

STAFF REPORT: RESPONSE TO REIMAGINING COMMUNITY SAFETY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this report is to share our plans for implementing the recommendations of the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force. This report will also share progress to date and proposed next steps.

BACKGROUND

On [September 9, 2020](#)¹, Council established the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force with a mission to bring forth concrete, actionable recommendations to the Town Council that will increase public safety, eliminate structural inequities in Town public safety systems, and enable all in the community to thrive. On October 7, 2020, Council appointed 13 members and 2 alternates to the Task Force, representing segments of the population most impacted by inequities in public safety approaches.

In a parallel process, a team of staff members completed the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) Cohort Training. Staff continues participating in the County-Wide Racial Equity Framework group, also based on the [GARE Framework](#)².

On June 23, [2021](#)³, the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force presented 28 recommendations and 31 action items to Council organized into three broad categories of prevention, crisis, and post-crisis. The Council received the report and referred the recommendations to the Manager.

The Task Force suggested that implementation strategies include Community Outreach & Awareness, Program Development, Multi-Stakeholder Communication & Collaboration, and Policy Review and timeframe for implementation. The recommendations and action items provided by the Task Force are data-informed, thoughtful, and crafted to address complex community challenges. Effective implementation will require data-driven and strategic plans co-created with additional community input and across multiple systems. Moreover, internal and external paradigm shifts must occur to identify, uncover, and address structural inequities perpetuated by “business as usual” in program design, development, implementation, and evaluation.

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4633761&GUID=FA79CCDB-E273-43F7-8BB6-AB1EDBC97556&Options=&Search=>

² <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/about/our-approach/>

³ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4990634&GUID=8A08437C-0B5C-4F31-AA47-59784AD0C9B4>

PROGRESS TO DATE

On June 30th, 2021, 13 former Task Force members debriefed their experience and received the Mayor's Salute of Appreciation. An internal team staffed by Chief Blue, Loryn Clark, Sarah Vinas, and Shenekia Weeks met to begin development of an action plan, discuss how to begin using the GARE Framework to organize the Town's process and design of the attached draft Action Plan.

Highlights of progress to date are:

Since June 2021, we have made progress in implementing several key recommendations of the Task Force, as described below. Additional details are outlined in the attached Action Plan.

- Hired Shenekia Weeks as the Town's first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Officer;
- Design of Town-wide DEI training is underway;
- Street Outreach and Harm Reduction and Deflection program funding approved by the Orange County Commissioners;
- Made changes to Police Department Policies;
- Initiated the data collection and analysis of local ordinances that could be presented to Council for decriminalization;
- Initiated review of Police Department data sets in collaboration with outside experts;
- Expanded staffing for the Town's Crisis Unit; and
- Advanced plans to create affordable housing opportunities on Town-owned land.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

We propose the following next steps:

1. Convene community partners to review the recommendations from the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force, receive training on the GARE Framework and tools;
2. Continue the Police Department's analysis and data gathering efforts;
3. Socialize the action plan and GARE Framework with Town staff and appropriate advisory boards for feedback (Justice in Action, Community Policing Advisory Committee, Housing Advisory Board, Human Services Advisory Board);
4. Work with advisory boards to identify action items as their next steps;
5. Provide an update on our progress to the Council in winter of 2022; and
6. Present a strategic plan to the Council in the spring of 2022.