



# City of Nevada City

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On August 9, 2021 the city of Nevada City experienced something that it had not dealt with before—a peaceful protest that turned verbally and physically confrontational. Our city has seen many peaceful, non-violent demonstrations over the years and the community's expectation is that coming together to express a belief or concern will be just that—peaceful. To be faced with what happened on August 9 was so counter to those expectations that it took not just the community off guard but the city's government and police department off guard as well.

As a result of that day and the aftermath following it, the city determined that it would seek review in a way that would determine what went wrong and how it can minimize a reoccurrence of anything like that August day from happening in the future. An internal investigation by an unbiased, neutral and independent investigator was done resulting in the After Action Report that follows this introduction.

The report does not reflect the views of individual councilmembers but is a summary of the independent investigator's findings. The city looks at this report as a means to learn, to recognize that there are sensitive issues that run deep and as an opportunity to hear and listen in an effort to do better going forward.

We understand that for some trust was lost in our ability to address the situation. For others, there was a sense of dismay that this could happen in our city. For all of us, there is an understanding that we need to do better. There needs to be better communication from all sides. There needs to be increased training for our police officers and they need to be given better tools to handle unrest like we saw that day. There needs to be dialogue on how to avoid this from ever happening again in Nevada City.

So how can we do better? The police department is pursuing additional training for its officers in crowd and riot control. Administration and city council need to be mindful of the resources and tools that are needed and be prepared to fund them. And, we will work diligently to have a critical thought process to identify other ways that we can do better. A town hall meeting has been discussed to provide opportunity for our residents to express and share what policing and community safety should look like in Nevada City. In addition, the city has appointed an experienced interim police chief following the former chief's resignation. He will conduct a strategic analysis of the department, its operations and needs with direction to implement necessary and appropriate changes. A community survey is also a way that we can seek comments that will help formulate actions that will help to build trust and cooperation between the community and organizations with the city.

The city has in place a process requiring permits for these types of events. Organizers of events need to follow that process so that appropriate resources are available and effective planning can occur prior to the event. Increased communication with the city about plans and expectations of similar events can only serve to benefit all involved.

Together we can learn from this experience and together we can open lines of communication to make sure that an incident like what occurred on August 9 does not repeat itself while preserving the ability of our residents to raise their voices publicly on important issues.

Sincerely,

Joan L. Phillippe  
Interim City Manager