

Responses to Re-Imagining Community Safety Task Force Questions on Public Safety Issues

*Compiled by the Town of Chapel Hill
November 20, 2020*

Coordination

(1) Coordination between the Town and UNC police

UNC-Chapel Hill and the Town of Chapel Hill have a long history of cooperation on addressing public safety matters. All public safety matters that occur on UNC's campus or UNC-owned properties are managed by the UNC Police Department. And, since we have jurisdictions that overlap, events that occur in town or on campus almost always have an impact on both jurisdictions. Consequently, we are in frequent communication with our University partners to share information and plan for any events.

The primary role of the Chapel Hill Police Department, when there are events on UNC's campus, continues to be to protect the safety of people and property in the town and to support UNC as requested. Decisions about strategy and tactics in such situations are made by Police Chief Chris Blue in consultation with the Town Manager and the Town's Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator.

(2) Partnerships with other police departments

North Carolina General Statute §160A-288 governs cooperation between law enforcement agencies. Any law enforcement agency may temporarily assist another agency if requested in writing by the head of the requesting agency. These written agreements are called Mutual Aid Agreements. Requests for assistance are made through the Chief, Sheriff, or their designee. According to these agreements, a law enforcement agency can lend personnel and equipment on a temporary basis.

Officers who are requested to assist another agency under such an agreement have the same authority, rights, and jurisdiction as the officers of the requesting department and are subject to the lawful operational commands and supervision of the superior officers within the requesting agency, while remaining subject to the policies and procedures of their own agency, including for purposes of payment.

The Chapel Hill Police Department has mutual aid agreements with numerous law enforcement agencies throughout the state that assist with events such as Halloween, athletic celebrations, and other large-scale events. When planning for such an event, we ensure that valid mutual aid agreements are in place, as outlined by the above referenced statute. We maintain standing agreements with all other Orange County law enforcement agencies as they are the most likely to be called upon for assistance.

Demographics

(1) Comprehensive report for Chapel Hill Police Department showing demographics of people who have interactions with police, broken down by SES and race


We are currently compiling this requested data for a future presentation and discussion with the Task Force.

(2) Data about public safety concerns

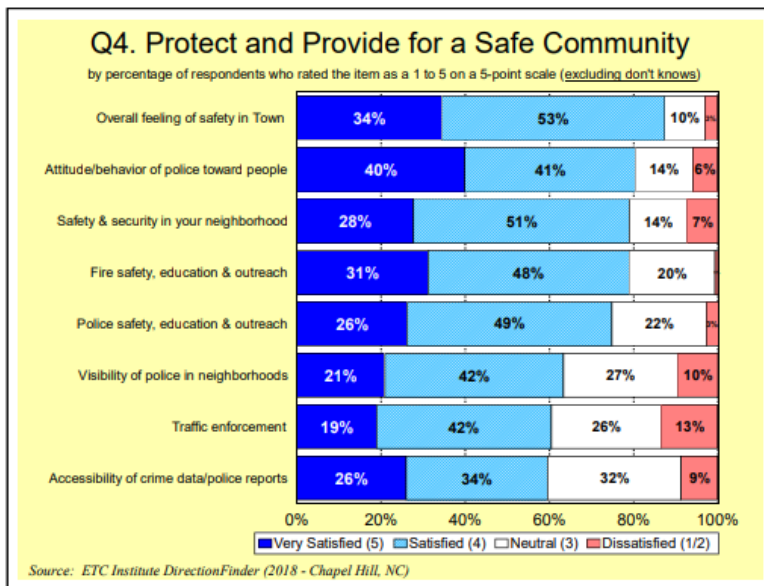
The Town of Chapel Hill published the most recent results of a Community Survey in December 2019. The survey was conducted by a professional market research firm and was the sixth survey done in the last 10 years by the Town. The complete survey findings for 2009- 2019 are found here:

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/newsroom/community-survey>

#4 Survey Questions asked for respondents' satisfaction with the following services:

 4. Protect and Provide for a Safe Community		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
1.	Overall feeling of safety in town	5	4	3	2	1	9
2.	Fire safety, education and outreach	5	4	3	2	1	9
3.	Police safety, education and outreach	5	4	3	2	1	9
4.	The attitude and behavior of police personnel toward people	5	4	3	2	1	9
5.	Visibility of police in neighborhoods	5	4	3	2	1	9
6.	Traffic enforcement	5	4	3	2	1	9
7.	Safety and security in your neighborhood	5	4	3	2	1	9
8.	Accessibility of crime data/police reports	5	4	3	2	1	9

#4 Survey Question responses were the following:



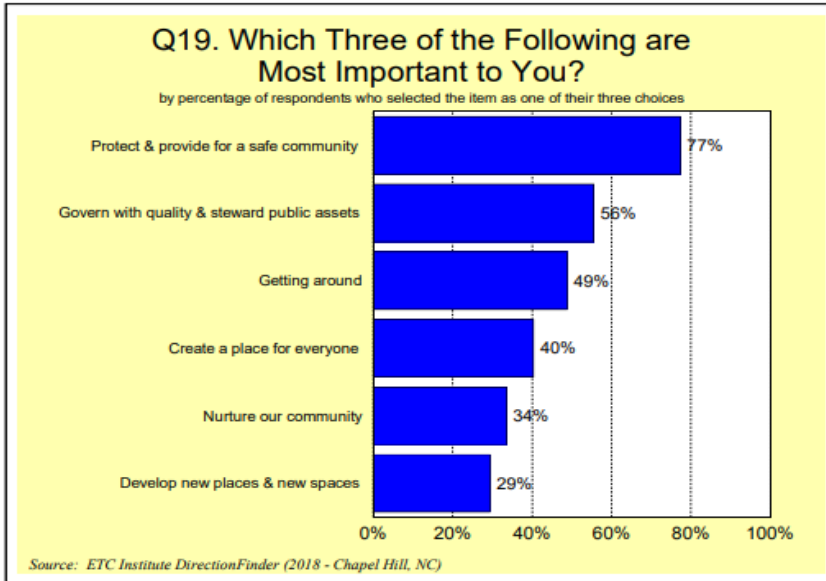
The highest levels of satisfaction with public safety services, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were: the overall feeling of safety in Town (87%), the attitude and behavior of police personnel toward people (81%), the safety and security in your neighborhood (79%), and fire safety, education, and outreach (79%). Respondents were least satisfied (79%) with the accessibility of crime data and police reports.

#19 Survey Question asked the following:

19. Looking Ahead. Which THREE of the following are MOST IMPORTANT to you? [Check only three.]

- ___(1) Protect and provide for a safe community
- ___(2) Getting around
- ___(3) Create a place for everyone
- ___(4) Nurture our community
- ___(5) Develop new places, new spaces
- ___(6) Govern with quality and steward public assets

#19 Survey Question responses were the following:



(3) What are people afraid of in Chapel Hill?

While we don't have any direct measures on community fears, the Town's Community Survey, referenced above, may provide information on people's priorities and satisfaction with Town services. The complete survey findings for 2009-2019 are found here:

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/newsroom/community-survey>

We hope that, through future listening sessions, we and the Task Force may better understand the concerns of all residents.

Training

(1) What racial equity and implicit bias training do officers currently receive? What is the feedback from police going through the training?

The North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission and the Criminal Justice Education & Training Standards Commission regulate the training and certification of all sheriffs' deputies, law enforcement officers, corrections officers, and juvenile justice officers, including the requirements for Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) and annual in-service training for officers. As part of our annual in-service training, the state always requires one mandatory topic related to juvenile or minority sensitivity training.

In early 2018, the Town's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) steering committee was established with

employees from across the organization. Police representatives served as part of the steering committee. The goal of the steering committee was to develop a diversity and inclusion plan that would establish goals and direction for diversity engagement for all employees and provide employees with tools and skills to embrace diversity and equity using the town's RESPECT values. The steering committee worked with VISIONS, INC., to lead the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative, engage in skill-building and organization development, and to provide input, ideas, implementation, and feedback in DEI efforts.

In 2019, we were invited to join the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Cohort Team. GARE is a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. Fifteen town staff members formed a team, to participate in a capacity building opportunity for city and county governments working to achieve racial equity and advancing racial equity by addressing institutional and structural racism. The GARE program is being piloted by the Housing and Community and Police departments.

Additionally, our department's Policy 1-6 mandates that we provide fair and impartial training to all new recruits and periodic updates to veteran officers. In 2015, we hosted a county wide train-the-trainer class on the subject of Fair and Impartial Policing. This training was taught by a nationally recognized professor and we sent seven police department employees to this class who are now able to deliver this training to all our employees.

We have also contracted with trainers outside our organization. The Dispute Settlement Center has helped deliver material centered on de-escalation, and fair and impartial policing. We have also had Tru Pettigrew deliver his Community Organizers Helping Officers Restore Trust (COHORT) training to all CHPD employees. This training involved community members and officers engaging in honest and meaningful conversations on their experiences. Lastly, we have sent several employees through the Racial Equity Institute's phase one training. This is also a mandatory training for career progression to become a supervisor in the department.

Below, please find an overview of our annual efforts at training our employees on Fair and Impartial Policing.

1. 2015: Bias Free Policing Training with Dr. Lorie Fridell (train the trainer and CHPD training)
2. 2016: Racial Equity Institute for several employees. We also did another Bias Free Policing Training for all CHPD
3. 2017: COHORT (Community Organizers Helping Officers Restore Trust) Tru Pettigrew
4. 2018: Equity in Policing
5. 2019: De-escalation training with the Dispute Settlement Center
6. 2020: Training was limited to only state required training due to the Pandemic.

We believe that this type of training needs to be continuous and is not a "one and done" experience. Our employees have been open and willing to participate in these sessions. In fact, the most powerful moments in these training sessions have been when employees share their personal experiences and how they felt in situations where they felt marginalized.

(2) What training do the police have for de-escalating situations?

De-escalation training teaches a variety of verbal and non-verbal communication skills, with the goal of defusing anger and reducing conflict between people. De-escalation training for our police officers is done in a variety of ways. De-escalation begins as an overall principle in our scenario-based training, and it is included in our use of force-related policies, too. De-escalation training typically consists of traditional instruction along with roleplay scenarios using verbal de-escalation techniques.

We also have an interactive video simulation console which allows officers to respond to a variety of scenarios and use these techniques to successfully resolve conflicts without resorting to force or other aggressive tactics. Additionally, last year we partnered with the Dispute Settlement Center and they designed and delivered a mandatory training series focused on de-escalation for the entire department.

(3) What training do the police receive on mental health issues?

Police officers begin to receive training on mental health issues while in the police academy. Responding to persons who are in crisis is built in to many of the practical exercises that officers experience while in training. We also frequently respond with members of our Crisis Unit to incidents where people are in crisis and this helps officers learn in the field. Lastly, we have a goal to send all our officers through Crisis Intervention Team Training and, over the last 10 years, we have sent more than 80 people to this training.

The Crisis Intervention Team Program (CIT) is a community-based collaborative between consumers, families, the Mental Health LME, law enforcement agencies, mental health providers, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), community colleges, and the medical community. The course teaches unique risk factors and warning signs of dealing with mental health, substance abuse, and intellectual and developmental disability situations.

Law enforcement officers are often the first responders to people in crisis. Therefore, CIT training facilitates ongoing collaboration between law enforcement and the mental health community, so those contacts and local resources remain fresh in our minds. CIT is introduced during the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) and again post-academy prior to officers starting their field training program. Police officers receive 40 hours of training on a variety of topics, including an overview of mental health, geriatrics, substance abuse/co-occurring disorders, special concerns with adolescents, mental health commitment process, personality disorders, developmental disabilities, autism, suicide, trauma and its aftermath, homelessness crisis intervention, and de-escalation.

Budget

(1) What financial support and other supports exist for those wrapped up in the criminal justice system? What reforms are already being considered?

Criminal Justice Debt Program

The Towns of Chapel Hill's Criminal Justice Debt Program provides financial relief to community members who are taking steps to successfully reintegrate into the community but whose ability to do so is hampered by debt from court fees and costs. Applicants to the program are screened by the Crisis Unit to ensure they meet program criteria. The criteria that was set forth in the resolution passed by Town Council is as follows:

- Must live within the municipal limits of the Town of Chapel Hill
- Must meet court indigency standards
- Cannot be currently incarcerated
- Must have outstanding criminal justice or traffic fees or costs from Orange County or the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (NCDMV)
- Must demonstrate that the individual is on the road to stability
- Must have already pursued other avenues for debt relief (e.g., driver's license restoration program)
- Must demonstrate that assistance will have an immediate impact on the individual's stability or successful reentry into the community

Relief will be considered for post-conviction and deferred prosecution court fees and costs, as well as NCDMV license restoration fees. Fines and restitution payments imposed as part of sentencing are not eligible for payment through the program. The resolution also states that individuals convicted of violent felonies are not eligible for the program, and individuals are only be eligible to receive assistance from the program once every three years.

Applications are reviewed by a ten-person advisory committee made up of representatives from the Orange County criminal justice and indigent service provider community. The advisory board meets monthly to review applications and recommend participants for the program. Applicants are also provided information about other resources for debt relief, when appropriate. Each of the following services providers have appointed one representative to the advisory committee:

- Community Empowerment Fund (CEF)
- Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC)
- Re-entry Council Case Manager
- Restoration Program Legal Counsel
- Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCPEH)
- NAACP Legal Redress Committee or Criminal Justice Committee member
- El Centro Hispano
- An impacted community member
- Orange County Clerk of Court's Office Victims advocate organization

Specialty Courts

Additionally, Chapel Hill Police Department makes referrals and works with three specialty courts that are designed to allow access to appropriate services for individuals who are involved with the criminal justice system. Our Crisis Unit helps us determine the appropriate resource based on both information obtained from review of a police incident report, and through direct follow up with the person(s).

The three specialty courts are:

- **Community Resource Court (CRC)** works to support individuals with mental health diagnosis who are actively involved in the Orange County or Chatham County criminal justice system. Court mandated therapy includes a monthly therapeutic court session and compliance with recommended mental health/substance use treatment.

- **Outreach Court** is designed to support those who are transient and have charges specifically related to homelessness (i.e. trespassing, call for service, drunken disorderly, breaking & entering, etc.). The Crisis Unit reviews incident reports on a daily basis in order to determine what additional psychological and/or environmental support may be beneficial.
- **Recovery Court** supports individuals viewed as high risk as it pertains to significant substance use. These individuals must be willing to engage in substance use treatment and ideally will find benefit in structure.

The Crisis Unit and our police officers work together to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system and toward supportive and sustainable resources as an alternative option, based on the presenting need. Appropriate referrals that aid in this diversion process include, but are not limited to:

- The Criminal Justice Resource Department and Specialty Courts
- Mental health providers and treatment (i.e. outpatient therapists/medication management, Cardinal Innovations, HomeLink through the UNC Center of Excellence and Community Mental Health, Assertive and Community Treatment Teams (ACTT), Caramore Community, etc.)
- Substance use treatment through Freedom House or UNC Horizons Program
- Housing alternatives through programs such as the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF), Orange County's Housing Helpline, Rapid Rehousing Programs, UNC's HomeLink, Inter-Faith Council (IFC) women/children and men's shelters, and IFC's community kitchen and food bank.