

Lynchburg Police Department 2020 Community Survey Report





I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lynchburg Police Department (LPD) conducted its biennial Community Survey from December 7 to December 28, 2020 using the online survey platform SurveyMonkey. The department informed the community about this survey through social media and local media outlets. The LPD received 355 responses to the 2020 Lynchburg Police Department Community Survey. The 2018 Lynchburg Police Department Community Survey generated 86 responses, and the 2015 Lynchburg Police Department Community Survey generated 184 responses.

The 2020 survey included 21 questions, which is an increase of 13 questions from the 2018 survey. The additional questions included those related to community interaction, quality of police service, trust, and safety. The LPD will use the responses provided in this survey to inform the department's continued efforts to provide the best service possible to Lynchburg's residents and visitors.

The majority (42%) of respondents to the 2020 survey were over the age of 55, and 58% were female. Respondents lived in all areas of the city and were fairly evenly distributed between Wards I, II, III, and IV. Overall, the majority of respondents (39%) rated the quality of police service in Lynchburg as "good" and the majority said Lynchburg is responsive to the concerns of the community. More than 50% of respondents said they trust the LPD.

In response to questions about developing relationships with community members, communicating with community members, and working with community members to solve problems, the majority of respondents said they "somewhat" feel the department performs these tasks. Most respondents who had contact with an LPD officer over the past two years said the officer explained his or her actions "to a great extent," that they were treated with dignity and respect, and that officers show concern for community members.

Nearly 80% of those who responded to the 2020 survey said they feel their neighborhood is safe, with 46% saying they feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood during the day. The majority of respondents (30%) said they felt "neutral" about the safety of walking along in their neighborhood at night. The top three most serious problems noted by respondents were litter/theft (37%), other (32%), and drugs (31%). The most common issue noted by respondents in their neighborhoods was speeding (62%).

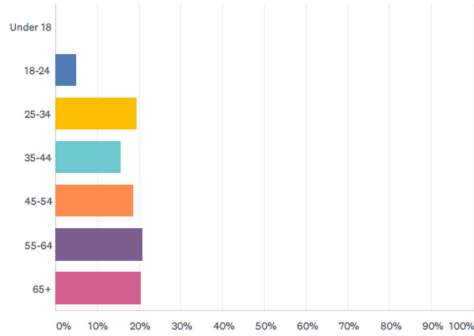
The survey concluded with an open-ended question asking individuals to provide feedback on what the department needs to do differently. The LPD received 247 responses to this question, including both constructive criticism and positive feedback. Several comments related to traffic and speed enforcement, others discussed the importance of officers respecting everyone they come into contact with, and some emphasized the importance of community engagement.



II. RESULTS

1. What is your age?

Answered: 354 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.28%	1
18-24	5.08%	18
25-34	19.49%	69
35-44	15.54%	55
45-54	18.64%	66
55-64	20.62%	73
65+	20.34%	72
TOTAL		354

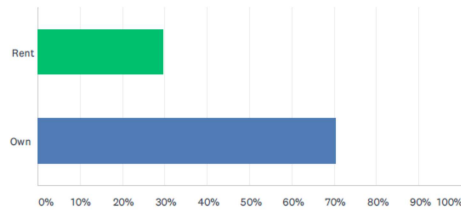
2. What is your gender?

- a. Female: 200 (58%)
- b. Male: 141 (41%)
- c. Other: 3 (1%)



3. Do you own or rent your home?

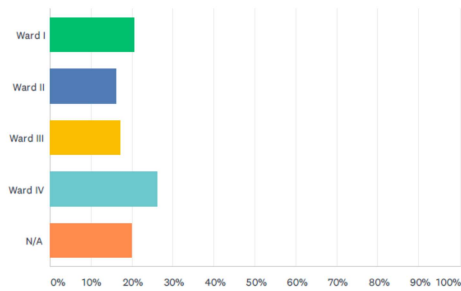
Answered: 351 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rent	29.63%	104
Own	70.37%	247
TOTAL		351

4. In which Ward do you live?

Answered: 328 Skipped: 27

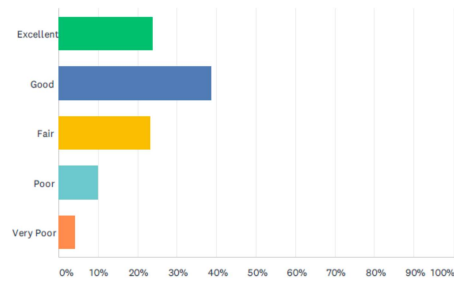


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ward I	20.43%	67
Ward II	16.16%	53
Ward III	17.07%	56
Ward IV	26.22%	86
N/A	20.12%	66
TOTAL		328



5. How would you rate the quality of police service in your community?

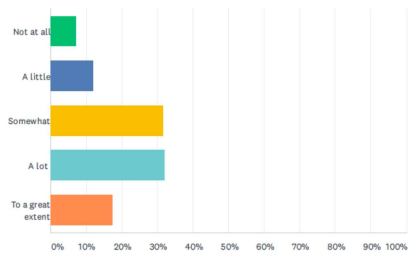
Answered: 352 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	23.86%	84
Good	38.64%	136
Fair	23.30%	82
Poor	9.94%	35
Very Poor	4.26%	15
TOTAL		352

6. To what extent is the Lynchburg Police Department responsive to the concerns of the community?

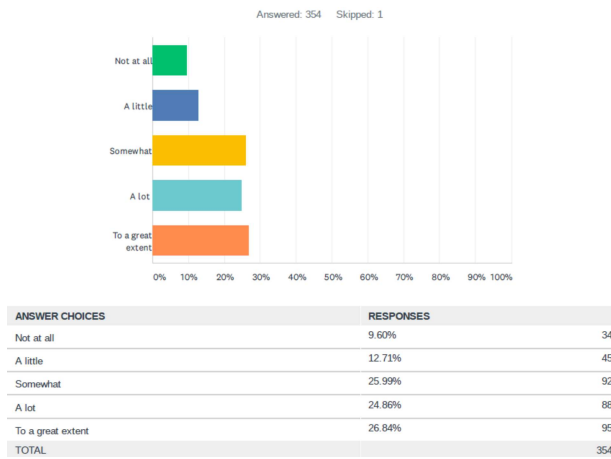
Answered: 351 Skipped: 4



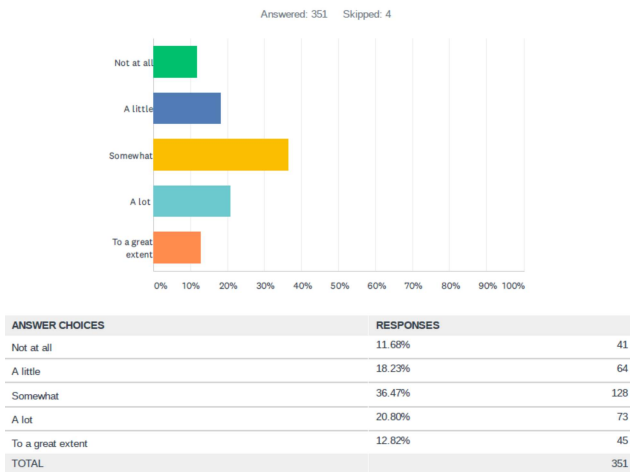
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all	7.12%	25
A little	11.97%	42
Somewhat	31.62%	111
A lot	31.91%	112
To a great extent	17.38%	61
TOTAL		351



7. To what extent do you trust your law enforcement agency?

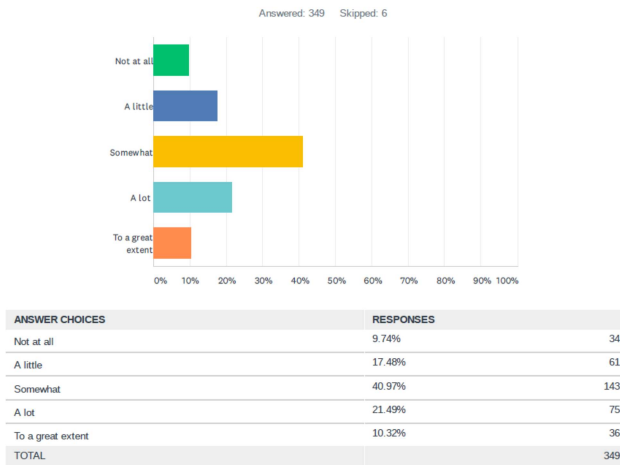


8. To what extent does the Lynchburg Police Department develop relationships with community members (residents, organizations, and groups)?

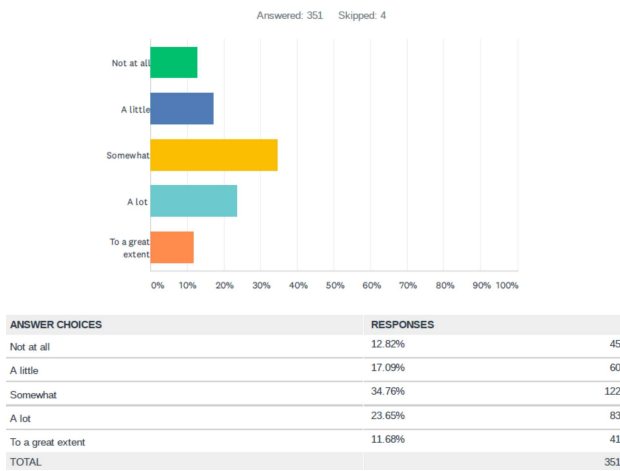




9. To what extent does the Lynchburg Police Department regularly communicate with community members (website, emails, public meetings, social media)?



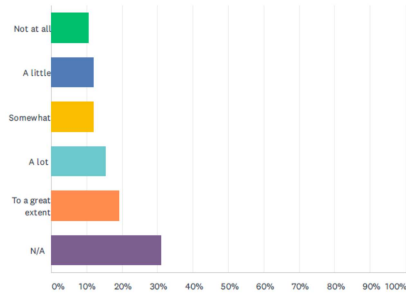
10. To what extent does the Lynchburg Police Department work together with community members to solve problems?





11. If you had contact with a Lynchburg Police Department officer over the past two years, to what extent did the officer sufficiently explain his or her actions and procedures?

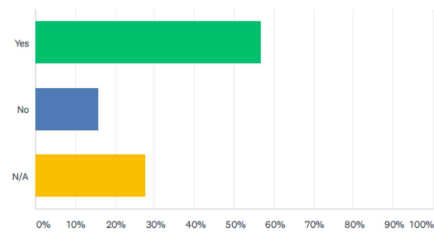
Answered: 352 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	PERCENTAGE	COUNT
Not at all	10.51%	37
A little	11.93%	42
Somewhat	11.93%	42
A lot	15.34%	54
To a great extent	19.32%	68
N/A	30.97%	109
TOTAL		352

12. If you have had any contact with a Lynchburg Police Department officer over the past two years, were you treated professionally, with dignity and respect?

Answered: 351 Skipped: 4

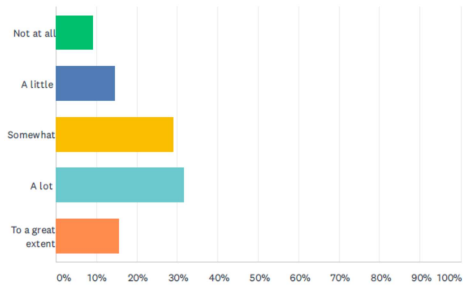


ANSWER CHOICES	PERCENTAGE	COUNT
Yes	56.70%	199
No	15.67%	55
N/A	27.64%	97
TOTAL		351



13. To what extent do Lynchburg Police Department officers show concern for community members?

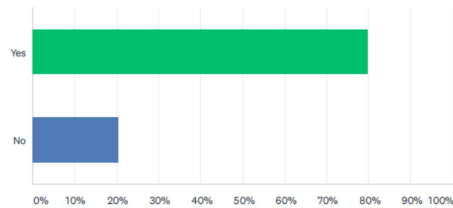
Answered: 348 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all	9.20%	32
A little	14.66%	51
Somewhat	29.02%	101
A lot	31.61%	110
To a great extent	15.52%	54
TOTAL		348

14. Do you feel your neighborhood is safe?

Answered: 346 Skipped: 9

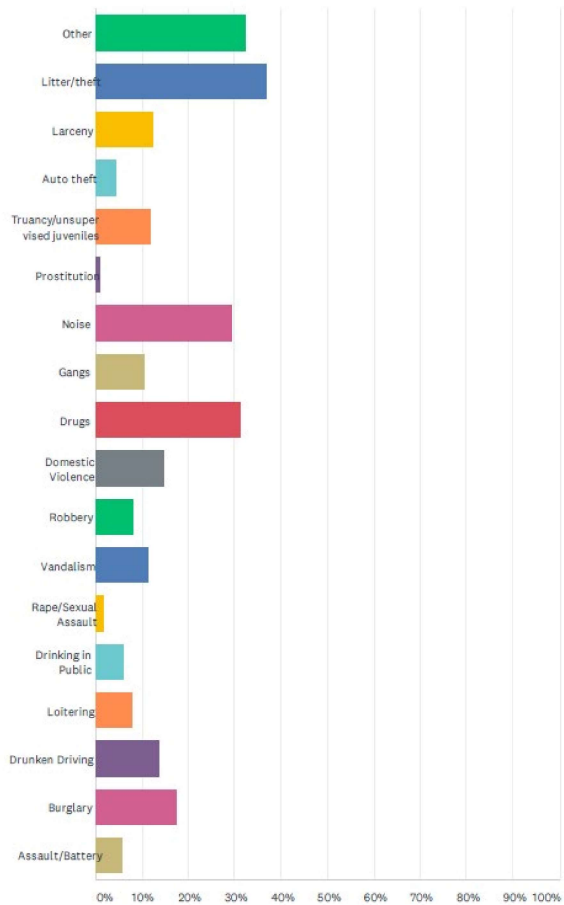


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	79.77%	276
No	20.23%	70
TOTAL		346



15. In your opinion, what are the top 3 most serious problems in your neighborhood?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 37





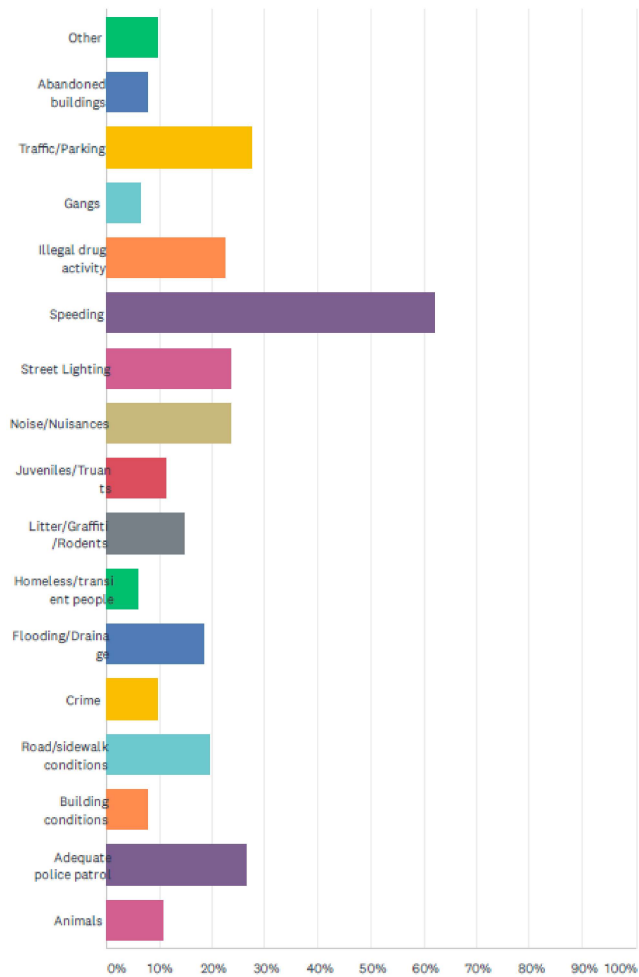
15 cont.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Other	32.39%	103
Litter/theft	36.79%	117
Larceny	12.26%	39
Auto theft	4.40%	14
Truancy/unsupervised juveniles	11.64%	37
Prostitution	0.94%	3
Noise	29.25%	93
Gangs	10.38%	33
Drugs	31.13%	99
Domestic Violence	14.78%	47
Robbery	8.18%	26
Vandalism	11.32%	36
Rape/Sexual Assault	1.57%	5
Drinking in Public	5.97%	19
Loitering	7.86%	25
Drunken Driving	13.52%	43
Burglary	17.30%	55
Assault/Battery	5.66%	18
Total Respondents: 318		



16. Check each box that you feel is a problem in your neighborhood.

Answered: 325 Skipped: 30





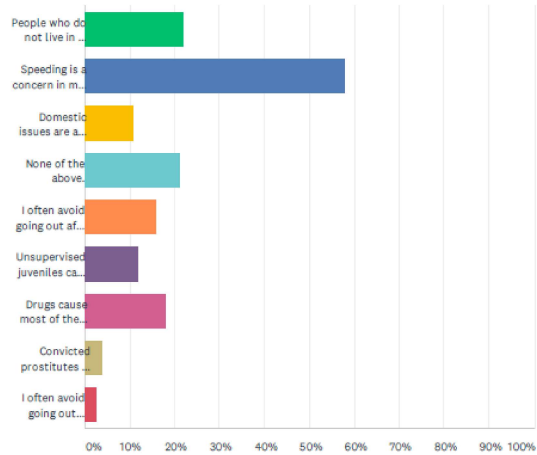
16 cont.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Other	9.54%	31
Abandoned buildings	8.00%	26
Traffic/Parking	27.69%	90
Gangs	6.46%	21
Illegal drug activity	22.46%	73
Speeding	62.15%	202
Street Lighting	23.69%	77
Noise/Nuisances	23.38%	76
Juveniles/Truants	11.38%	37
Litter/Graffiti/Rodents	14.77%	48
Homeless/transient people	6.15%	20
Flooding/Drainage	18.46%	60
Crime	9.54%	31
Road/sidewalk conditions	19.38%	63
Building conditions	8.00%	26
Adequate police patrol	26.46%	86
Animals	10.77%	35
Total Respondents: 325		



17. Check the following statements that are true to your neighborhood.

Answered: 345 Skipped: 10

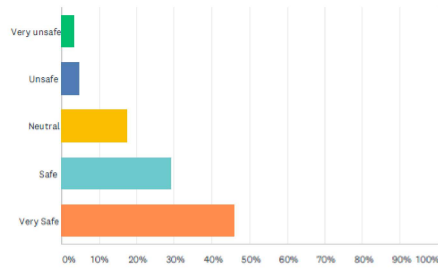


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
People who do not live in the neighborhood cause most of the crime problems around here.	22.03%	76
Speeding is a concern in my neighborhood.	57.68%	199
Domestic issues are a problem in my neighborhood.	10.72%	37
None of the above.	21.16%	73
I often avoid going out after dark because I am afraid of crime.	15.94%	55
Unsupervised juveniles cause most of the crime problems in my neighborhood.	11.88%	41
Drugs cause most of the crime problems around here.	17.97%	62
Convicted prostitutes and drug dealers should be banned from entering the neighborhood.	3.77%	13
I often avoid going out during the day because I am afraid of crime.	2.61%	9
Total Respondents: 345		



18. How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood during the day?

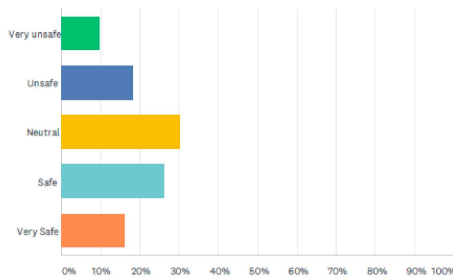
Answered: 352 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very unsafe	3.41% 12
Unsafe	4.55% 16
Neutral	17.33% 61
Safe	28.98% 102
Very Safe	45.74% 161
TOTAL	352

19. How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood at night?

Answered: 353 Skipped: 2

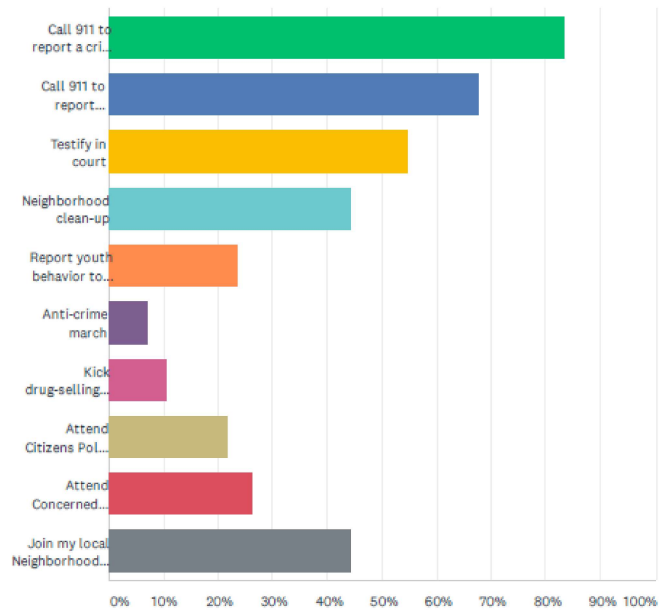


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very unsafe	9.63% 34
Unsafe	18.13% 64
Neutral	30.03% 106
Safe	26.06% 92
Very Safe	16.15% 57
TOTAL	353



20. The police officers can't be on every street to prevent crime. What are you willing to do to help solve the problems in your neighborhood?

Answered: 333 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Call 911 to report a crime in progress	83.18%	277
Call 911 to report suspicious people or activities	67.57%	225
Testify in court	54.65%	182
Neighborhood clean-up	44.14%	147
Report youth behavior to parent	23.42%	78
Anti-crime march	6.91%	23
Kick drug-selling youth out of neighborhood	10.51%	35
Attend Citizens Police Academy	21.62%	72
Attend Concerned Reliable Citizens training	26.13%	87
Join my local Neighborhood Watch group	44.14%	147
Total Respondents: 333		



21. What does the department need to do differently?

- a. We received 247 responses to this open-ended question, with respondents providing both positive feedback and constructive criticism.
- b. Several comments related to traffic and speed enforcement, others discussed the importance of officers respecting everyone they come into contact with, and some emphasized the importance of community engagement.
- c. Below are some responses to this question.
 - (1) "The department needs to concentrate on crime, transferring mental health and substance use problems to social workers. The department needs to be fully transparent, keeping statistics on stops, their location, race, results, etc., and make the aggregated information public."
 - (2) "More closely mirror the demographic makeup of the City and continue to reach out to those in our community who distrust the police. Engrain respect for citizens within PD training. The current academy philosophy is damaging. Hopefully an internal cadet force is possible."
 - (3) "Enforce traffic laws: running red lights, speeding, using neighborhoods as cut throes. Speeding and people running red lights is my biggest safety concern everyday day."
 - (4) "Perhaps more patrols in area, if man power permits, I do not have much contact with police officers as a rule, but the few times I have, I find police officers are human and if you treat them with respect they will do the same in turn. I'm proud of our dept. and the men and women that are on the streets, it's a thankless job, as I see it."
 - (5) "More driving through neighborhoods during day/night. Stopping to talk to residents to ask about concerns, etc. when/if they have free time. Friendlier attitudes."
 - (6) "The LPD is doing an excellent job in the community and should keep it up. Hiring more officers from diverse backgrounds is the only idea I can think of that may enhance the department's image and standing in the community."
 - (7) "Increase their understanding of gender non-conforming residents and treat them with respect. Continue education and training on handling mental health calls as a medical emergency, not a criminal situation. Develop interventions, maybe with Horizon, to de-escalate mental health situations and treat them as medical emergencies. I believe our officers have GREATLY improved in this area but need support. Our folks with mental illness do not need to be treated like criminals...handcuffed, transported in police car. And develop programs to better handle non-violent drug offenses. Drug addiction is a DISEASE! People need to be treated with compassion, gentleness. In spite of their often horrible behavior. The city needs to have a new plan, including the police, to improve the way drug charges/use is handled"
 - (8) "Be a part of this community and actively engage in making it better instead of just penalizing people. There is more this community can do to come together and work on building the community."
 - (9) "More of a public presence beyond "here we are doing something nice again". Be seen, don't be afraid of walking around the neighborhood a little, going into stores and restaurants, etc. Less "One Community One Voice" super conservative religious crap (that's a terrible slogan BTW) and be a department that is openly and outwardly inclusive of the entire community! Recognize PRIDE, POC and their holidays, the trans community, the young community. Create a police culture within



your department where officers want to keep working there, the LPD turnover rate is atrocious and expensive."

(10) "Treat everyone with dignity and respect regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender. Additionally, stop only patrolling where they believe gangs are & focus on Lynchburg as a whole."

- d. Below is a word cloud of words that appeared most frequently in the open-ended response. Respondents used the words in larger font the most.

Continue place help department needs things response Give residents car pay come
Increase even received training criminal think less respect Lynchburg Police Department
treat drugs street issues concerns try area individuals will every also look
department interactions one questions know police department better
neighbors city white Stop lot LPD drive need crime
police Hire officers many community etc
people improve neighborhood make time deal
work speeding police officers happened called focus citizens
often use parked see black believe survey Take new much good job patrol
trust problem Lynchburg live control want always going situations experience reported
years night someone good officers Thanks children support job traffic nothing