affairs – department records, complaints, discipline
 - e) Patrol function – personnel assignments, responding to scenes of disorder
3. Implement improved training protocols in order to inform and update police officers regarding the latest policies, practices and procedures pertaining to specific subjects such as:
- a) De-escalation of volatile incidents related to mental health and domestic violence
 - b) Crowd management
 - c) Bias awareness with an emphasis regarding calls classified as “hate crimes”
 - d) Procedural justice including published studies that address systemic racial bias
 - e) Community-based outreach and conflict resolution
 - f) Hot spot policing and focused deterrence
 - g) Crime prevention through environmental design
4. Develop addendums to the disciplinary procedures in order to address police officer conduct received through civilian complaints to determine:
- a) Which officer(s) is being reported
 - b) Why an officer is being reported (alleged conduct)
 - c) Circumstances surrounding a particular event in which an officer is reported
 - d) Determine if the complaints are being initiated in a particular portion of the community

5.2 Offer the Plan for Public Comments

A. Involve the entire community – Stakeholders

1. Elected Officials (Mayor, Trustees, Commissioners and Village Justice)
2. Employees (Police Union)
3. Property Owner Associations
4. Residents
5. Commercial Establishments
6. Office of the District Attorney
7. Legal Aid Society

B. Present plan at a public meeting

1. Explain the current systems in place.
2. Describe revisions to policies and procedures.
3. Demonstrate how the revised policies can improve the quality of police service and bring about a more stringent requirement of accountability and responsibility .

C. Ensure an open and candid dialogue

5.3 Develop policy recommendations resulting from the review, evaluation and discussion

- A. Establish policies that allow police to effectively and safely perform their duties.

5.4 Certify adoption of the plan to the State Budget Director before April 1, 2021

- A. Present the plan to the Board of Trustees to ratify and adopt it.

APPENDIX B

NEW YORK STATE POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE PLAN CERTIFICATION FORM

Instructions: The Chief Executive of each local government must complete and submit this certification and a copy of their Plan to the Director of the New York State Division of the Budget on or before April 1, 2021 at EO203Certification@budget.ny.gov.

I, _____, as the Chief Executive of _____
(the "Local Government"), hereby certify the following pursuant to Executive Order No. 203 issued by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on June 12, 2020:

- The Local Government has performed a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices;
- The Local Government has developed a plan, attached hereto, to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices (the "Plan");
- The Local Government has consulted with stakeholders (including but not limited to: membership and leadership of the local police force; members of the community, with emphasis in areas with high numbers of police and community interactions; interested non-profit and faith-based community groups; the local office of the district attorney; the local public defender; and local elected officials) regarding the Plan;
- The Local Government has offered the Plan in draft form for public comment to all citizens in the locality and, prior to adoption of the Plan by the local legislative body, has considered the comments submitted; and
- The legislative body of the Local Government has ratified or adopted the Plan by local law or resolution.

Name

Signature

Title

Date