Quality of Life Task Force

Serving Port Jefferson Station/Terryville, NY

Genesis of the Task Force

- Collective need for collaboration of entities in addition to individual efforts
- Port Jefferson Station Chereb Lane Bus Station Incident
- Subsequent Civic Meeting
- Councilwoman Cartright announced she would develop a Quality of Life Task Force

Who are the current Task Force Members/Participants?

- State of New York
  - Office of Assemblyman Steven Englebright
- County of Suffolk
  - Office of Legislator Kara Hahn
  - Suffolk County Police Department
  - Department of Social Services
- Town of Brookhaven
  - Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright, Council District One
  - Town Law Department
- Incorporated Village of Port Jefferson
- MTA/Long Island Railroad
- MTA Police Department
- Port Jefferson Station/Terryville Civic Association
- Port Jefferson Station/Terryville Chamber of Commerce
- Bridge of Hope Resource Center

Jurisdiction of Task Force Entities

- State of New York: jurisdiction over MTA (LIRR) police; sober homes
- County of Suffolk
  - Suffolk County Police Department: jurisdiction over criminal violations
  - Department of Social Services: provide financial assistance and other services to Suffolk County residents; jurisdiction over Suffolk County emergency housing
- Town of Brookhaven: jurisdiction over Town Code violations; no police powers
- Incorporated Village of Port Jefferson (North of the LIRR tracks): jurisdiction over issues within the Village; Village Code violations; Village Constables
- MTA Police Department: jurisdiction over Long Island Railroad

Data Collection: Phase I

The purpose of data collection is to confirm, substantiate, or clarify certain information that is being discussed in the community

Data was collected by

- Suffolk County Police Department
- Department of Social Services
- Bridge of Hope Resource Center

Additional information from

- Suffolk County Legislator Hahn's Office
- MTA Police Department
- Port Jefferson Village
- Port Jefferson Station/Terryville Civic Association
- Port Jefferson Station/Terryville Chamber of Commerce

Report from Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn

October 2019, Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn passed legislation to increase communication between the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD)

This law requires:

- DSS to provide SCPD with a list of emergency shelters that are operated or funded in Suffolk County by DSS
- SCPD to provide DSS with a confidential report disclosing the number and types of emergency calls received from the identified shelter locations
- An annual report to be filed with Legislature detailing the aggregate number of emergency phone calls received from the locations

Suffolk County Police Department Data

The Suffolk County Police Department was tasked with providing statistics on the number and types of arrests made in the target area in the last two years.

After analysis, it was determined that there was no increase in crime during this two year time period. Additionally, what appeared to be an increase in arrests was due to open warrants being recalled.

Suffolk County Police Department Data & Information

The General mission of the Suffolk County Police Dept is to protect life and property, and maintain law and order.

- Important phone numbers to know:
  - 911
  - Non – Emergency (631) 852- COPS (2677)
  - To report suspected drug activity (631) 852-NARC (6272)

    Callers can remain anonymous

Suffolk County Police Department Data & Information

Port Jefferson Station / Village Initiative

- Inspector Reilly issued directives intended to focus precinct resources to address quality of life issues in the areas around Upper Port Jefferson Village and the northern portion Port Jefferson Station along Rt. 112 and address increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic and related activity during the summer season
- Quality of life offenses will not be tolerated and applicable laws/village ordinances will be enforced
  - Littering
  - Open Alcohol
  - Urinating in Public
- Cameras were installed in multiple locations to observe and deter criminal activity

Suffolk County Police Department Data & Information

Port Jefferson Station / Village Initiative (cont.)

- Officers conducted increased bike and foot patrols in and around the area of Upper Port, Jefferson Plaza/Greenway Trail and Port Jefferson LIRR
- Increased outreach to provide appropriate referrals to homeless persons, and provide assistance to any persons apparently suffering from mental illness
- Increased police presence at Lighthouse Mission Mobile Food Pantry
- Community events held at several local businesses
- Officers conducted outreach with local businesses and gathered Intel on problem spots/people
- Coordination with MTA Police Dept and many community organizations

Report from MTA Police Department

- Improvements to Port Jeff LIRR Station, including new benches and security cameras
- Committed to maintaining a safe and orderly environment at our stations, and works closely with both the MTA Police Department (MTA PD), local law enforcement, and Services for the Under Served (SUS)
  - SUS is an organization under contract with LIRR to visit stations and encourage homeless individuals to take advantage of free transportation to shelter facilities and other services
- Responsive to customer feedback on their station environment, and will request increased homeless outreach and/or stepped up police patrols at locations were we receive reports of quality-of-life concerns
- Committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders at the State, County, Town and Village levels to address quality-of-life concerns

Suffolk County Department of Social Services Data

The Suffolk County Department of Social Services was tasked with providing updated information on the services they provide to the homeless and information about activities and outreach in this area in the last two years.

Suffolk County Department of Social Services Data & Information

The mission of the Department of Social Services is to provide financial assistance and support services to eligible Suffolk County residents in a cost –effective and efficient manner, simultaneously protecting the vulnerable while encouraging their independence and self-sufficiency.

Important resources and phone numbers can be found at
http://suffolkcountyny.gov/departments/socialservices

The Department's financial assistance and support services are administered through the four major program areas.

Suffolk County Department of Social Services Data & Information

Client Benefits Services

- Public Assistance (4 Centers)
  - Cash Assistance
    - Rent, Utilities and Personal Needs
  - Emergency one time payments
    - Diversion payments
- Food Stamps (4 Centers)
- HEAP/Energy Assistance Program – Smithtown Center
- Emergency Housing

Suffolk County Department of Social Services Data & Information

Medicaid

- Community Based Medicare
- Client Centers – Smithtown & Riverhead
- Chronic Care Eligibility & Undercare - Mary Gordon Building
- Medical Services Bureau

Suffolk County Department of Social Services Data & Information

Commissioner's Response Unit's Homeless Outreach Initiative:

- Effort to identify and engage individuals who may be homeless, encourage them to accept services, and ultimately help them transition off the streets
- DSS conducts homeless outreaches in partnership with the SCPD Community Relation Bureau (CRB) and community-based organizations, responding when notified of homeless persons needing assistance within the community. Additionally outreaches to known encampment areas are conducted on a regular basis. Recently the MTA Police and Town of Riverhead Police have been added to the calendar
- Suffolk County DSS partnered with SCPD in 2015 to conduct homeless outreach in the SCPD's 7 precincts in 2015
- From January 2018 to present there have been 18 outreaches performed in Port Jefferson. A total of 48 people were found and offered assistance

Report from the Incorporated Village of Port Jefferson

- Village Constables enforce Village Code
- The Village Code Enforcement car contact number is 631.774.0066 from 10AM-12PM
- Village Constables work with MTA Police to address issues at Port Jefferson LIRR Station

Report from the Incorporated Village of Port Jefferson

- Partnering with LIRR to increase public safety and awareness
- Partnering with Pax Christi to have better communication with our Code Enforcement office
- Toured Pax Christi facility to gain a better understanding of their protocols and security
- Increase and make secure, fencing around the Pax Christi facility
- Removal of Jitney shelter to prevent people from making it their personal shelter
- Continuing to have Code Enforcement meet trains at the station
- Continued partnership with Suffolk County Police for ongoing patrol in the area
- Code officers continued regular patrol of the area
- Village security cameras linked to SCPD Real Time Crime Center

Bridge of Hope Resource Center Data

Bridge of Hope Resource Center was tasked with providing an analysis of the existing conditions that support the homeless, poor, and transient populations in/around the Port Jefferson Train Station

- Identify the number of shelters, recovery centers and other related supportive housing etc. in the area and obtain information about their operations (application process for service, hours of operation, services provided, and where the persons being served come from)
- Identify soup kitchens in the area and obtain information on their operations (how many persons they serve, where those people come from, hours of operation, etc.)
- Identify any other community organizations and churches with a presence in the area that serve the homeless and transient populations
- Obtain information about the local hospital drug detox units in the area and their operations

Bridge of Hope Resource Center Data & Information

LOCAL HOSPITALS WITH CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY PROGRAMS

- ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL
  - Services: Inpatient Medically Supervised Drug-Detoxification and Rehabilitation Program,
  - Population Served: Adults & Teens 12-18 yrs.
  - Service Hours: 24 hrs.

- MATHER HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT CHEMICAL DEPENDENT CLINIC
  - Services: Outpatient Alcohol & Substance Abuse Program
  - Population: Adolescents, adults 18-70 yrs.
  - Ratio- Male 60- Female-40
  - Identifiable Needs: Treatment of serious mental health disorders eg.. (bipolar, anxiety, schizophrenia), 5 days a week treatment programs

Bridge of Hope Resource Center Data & Information

SOUP KITCHENS IN PORT JEFFERSON & TERRYVILLE AREA

- WELCOME FRIENDS
- MARYHAVEN CENTER OF HOPE
- ST. GERARD MAJELLA CHURCH
- CHRIST CHURCH EPISCOPAL
- CHRIST CHURCH METHODIST
- ST. PAUL LUTHERAN
- FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Bridge of Hope Resource Center Data & Information

SHELTER AND RECOVERY CENTERS IN PORT JEFFERSON & TERRYVILLE AREA

- HOPE HOUSE MINISTRIES- a 501c3 organization which provides a variety of human services ranging from emergency shelter, counseling, education, inpatient drug rehabilitation program, domestic abuse protection, transitional housing, and therapeutic services;
  - Pax Christi- Emergency Shelter

    Services: 25 emergency beds

Please Note: This report does not include sober and halfway houses since there appears to be no public listings, including in the Port Jefferson Sta. and Village area.

Report from the Port Jefferson Station/Terryville Civic Association

The Port Jefferson Station/Terryville Civic Association provided a list of the major complaints they have received in the last year about the area.

- Homeless persons
- Drug dealing/use
- Panhandling
- Loitering
- Public drinking
- Bad neighbors in general
- Gangs

Report from the Port Jefferson Station/Terryville Chamber of Commerce

The Port Jefferson Station/Terryville Chamber of provided a list of major complaints from business owners in the area.

- Impact on businesses of homeless persons and loitering
- Businesses moving to other areas as result
- Abandoned/vacant buildings
- Patrons expressing safety concerns

Individual Rights and the Law

- Homelessness, panhandling, and loitering are not crimes absent some special circumstances
- In most cases, SCPD cannot ask that someone leave a public place unless they are disorderly, or committing some illegal act for which they could be arrested
- Regarding mental health issues, the Mental Hygiene Law provides that a person with mental health issues can only be involuntarily admitted only under the certain circumstances described in Section 9.27 of the Mental Hygiene Law of the State of New York
- If there is a concern about an individual's mental health and wellness, the Mobile Crisis Unit can be contacted at 631.952.3333

Follow Up Meetings with Stakeholders

Past Meetings

- Suffolk County Police Commissioner Geraldine Hart
- Suffolk County Department of Social Services Commissioner Frances Pierre
- Suffolk County Police Department Inspector Patrick Reilly
- Father Frank Pizzarelli, Hope House Ministries

Proposed Future Meetings

- Lighthouse Mission
- Local Food Pantries
- Other stakeholder individuals/groups

Proposed Legislation and Policy Change

- Need for State Legislation to regulate sober homes
- Request from community leadership for more oversight of sober homes
- Legislation improving the transition of residents from an inpatient treatment facility or shelter to outside living situation
- Improved care coordination
- Requiring that sober homes be subject to, not exempt from, Town Zoning Laws
- Need for Town policy to assist in emergency transportation of homeless persons to temporary housing

Quality of Life Task Force Accomplishments

- Increased communication amongst Task Force members
- Increased information sharing
- Increase patrols of the focus area
- Increased enforcement within the focus area
- Identified specific issues
- Identified potential resources to address these issues
- Increased willingness by landowners to invest in revitalization

Moving Forward

- Additional meetings with stakeholders
- Homeless outreach
- Analysis of the population being served by existing facilities
- Development of formal Task Force Report with recommendations

Questions, Ideas, & Suggestions

This presentation is just the beginning. This is our first community update. There is still much work to be done.

We want to hear your questions, ideas, and suggestions.

We intend to allow the concerns of the community to guide this process.