

REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

Recommendations for a Public Safety System that Fosters Trust and Works for Everyone



In February 2021, in the wake of civil unrest and a community call for social justice, the Olympia City Council responded with a community-led process to reimagine the City of Olympia's public safety system.

A Community Work Group of eight community members, representing a cross-section of demographics, expertise, and experiences, led an 18-month effort to understand how Olympia community members experience public safety. Their role in leading this process was to learn about Olympia's public safety system; deeply listen to community members' experiences, concerns, hopes and dreams; and coalesce what they heard into a recommendation for the City Council.

To hear from the community, the Community Work Group hosted extensive public engagement opportunities, made shifts to their approach and timeframe, and worked to remove barriers to community member participation by seeking ways to make sharing their experiences more comfortable. To center equity in their work, the Community Work Groups applied the following intentions throughout this process:

- Focus on long-term, systems change
- Approach safety holistically and through the lens of the human experience

The Reimagining Public Safety process had a scope that included the entire range of public safety-related departments and programs:

Olympia Police Department, the Crisis Response Unit (CRU), Familiar Faces (peer navigators), Olympia Fire Department, Olympia Municipal Court, Olympia Community Court, Public Defense and the City Prosecutor's Office.

- Move people towards wellness
- Acknowledge and address harm
- Assume those closest to the problem are closest to the solutions
- Reduce barriers and improve system accessibility

These efforts capture the collective voice of our community.

The Olympia City Council formally accepted the Community Work Group's recommendations on December 6, 2022.

The final recommendations include four guiding principles, five goals, 21 strategies and numerous actions. This work is the challenge we must accept to realize a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone.





Four Guiding Principles

Any decisions we make or actions we take...

1. Will not perpetuate or cause additional physical, psychological or economic harm to any member of the community;
2. Will be pro-equity and anti-racist in nature;
3. Will be based on meaningful collaboration and authentic engagement among everyone in the community; and
4. Will be based on the best available information and process will be measured and regularly reported to the community.
5. (Note: Please reference the full Reimagining Public Safety report for the individual actions that will help Olympia move towards the following goals.)

Goal 1: Build trust and legitimacy in the City's public safety system

- Center the City's public safety system on moving people towards wellness
- Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system
- Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies
- Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values
- Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia

Goal 2: Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes

- Develop and expand resources to address root causes of individuals engaging with the public safety system
- Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals

Goal 3: Acknowledge and correct the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members

- Work towards healing the community from harm created by the public safety system
- Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups
- Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services
- Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training
- Examine when and how to eliminate or significantly reduce fines and fees that are inequitable and have a disproportionate impact on low-income and marginalized



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Goal 4: Reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system

- Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders
- Develop and expand pre-arrest and pre-booking diversion programs
- Offer restorative practices and transformative justice options
- Expand the availability and use of therapeutic courts training

Goal 5: Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive

- Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive
- Evaluate public safety system staffing levels
- Improve the responsiveness of emergency services
- Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners

Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe



CONTINUING FORWARD



Fostering belonging and connection with community members who have been historically unengaged in City processes and decision-making



Identifying the Olympia Police Department's strategic priorities for the next five years



Exploring enhancements to community involvement and oversight of the Olympia Police Department



Evaluating Police Department staffing and resources to continue to strive to meet community needs, expectations, and priorities.

What Success Looks Like

Olympians will recognize that they have been heard as these recommendations are implemented across processes that reach deep into our organization: in strategic planning, annual budgeting, department and program work plans, policy changes, updates in operations, expansion of community partnerships, grants and pilot projects.

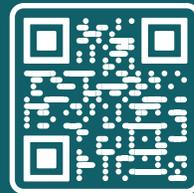
City Public Safety leaders will monitor and regularly report to the City Council and community our progress. In 2023, such efforts include: enhancing Olympia's approach to the community oversight of law enforcement, deploying police vehicle cameras, improving collection and reporting of data, and enhancing ways to strengthen community connections.

Olympia's public safety system has for years prided itself on its work to be transparent, forward leaning and responsive to our community's values, and we will continue to strive to serve our community in the ways expressed through *Reimagining*, with a goal of a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone.

To review the full plan, visit <https://qrco.de/OlyRSP>



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