



**Proposed Meeting Agenda
Re-Imagining Community Safety Task Force
June 14, 2021**

1. Roll Call (5 min)
2. Final Review of Task Force Recommendations (50 min)
3. Preparation for June 23rd Council Presentation (10 min)
 - a. Who will present from the Task Force?
 - b. Who plans to attend?
4. Closing Reflections & Appreciations (25 min)

Re-Imagining Community Safety

Task Force Recommendations

PREVENTION

1. Use a Community Building Collective Planning approach

- We recommend the Council adopt a Community Building Collective Planning approach when considering new development. This framework seeks to produce alignment of purpose across related sectors working on social, economic, and environmental challenges. While intuitively collective planning would appear to be a welcome tool for addressing community challenges it is not a natural model in traditional planning environments and can counter to current norms. Examples of these shifts include sharing rather than competing for resources, transitioning from outputs to outcomes and using adaptive approaches rather than technical ones.

2. Create additional affordable housing opportunities to serve extremely low-income residents.

- We recommend that the Town allocate resources to build affordable housing that addresses households at or below 30% of the Area Median Income. The town, in cooperation with other governmental, nonprofit, and private organizations should have adequate emergency shelter available at all times.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Town Council should use funds to incentivize private landlords to “ban the box,” allowing tenants with criminal records to rent.

B. Town Council should create a policy removing criminal records as a barrier to public housing.

3. Use data analysis to inform strategies

- We recommend that the Chapel Hill Police Department prioritize the use of evidence-based policing, which is the concept of using the best available evidence to inform police actions and decisions, where practicable and appropriate as recommended by the National Institute of Justice. We also recommend that the Town identify the places along the criminal justice system where data collection directly impacts the implementation, evaluation, and monitoring of the Task Force’s recommendations and broader questions of racial equity within the criminal justice system.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Town Council should allocate funding to allow CHPD to consult with outside experts on data sets to report on and frequency of reporting.

B. CHPD should provide Town Council with a report on policing data every six months. Report must be publicized to the local community and CPAC must be allowed to respond.

C. An annual independent audit should be conducted to: review implementation of the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force recommendations and action items; test the

efficacy of actions taken in response to the recommendations, and support continuous improvements to public safety resulting from the recommendations.

4. Research School Resource Officer Program

We recommend the Town Council continue to explore SROs in collaboration with the other groups looking at this question.

5. Take Steps to Decriminalize Poverty

- Societal, economic, and political events have illustrated historic levels of income inequality, children in poverty, and disparate treatment and impacts of the law and justice systems on communities of color and populations that face other barriers and obstacles to justice. We recommend that the Council seek to implement best practices for eliminating legal and justice system-related policies, practices and procedures that perpetuate or worsen the harmful effects of poverty and discrimination. The harmful effects of poverty manifest themselves in multiple areas of the community including but not limited to; substandard and unaffordable housing, homelessness, limited access to the justice system, food insecurity, stigma, isolation from community and political infrastructure, inadequate education outcomes and inadequate healthcare leading to poor health outcomes.

ACTION ITEMS

- A. Town Council, in conjunction with CHPD and other criminal justice stakeholders, should identify a list of town ordinances that tend to target vulnerable communities and can be decriminalized (ie noise violations, open container, public urination, and panhandling).
- B. CHPD should conduct community conversations on when to call the police, with the goal of reducing calls that criminalize poor or marginalized individuals.
- C. Continue to enhance training for Police on racial equity.

6. Youth Issues

- We recommend that the Town should work to ensure that community youth have access to substance use treatment programs. This includes community youth having access to a program like the “Carpe Diem” Alcohol Education program at UNC-Chapel Hill.
- We recommend that the Chapel Hill Police Department look for ways to decriminalize substance use by youth and use diversion to evaluation and treatment programs where appropriate.
- We recommend that Town support programs and activities to attract local youth to employment and service with the Town. Including making existing programs (TOCH Summer Youth Employment Program, Career Explorers, and other programs) more accessible to all youth.

7. Expand Community Police Conversations

- We recommend to the Council that the Chapel Hill Police Department collaborate with partner organizations for important discussions surrounding public safety. This includes expanded community conversation with marginalized communities, youth and the University.

ACTION ITEM

- A. CHPD should Engage CPAC, Justice in Action, and community partners in regular conversations between police and various communities.

8. Continue making changes to Public Safety Policies

- We recommend to the Council that it, with the active advice of the citizens, work with Chief of Police and Citizens Police Advisory Committee, to determine methods and timeline for “downsizing” the armed, uniformed portion of the police force and determine how to provide services that do not require armed police to be provided by other government employees or private agency employees. These functions may include parking enforcement, traffic enforcement, traffic accident response and investigation, routine patrols of downtown and neighborhoods, routine school security presence, responding to family crises that do not involve the threat of immediate violence, responding to substance abuse or mental health crises that do not involve the threat of immediate violence, responding to people who are homeless and other functions as determined by the Council and the Chief.
- We recommend to the Council that it, with the active advice of citizens, work with the Chief of Police and Citizens Advisory Committee review existing police department policies to ensure that current policies surrounding use of force are in line with best practice recommendations that seek to eliminate disparate application of force to minority populations.

9. Mental Health

- We recommend that the Town, in cooperation with other Orange County municipalities and the University, create a 24-hour Mental Health Crisis Intervention Center that could be used as a diversion or deflection resource by law enforcement and members of the community.
- We further recommend additional investments be made to provide additional mental health awareness and education and related crisis response, to include Rape Crisis Center, Compass Center, and Club Nova for the Chapel Hill Police Department and residents.

ACTION ITEMS

- A. Town Council should allocate funding for Crisis Intervention Training for all law enforcement officers.
- B. All Police recruits, sworn officers, and other emergency personnel should receive enhanced Crisis Intervention Training. In this effort, CHPD should seek out or develop a police training model that prioritizes problem-solving, crisis intervention, mediation and basic mental health triage as its core competencies.

10. Expand the Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection Program (SOHRAD)

- We recommend to the Council that programs connecting people experiencing homelessness in our community with housing and services be expanded. We believe that programs using peer support and clinical staff in a relationship-based model to provide ongoing engagement and case management for people living unsheltered.

ACTION ITEM

- A. Town Council should consider the use of ARPA funding, or other available funds, to expand SOHRAD by creating a 4th position.

11. Prevent Addiction and Support Recovery

- Drug and alcohol use, for people who become addicted and are unable to maintain sobriety, unable to maintain a job, unable to raise children, and/or financially unable to support their level of drug or alcohol use, are also major drivers of criminal activity. However, the criminalization of drug possession and use and the enforcement of our alcohol and drug laws has often caused more misery and contributed to a less safe community.

We recommend that the council, in cooperation with other government and private organizations, fund and otherwise encourage affordable inpatient and outpatient treatment for any Chapel Hill residents in need of treatment. Drug and alcohol use should be treated primarily as a public health and not criminal law problem.

We further recommend that the council, in cooperation with other organizations, urge the decriminalization of drug possession and use by adults. In the meantime, we recommend that the council instruct the CHPD to deprioritize the use of the criminal law to deal with currently illegal drug use and possession and, whenever possible, to refer persons using or possessing currently illegal drugs for evaluation to see if drug treatment is appropriate. People who commit other crimes, such as DWI, which create a significant danger to other people, should continue to be prosecuted in our court system, but any sanctions should include drug treatment. Persons who are unable to care for their children because of drug use should not be charged criminally, unless the children have been actually harmed, but should be referred to appropriate services so that they can reacquire the ability to care for their children. Persons who commit relatively minor offenses, such as misdemeanor larceny, where it is apparent that drug or alcohol use is the underlying problem, should have any criminal charges deferred and the person should be referred for evaluation and drug treatment if appropriate.

12. Develop Partnerships

- We recommend that the Town take action to foster collaboration Forster across community providers to address issues such as homelessness, hunger and addiction to ensure resources are coordinated and reach widest possible number of people.

13. 24 hour non-police crisis response team

- We recommend that a non-police crisis intervention team be established to provide an alternative crisis response option when indicated. Establish employee/response team to respond to mental health crises.

ACTION ITEM

- A. Town Council should allocate funds to, in conjunction with the County and other Orange County stakeholders, fully fund a 24-hour non-police crisis response unit, with teams consisting of paramedics and mental health clinicians.

14. DEI Training and support of new DEI role

- We recommend that the Town continue to provide robust Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training for all employees and that the Town provide additional resources/staff to support the recently hired DEI Officer.

CRISIS

1. Expand the crisis response team within the Chapel Hill Police Department.

We recommend that the size of the team should be expanded and the team should be trained and prepared to respond to a wider range of situations, sometimes independently of armed police officers.

ACTION ITEMS

- A. Town Council should allocate funding to expand the Crisis Unit as necessary to be able to operate 24/7
- B. CHPD should modify its operations to make the Crisis Unit a corresponding unit, going out on calls with uniformed officers immediately rather than waiting to be called by responding officers.

2. Establish program outside the criminal justice system to deal with youth involved with alcohol and other drugs.

Substance abuse by youth is especially problematic and must be approached as a public health problem and not merely a discipline or criminal problem. We recommend that this be a Town, County, or private program partnering with the Town and the County. UNC and the public schools may be other possible partners.

3. Restructure 9-1-1.

We recommend either retrain 9-1-1 operators to triage calls or have a separate non-police crisis number for people to call who are experiencing mental health, alcohol, drug, family or other crises not requiring an armed police response.

ACTION ITEM

- A. Emergency Call Center/9-1-1 Operators should be trained to identify community needs that may be handled by non-law enforcement personnel and to redirect callers to the appropriate service provider.

4. Diversion and deflection

We recommend that minor, non-traffic violations of the law should generally be diverted or deflected from the criminal justice system. If a warning is appropriate, then the violation should be resolved with a warning. If the violation suggests the need for counselling or other assistance, then the person should be referred to appropriate agencies. Citations should only be issued if a warning is not appropriate and the violator is not amenable to diversion or deflection. Persons should not be arrested for minor violations of the law unless absolutely necessary. We

recommend that the Town encourage the court system to continue and expand any court system diversion programs.

ACTION ITEMS:

- A. CHPD should have a concrete diversion policy to deflect drug charges from the criminal system.
- B. CHPD should have a diversion policy to deflect non-safety traffic violations, such as headlamp violations, other equipment issues, and license and registration violations.
- C. CHPD should expand existing diversion policies to include non-first time offenders in eligibility standards.
- D. CHPD should be required to provide justification for why any eligible individual is not diverted.
- E. CHPD should be required to include diversion data in its data reporting, including numbers, demographic data on who is and is not being diverted.

5. Expand 24-hour crisis response

We recommend that the Town, on its own or in partnership with county or private agencies, should be prepared to respond to homelessness, hunger, mental health, and other crises 24 hours a day. The new county sponsored SOHRAD program is an excellent example of the kind of program that could be expanded to provide this kind of service without involving the police.

6. Reduce armed police response.

We recommend that armed police only be sent to emergencies where they are the most appropriate responder or where, if time is of the essence, they are the quickest responder. In many situations currently handled by the police, the expanded services described above would be the preferred responder. This would allow the police to concentrate on what they are best trained and equipped to do and should allow the town, as these alternative programs are developed and expanded, to determine methods and a timeline for reducing the size of the armed, uniformed part of the police force. Other services that might be handled by someone other than armed police might include parking enforcement, traffic enforcement, traffic accident response and investigation, routine patrols of downtown and neighborhoods and other services as determined by the council, in consultation with the citizens, town manager and chief of police.

ACTION ITEMS

- A. Town Council and CHPD should conduct a risk assessment of police activities to determine the need for and effectiveness of having all officers carry firearms at all times.
- B. Town Council and CHPD should develop a policy for when officers can and should respond in an unarmed manner within 12 months of the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force report being submitted.

7. Be prepared to respond to explosive Issues.

Chapel Hill is generally a low violent crime town. In addition, the Chapel Hill police rarely use violence. However, the violence we read about and sometimes see on television or the internet, along with the occasional violent incidents in Chapel Hill, have an effect on our local residents.

The photos of the CHPD pointing weapons at people occupying the old Yates Motor Building were disturbing. The occasionally aggressive response by police from several neighboring jurisdictions brought to the UNC campus to respond to “Silent Sam” protests resulted in significant anti-police feeling among some students and others. The murder of the young Muslim students several years ago shocked the entire community but was especially painful and fear-provoking for Muslims. We know from our listening sessions that some Black and Brown people in Chapel Hill feel “over policed and under protected.” In addition, many people of Asian descent feel fearful in light of anti-Asian/Pacific Islander violence around the country. Immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, are fearful of the police and reluctant to be involved with the police even when victimized by crime. We recommend that the Town constantly engage with and reassure all these communities that their safety and well-being is important and be prepared for extra communication and assistance in cases of local or national events.

POST-CRISIS

1. Support persons formerly involved in the criminal justice system.

We recommend that the Town, in partnership with other public and private agencies, support judicial expungement of prior arrests and convictions, assist with reinstatement of driver’s licenses and support programs to aid persons returning to our community from incarceration. We recommend that the Town continue to support programs to assist people with debt from court fines and fees. The Town should not have policies regarding housing or other services that discriminate against persons with prior convictions.

ACTION ITEMS

- A. Town Council should use funding to incentivize second chance employment and ban the box employment for private businesses, to create more job opportunities for individuals with criminal records.
- B. Town Council should look into creating a master leasing program, where the town is the leaseholder for residencies, to increase access to housing for individuals with criminal records.

2. Expand reach of SOHRAD

See CRISIS #5 above.

3. Expand police diversion and deflection practices.

See CRISIS #4 above. Diversion from the criminal justice system must also mean diversion to more appropriate treatment and service programs. When the Police or the Crisis Unit decide that court involvement is not appropriate, we recommend that the Town, perhaps in partnership with the County and private agencies, insure effective wrap-around services for post-crisis treatment and services.

ACTION ITEM

- A. Town Council should commit funding toward a Mental Health Crisis Facility, in conjunction with the County and other stakeholders, to provide a resource for people diverted away from the criminal system or in need of additional crisis support.

4. Expand support programs for people recovering from crisis

We recommend that the Town encourage, fund, and provide support services for people attempting to recover from homelessness, substance use, mental illness, job loss and other crises. Emergency housing, job training, financial support, appropriate counselling and other support should be in place. Someone from the Town or supported by the Town whose job is to help guide folks to existing programs would be enormously helpful.

5. Review response to explosive issues.

See Crisis #7 above. We recommend that the Town, relevant Town staff and residents work together to review and evaluate past responses to explosive issues in order to improve our response to the next situation.

6. Expand transformative and restorative justice programs.

We recommend that existing transformative and restorative justice programs be further supported, publicized, and expanded, including those of the court system, Orange County, and the Chapel Hill Police Department.

Reimagining Community Safety Task Force: Action Items

Stage	Task Force Concern	Action Items
Prevention	Affordable Housing Opportunities	1. Town Council should use funds to incentivize private landlords to “ban the box,” allowing tenants with criminal records to rent. 2. Town Council should create a policy removing criminal records as a barrier to public housing.
Prevention	Data Analysis to inform strategies	1. Town Council should allocate funding to allow CHPD to consult with outside experts on data sets to report on and frequency of reporting. 2. CHPD should provide Town Council with a report on policing data every six months. Report must be publicized to the local community and CPAC must be allowed to respond. 3. An annual independent audit should be conducted to: review implementation of the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force recommendations and action items; test the efficacy of actions taken in response to the recommendations, and support continuous improvements to public safety resulting from the recommendations.
Prevention	Decriminalize Poverty	1. Town Council, in conjunction with CHPD and other criminal justice stakeholders, should identify a list of town ordinances that tend to target vulnerable communities and can be decriminalized (ie noise violations, open container, public urination, and panhandling). 2. CHPD should conduct community conversations on when to call the police, with the goal of reducing calls that criminalize poor or marginalized individuals. 3. Continue to enhance training for Police on racial equity.
Prevention	Expand Community Police Conversations	1. CHPD should Engage CPAC, Justice in Action, and community partners in regular conversations between police and various communities.
Prevention	Mental Health	1. Town Council should allocate funding for Crisis Intervention Training for all law enforcement officers. 2. All Police recruits, sworn officers, and other emergency personnel should receive enhanced Crisis Intervention Training. In this effort, CHPD should seek out or develop a police training model that prioritizes problem-solving, crisis intervention, mediation and basic mental health triage as its core competencies.
Prevention	Expand SOHRAD	1. Town Council should consider the use of ARPA funding, or other available funds, to expand SOHRAD by creating a 4th position.
Prevention	24-hour non-police crisis response team	1. Town Council should allocate funds to, in conjunction with the County and other Orange County stakeholders, fully fund a 24-hour non-police crisis response unit, with teams consisting of paramedics and mental health clinicians.

Crisis	Expand CHPD Crisis Unit	1. Town Council should allocate funding to expand the Crisis Unit as necessary to be able to operate 24/7 2. CHPD should modify its operations to make the Crisis Unit a corresponding unit, going out on calls with uniformed officers immediately rather than waiting to be called by responding officers.
Crisis	Restructure 9-1-1	1. Emergency Call Center/9-1-1 Operators should be trained to identify community needs that may be handled by non-law enforcement personnel and to redirect callers to the appropriate service provider.
Crisis	Diversion and Deflection	1. CHPD should have a concrete diversion policy to deflect drug charges from the criminal system. 2. CHPD should have a diversion policy to deflect non-safety traffic violations, such as headlamp violations, other equipment issues, and license and registration violations. 3. CHPD should expand existing diversion policies to include non-first time offenders in eligibility standards. 4. CHPD should be required to provide justification for why any eligible individual is not diverted. 5. CHPD should be required to include diversion data in its data reporting, including numbers, demographic data on who is and is not being diverted.
Crisis	Reduce Armed Police Response	1. Town Council and CHPD should conduct a risk assessment of police activities to determine the need for and effectiveness of having all officers carry firearms at all times. 2. Town Council and CHPD should develop a policy for when officers can and should respond in an unarmed manner within 12 months of the Reimagining Community Safety Task Force report being submitted.
Post-Crisis	Support persons formerly involved in the criminal justice system.	1. Town Council should use funding to incentivize second chance employment and ban the box employment for private businesses, to create more job opportunities for individuals with criminal records. 2. Town Council should look into creating a master leasing program, where the town is the leaseholder for residencies, to increase access to housing for individuals with criminal records.
Post-Crisis	Expand police diversion and deflection practices.	1. Town Council should commit funding toward a Mental Health Crisis Facility, in conjunction with the County and other stakeholders, to provide a resource for people diverted away from the criminal system or in need of additional crisis support.

To the Mayor, Council, Manager and fellow citizens:

We are honored to have served on the Chapel Hill Reimagining Community Safety Task Force. It has been a stimulating and daunting task. In many ways, we feel like we are just beginning to scratch the surface of our understanding of community safety. Thus, we submit our report to the Council with the hope and understanding that it is the beginning of much more study, discussion, and change.

As Council recognized in its Charge to the Task Force, reimagining community safety is not something that can be accomplished in a few months or even a few years, no matter how motivated the actors. It is urgent to start action now, but there will need to be sustained effort from now on. We hope that these recommendations and Council's follow-through will set Chapel Hill on a path toward greater community justice, more community happiness and thus, greater community safety.

We are convinced that many of the best ways to make Chapel Hill safer in the long run are only tangentially related to the police. Affordable housing, decent jobs for all who are able to work, equitable public education, and access to mental health and drug use treatment are the keys to a safer Chapel Hill.

In all our work, we must continue to grapple honestly and effectively with the still powerful effects of our nation's and Chapel Hill's long history of slavery, Jim Crow, exploitation and racism.

Many of the efforts the Task Force has recommended need to be regional. Carrboro, Orange County, the school systems, and UNC need to work together with the Town for our mutual benefit. Additionally, we have many private nonprofit agencies that are doing good work and should be brought in as partners for appropriate projects. The Task Force has identified several current public programs that deserve greater support. Many that are not mentioned are also making crucial contributions. We feel confident that as Council, staff and citizens continue the work of reimagining community safety, new ideas and programs will emerge and neglected existing ideas and programs will be revealed.

The members of the Task Force want to thank: all the citizens who took part in the listening sessions set up to help inform our work; Amplify, Inc., who facilitated the listening sessions and some of our Task Force Meetings; Chapel Hill staff who have assisted us in countless ways -- always with professionalism, patience, and good humor -- and many experts who gave us a very quick education about existing and planned public safety programs.

We stand ready to support the Town in any way we can as Council and staff determine how to go forward. We have made some suggestions as to how the Town can hold itself accountable in the hard, often painful work of change. We also recommend that Council use some existing standing committees -- the Community Policing Advisory Committee and the Justice in Action Committee -- to help with this process.

Thank you for the privilege of working on this project.

Sincerely,