

September 28 Final Committee Draft of Re-Imagining Community Safety Task Force Charge

Introduction

In the Council Resolution, issued on June 24, 2020, A RESOLUTION ON DEVELOPING NEW COMMUNITY APPROACHES TO IMPROVE RACIAL EQUITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN CHAPEL HILL (2020-06-24/R-1), the Council committed to a process and a path to change that centers the work on the lived experience of black and brown people impacted by policing in our community. To do so, the Council called for the creation of a community-based, Town Council approved Task Force to do the pioneering work of reimagining public safety in Chapel Hill. The *Reimagining Community Safety Task Force* promises to draw on community perspectives, Town department insights, data from Chapel Hill and other jurisdictions in North Carolina and across the nation. It will consider best practices research and innovative ideas for identifying approaches to ensure public safety in Chapel Hill for everyone.

Where We Are

Systemic racism and racial bias are interwoven into the fabric of the Chapel Hill community and criminal justice system. We recognize we have committed and dedicated officers in the Chapel Hill Police Department (CHPD) working in an organization that has long had many progressive policies and practices in place. Nonetheless, the Department's own data reflects bias in its outcomes. For these reasons, we must investigate the sources of this disparate impact in the systems and structures of the Town's police department and in policing as an institution, as a critical component of re-imagining

The Town of Chapel Hill recognizes it must take leadership in rooting out racism to achieve a safe, equitable community for everyone, especially historically disenfranchised communities. Reimagining public safety is part of this effort. The Town recognizes that the impact of historical and institutional racism is not limited to public safety and has created additional significant barriers to equity in our community in areas such as – housing, education, food access, employment, among others – which also must be addressed, though are beyond the scope of this particular Task Force. Public safety is not synonymous with policing. But the Task Force aims to examine holistically what safety means for everyone.

Council understands that the CHPD is a key resource and participant in this re-imagining work; we also recognize the importance of Task Force members being able to speak freely during difficult discussions, and that there will be times when police presence might not be appropriate. The Task Force and its consultant will work to balance these two interests throughout the process.

The Task Force is committed to the earnest, honest, and hard work of moving Chapel Hill, our state, and the country forward.

Mission:

The Task Force will bring forth concrete, actionable recommendations to the Town Council that will achieve the following:

- 1) Increase public safety
- 2) Eliminate structural inequities in Town public safety systems; and
- 3) Enable all in the community to thrive.

Tasks:

1. Understand the lived experiences with public safety in Chapel Hill, with particular focus on, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Women, and LGBTQ+ people and identify key concerns. This should include gaining an understanding of how Chapel Hill's history shaped and influenced public safety approaches today.
2. Define a safe and equitable community and specify what metrics could be used to measure progress toward achieving it. This could include a consideration of needs around community healing, trust-building, and moral recognition.
3. Map existing Town (and County and State, as relevant) programs and services, that contribute to community safety and determine:
 - What is working well as is
 - What is working and calls for increased investment
 - What isn't working and should be fixed or ended
 - What should be created that doesn't yet exist
 - What opportunities exist for collaboration with other jurisdictions, UNC, and the private sector to address or strengthen the above?
4. Identify areas of strength and deficiency in CHPD's current approaches. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - Establishment and implementation of bias-free policies, practices, and procedures
 - Overall operational philosophy and culture, including alignment of officers with that philosophy
 - Transparency, accountability, and oversight
 - Civilian complaint review procedures
 - Composition of the force and roles of CHPD personnel
 - Personnel policies, including recruitment, performance evaluation, and compensation
 - Ability to recruit and retain high performing officers committed to equitable community safety
5. Based on the above, and best practices from around the country, recommend changes needed to achieve the Task Force's definition of equitable community safety. This could include but is not limited to:
 - Unbundling services currently provided by the police
 - The appropriate size and composition of the CHPD
 - Creation of new categories of public safety personnel
 - Revisions to the scope of police responsibility

- Proposals for alternate response mechanisms to mental health and substance misuse crises
- Standards for mutual assistance agreements
- Best practices for crisis diversion
- Conceptualizing new models of public safety that have yet to be imagined
- Review of laws and ordinances that criminalize survival

6. Issue a final report:

The Task Force will produce a report and present at a Town Council meeting its findings and recommendations on approaches to public safety that intentionally and actively dismantle racism, implicit bias, and discriminatory practices and increase safety for everyone, especially historically impacted communities and individuals. The report should include:

- Actionable recommendations that could be implemented by the Town Council in the short and medium term
- Legislative recommendations to our state and congressional representatives to address policing/safety recommendations (e.g. civilian review board, oversight, accountability, and policing powers) that cannot directly be achieved without changes to state legislation
- Areas for further study and potential action and how those should be taken up.

Time Requirement, Expectations, and Resources:

The Task Force will begin meeting in October 2020, with the goal of completing their work and issuing a report to Council by March 2021. The Task Force will present an interim progress report on their work at a public Council meeting in January 2021.

With the help of the Task Force consultant and Town staff, the Task Force will organize its leadership and work and decide the scheduling and duration of meetings, including but not limited to community listening sessions, data gathering, discussions, and committee meetings (if warranted). Given the scope of work, we expect that there will be at least two meetings held each month.

The Task Force is empowered to reach out as necessary to whatever resources they feel are needed to inform their work.

It is likely that because of the coronavirus pandemic, these meetings will be conducted remotely on Zoom or a similar platform. The Town will provide resources and technical support to Task Force members to insure they can all participate equally in remote meetings.