

Re-Imagining Community Safety Task Force Update

Staff:

Celisa Lehew, Chief of Police
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Department:

Police
Manager's Office

PURPOSE: That Council receives information regarding implementing recommendations of the Re-Imagining Community Safety (RICS) Task Force.

OVERVIEW

Background: On September 9, 2020, Council established the Task Force with a mission to bring forth concrete, actionable recommendations that will increase public safety, eliminate structural inequities in Town public safety systems, and enable all in the community to thrive. On June 23, 2021, the Task Force presented 28 recommendations and 31 action items to Council organized into three broad categories of prevention, crisis, and post-crisis.

Progress: Since the last update to Council in September 2021, several key recommendations of the Task Force have been implemented, as described below.

Community Initiatives:

- Included RICS recommendations as a priority for American Rescue Plan Act Funding. Five of the six programs awarded connected their work to the RICS recommendations.
- Partnered with Clear Impact to provide Results-Based Accountability training sessions for the Town's leadership and community partners.
- Increased funding for Street Outreach Harm Reduction & Deflection (SOHRAD) for a fourth position.
- Public Housing is updating their admission policy for clarity of regulations and rights, with support from DEI Office, to explore ways to increase access
- Hired Alysha Phanord as the Town's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Program Analyst
- Affordable Housing and Community Connections department launched a Community Engagement Pilot

Policing Initiatives:

- Moved to semi-annual data reports providing trend evaluation over a longer time span, consult with outside experts on the data, and reports are reviewed by Community Police Advisory Committee (CPAC)
- As of November 2022, all officers completed de-escalation training called Integrating Communications and Tactics, with three certified instructors now in the department
- Expanded Crisis Unit staff to 7 full-time counselors. This includes a Peer Support Specialist with lived experience who provides resources and assistance in path to recovery. Additionally, a new Counselor, in partnership with Transit, is dedicated to providing resources and assistance with crisis situations that arise on buses or bus stops
- Department participates now in all three diversion programs through the Criminal Justice Resource Department (CJRD), for both youth and adults. Department is being nationally recognized for its leadership in diversion, co-response, and progressive policy changes.

- Launched Virtual Report Unit (VRU) providing people a timely way to make a report that doesn't require an armed officer response. VRU takes 80 reports on average per month, which is 11.3% of all reports taken.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to provide Council with periodic updates on RICS implementation. In the coming months, staff will focus efforts on:

- Collaborating with CPAC and Justice In Action Committee on a series of community conversations with Chief Lehw
- Publishing the Police Department's Semi-Annual Report in March
- Partnering with County to implement a Mobile Crisis Team pilot to triage mental health calls in the 911 Center, sending non-law enforcement professionals to respond
- Adding an additional Crisis Counselor to focus on pre-and post diversion for those with mental health illnesses in partner with CJRD
- DEI Office will continue to provide additional internal training for staff and elected officials
- Will partner to offer Restorative Practices training for community members to connect incident response to longer-term community healing and repair work
- Work with partners to expand local youth employment and services, and host free sessions for youth on filling out the Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Conduct GARE Training to reduce systemic barriers across the non-profit sector