



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Legislation Text

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Staff Report: Implementing the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force Recommendations.

Staff:

Shenekia Weeks, DEI Officer
Celisa Lehew, Chief of Police

Department:

Manager's Office
Police

PURPOSE:

That Council receive information regarding implementing recommendations of the Reimagining Community Safety (RICS) Task Force.

OVERVIEW

On September 9, 2020, Council established the RICS Task Force with a mission to bring forth concrete, actionable recommendations to increase community safety, eliminate structural inequities in Town community 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 TO DATE

Since the last update in February 2023, several key recommendations of the Task Force have been implemented, as described below.

Community Initiatives:

- The Affordable Housing and Community Connections team has finalized the Chapel Hill Affordable Housing Plan & Investment Strategy Draft and presented to Council on 9/13/23. This plan includes a focus on expanding the Town's Master Leasing program, a recommendation from the Task Force.
- The Affordable Housing and Community Connections and Parks and Recreation teams are assessing local youth employment opportunities to expand access to current programs.
- Staff is drafting a Significant Community Events plan to prepare a communication response in the event of explosive issues, including reviewing the Town's Policy Team and updating Emergency Management Plan.
- The DEI Office partnered with the Hannah Ruth Foundation to provide Restorative Justice training to staff and community partners.

Policing Initiatives:

- Published semi-annual reports in March and September 2023, in consult with outside experts on the data. Reports are reviewed by Community Police Advisory Committee (CPAC).
- The Police Department participates in all four diversion programs through the Criminal Justice Resource Department (CJRD), including the recently launched Community Care & Diversion Response Program. This program diverts people who have mental illness to appropriate community behavioral health providers and support services, reducing the number of people who have serious mental health illness entering the criminal legal system.
- The Town's Crisis Unit has expanded to include an additional Crisis Counselor focused on pre-and

post-diversion for those with mental health illnesses in partnership with the CJRD programs listed above.

- Partner in Cornerstones Project, along with several other community organizations. A six-month project providing staff with training and facilitation skills in Listening Circles and Reflective Structured Dialogue. These approaches provide a flexible skill set that helps people communicate better and relate to one another, across differences of perspectives, and life experiences to build community trust, understanding and human connections.
- Virtual Report Unit (VRU) provides people a timely way to make a report that doesn't require an emergency response. VRU takes 88 reports on average per month, which is 12% of all reports taken. In the last six months, the VRU took 66% of the department's lost property reports, 56% of all fraud reports, and 47% of all hit-and-run reports.
- Council allocated funds, as a part of the FY 2024 budget, to hire a Crisis Counselor as part of the county-wide partnership to implement a Mobile Crisis Team pilot to triage mental health calls in the 911 Center, sending non-law enforcement professionals to respond. The team will be comprised of a Crisis Counselor, Peer Support Specialist, Community Paramedic, and a Clinician at the 911 call center.
- 15 staff have participated in Language Justice Training organized by Affordable Housing and Community Connections in partnership with Tilde and Refugee Community Partnership.
- 47 officers are Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained, and the department continues to provide training to all officers as it becomes available. All recent police cadets receive adult mental health first aid training, prior to going into field training.
- 89 officers are trained in Integrating Communications and Tactics (ICAT) as of April 2023. Additionally, the department has three certified ICAT instructors. The department will provide ICAT training in the coming months for new officers and cadets when they complete Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy.

NEXT STEPS

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

1. Expanding training opportunities for staff and community partners.
2. Making progress on long-term multi-stakeholder recommendations.
3. Certifying Town Employees in Results Based Accountability.
4. Publishing the Police Department's Semi-Annual report in February 2024.
5. Exploring the possibility of adding non-sworn, traffic crash investigators to respond and take reports for people involved in non-injury vehicle crashes.
6. Working with UNC Criminal Justice Innovation Lab to analyze and evaluate the Mobile Crisis Response Unit.
7. Sending a team comprised of Crisis Counselors, the Patrol Captain, and Chief to the 2023 Police, Treatment, and Community Collaborative's (PTACC) International Deflection and Pre-arrest Diversion Summit where they will present a keynote speech on CHPD's work with deflection and diversion programs.

The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.

By accepting the report, the Council acknowledges receipt of the Staff Report on the implementation of the RICS recommendations.