

Summary of Re-Imagining Community Safety Task Force Progress

April 2021

Background

On June 24, 2020 Town Council adopted a [Resolution on Developing New Community Approaches to Improve Racial Equity and Public Safety in Chapel Hill \(2020-06-24/R-1\)](#)¹ to improve racial equity and public safety in Chapel Hill. This resolution came after weeks of considerable nationwide concern over the killings of Black men and women by law enforcement, sparked by the murder of George Floyd, and the increasing demands from community members that Council take local action to address opportunities to reform law enforcement practices and enhance community resources in Chapel Hill.

Additionally, the resolution included changes to the Police Department's policies;

- authorizing deadly force only when there is clear and convincing evidence of imminent threat of death or serious physical injury,
- prohibiting the use of chokeholds and ensuring that policies and training reflect that prohibition,
- ending the use of regulatory traffic stops or low-level, non-moving violations that do not address public safety and which significant racial disparities are often found.

On September 9, 2020, Council established the Re-imagining Community Safety Task 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. Additionally, a Council-approved [Task Force Charge](#)² was created.

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.

Progress to Date

From October to December 2020, the Task Force met four times to establish the project timeline, review roles and responsibilities, elect a steering committee, learn from Town staff presentations, and review data. Additionally, a [comprehensive webpage](#)³ was dedicated to the work of the Task Force.

In February 2021, the Town engaged [Amplify Consulting](#)⁴ to facilitate the process and guide the Task Force to recommendations.

In March, Amplify Consulting conducted six virtual listening sessions, for participants to share their experiences and ideas for making Chapel Hill a safe and inclusive community.

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=8634097&GUID=DB454587-66EA-418B-85FC-77928465DB32>

² <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=47399>

³ <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/mayor-and-council/boards-commissions/re-imagining-public-safety-task-force>

⁴ <https://www.amplifycharlotte.com/>

Also, Amplify opened a survey asking the community for input on how public safety services can better promote racial equity and inclusion.

In addition, Task Force members learned from presentations by speakers from Orange County's [Criminal Justice Resource Department](#),⁵ [Public Protection Section at NC Department of Justice](#),⁶ and the [Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection Program \(SOHRAD\)](#).⁷

Proposed Next Steps

Under the continued facilitation of Amplify, the Task Force has agreed to convene for three additional meetings, with the goal of providing Council with more thorough recommendations by the end of May.

Preliminary Task Force Recommendations

- Provide funding to the Orange County Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection Program (SOHRAD). The estimated funding needed to sustain the County-wide SOHRAD program through FY22 is approximately \$237,000. The cost is proposed to be shared among the government partners in the County and, and the Town's portion would be \$97,176.
- Provide funding to neighborhood organizations for neighborhood meetings and outreach activities to address community safety concerns and expand capacity for neighborhoods to get organized and partner in the work of identifying community needs. The estimated funding needed is \$35,000 for FY22.

⁵ <https://www.orangecountync.gov/432/Criminal-Justice-Resource-Department>

⁶ <https://ncdoj.gov/public-protection/>

⁷ <https://www.ocpehnc.com/street-outreach>