



REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

Recommendations for a System that
Fosters Trust and Works for Everyone



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Letter from the City Manager

Three years ago, in the midst of a global pandemic, as the nation was shaken by the 2020 murder of George Floyd and was rising to the urgency of social justice, the Olympia City Council turned its attention to the issue of public safety, forming City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Public Safety. In February 2021, the Council approved a community-led process to reimagine public safety for the City, with a goal of ensuring that our public safety system fosters trust and works for everyone.

We are fortunate in Olympia. Our community is smart, highly engaged and cares deeply about doing right. So, in July 2021, the City turned to our community, launching an inclusive, community-led process to evaluate and arrive at recommendations for enhancing our public-safety system. We called it Reimagining Public Safety.

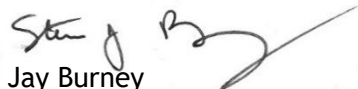
The Work Group, the community members who stepped up to this process, brought differing perspectives and experiences that were representative of our community's diversity of experiences and demographics. The Work Group included members with:

- Lived experience and having been impacted by family members with lived experience;
- Professional and non-professional experience within the public safety system and related areas like substance abuse, job training and affordable housing;
- Strong connections to the Olympia community -- as a resident, owning a business here, having grown up here, work or volunteer in this community; and
- Personal and professional connections to youth and the youth experience in Olympia.

After a challenging and emotional process of approximately 18 months, more than 70 hours of meetings, listening sessions, reviewing materials, shadowing staff and collaborating with one another, the Work Group delivered their recommendations to the City Council.

During a City Council work session, the Work Group members had an opportunity to speak to what was important to them, their experience leading this process, their vision for the public safety in Olympia, what they learned from the community and each other and what they felt were the communities' most significant priorities for implementation.

With this report, we offer the result of the Work Group's efforts back to the community. The work group planted the seeds, it is our responsibility to nurture and help them grow. The City of Olympia is committed to the effort of bringing these recommendations into fruition and moving our system always closer to one that embodies our vision: a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone.



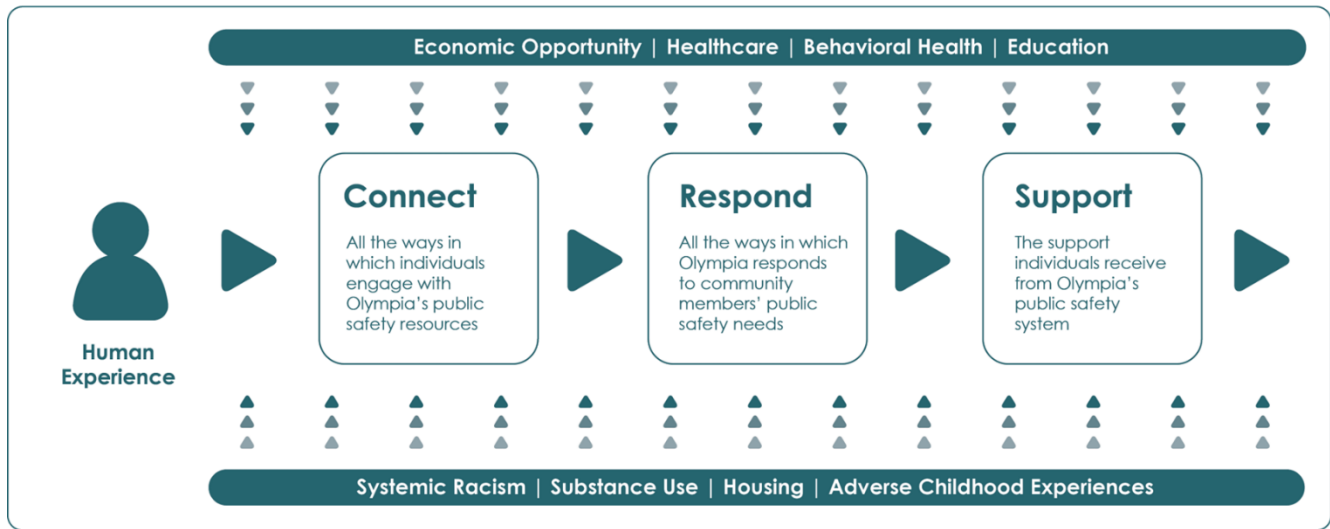
Jay Burney
Olympia City Manager



Overview

In February 2021, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and a call for social justice from the community, the Olympia City Council approved the use of a community-led process to reimagine the City's public safety system. As shared by City Manager Jay Burney, the goal of the process was to ensure everyone who engages with the City's public safety system can trust that it is just, equitable and without bias.

A Community Work Group of eight community members, representing a cross-section of Olympia's demographics, expertise and experiences, led an 18-month effort to listen, hear and understand how Olympia community members experience public safety. Specifically, this group sought to learn about the experiences and stories of community members, how people connected to the public safety system, how the system responded to community members' needs and how individuals were supported as they navigated through and out of the system.



Public safety is complex, and significantly influenced by other factors, such as educational opportunity, access to high quality healthcare and economic opportunity. While acknowledging those critical influences, this process sought to focus on the City's public safety system, including policing, prosecution, public defense, municipal court, corrections, fire and medical response, homeless response, code enforcement, park rangers and those who keep public spaces clean.

The Reimagining Public Safety Community Work Group's role in leading this process was to learn about Olympia's public safety system, deeply listen to community members about their lived experiences, concerns, hopes and dreams, and coalesce what they heard into a recommendation for the City Council.

To hear from the community, the Work Group hosted extensive public engagement opportunities, including eight internal City staff listening-and-learning sessions (including an online survey for public safety staff), six general external listening-and-learning sessions, a public-facing survey, and ten different focus groups. The Work Group and City staff worked closely with community partners to make

shifts to their approach and timeframe, and to remove barriers to community members participating and feeling comfortable speaking to their experiences.

The recommendations reflect what the Work Group heard from the community, what they learned from staff and what they learned from one another's own lived experiences. Some actions point to bolstering or expanding existing programs and services, and others will take time to fully implement. There is not an assumption all recommendations will be implemented overnight, and City Council, staff and partner agencies may need to pursue further study, prioritization and funding.

On December 6, 2022, the Olympia City Council formally accepted the Work Group's recommendations. The final recommendations include four guiding principles, five goals, 21 strategies and numerous actions.



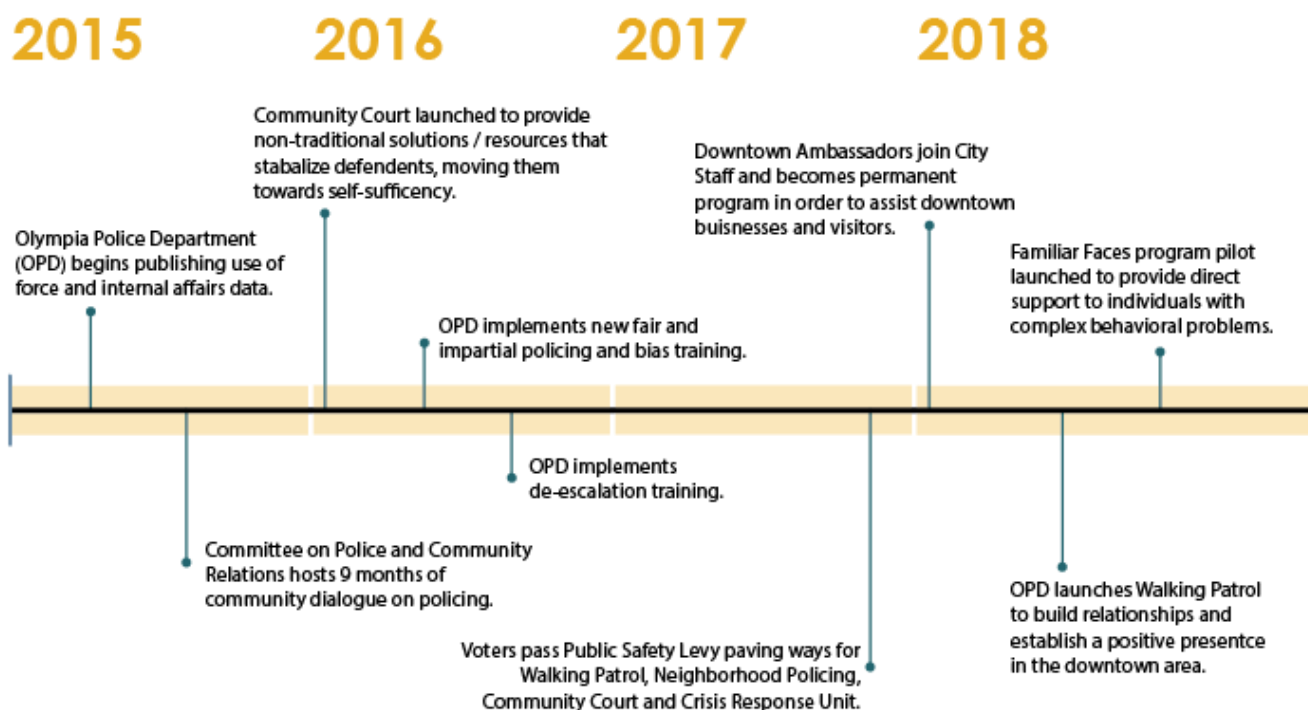
Context

The Reimagining Public Safety effort considered the entire range of public safety related departments and programs to maximize the collective impact of this work and ensure that the reimagining process can move us toward a community where all people can feel safe and flourish. The effort was inclusive and innovative in its conceptualization of the public safety system.

The mission of the **Olympia Police Department (OPD)** is to consistently earn the trust of the residents and visitors in the community. To fulfill this mission, OPD emphasizes fair and equitable outcomes for individuals and the community as a whole. To do this, the OPD conducts patrols and investigations, initiates community engagement, provides crisis services, and works with community partners, courts, prosecution and corrections. The OPD bolsters its responsiveness by fostering community conversations and undergoing contemporary training. It has also implemented nationally recognized programs that have put it at the forefront of alternative crisis response.

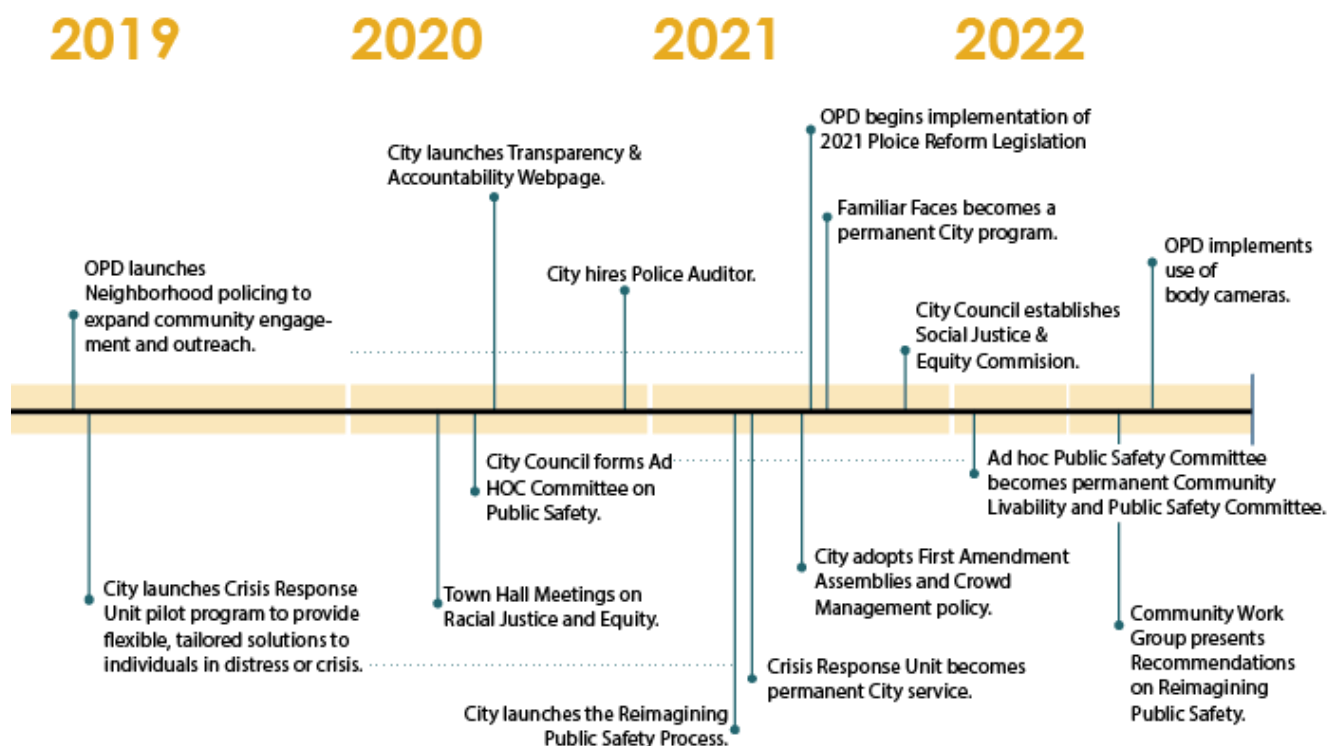
Through its outreach services, including the **Crisis Response Unit (CRU)** and **Familiar Faces**, the OPD can tailor its responses to people in crisis, enabling it to provide assistance that fits each situation. As a result, the OPD can maximize the effectiveness of its resources and provide individuals with more of the help they need. Modeled after the CAHOOTS Program from Eugene, Oregon, Olympia's CRU sends civilian responders, instead of police officers, to respond to individuals facing mental-health and substance-abuse crises. CRU has placed great emphasis on becoming a resource people feel comfortable reaching to for help.

The City's Evolving Response



Familiar Faces serves as a way to meet Olympia's increasingly complex needs for crisis response and public safety. The program specifically addresses individuals who need extra attention but feel more comfortable working with peer navigators than interacting with traditional law enforcement. Perhaps the biggest contributing factor to the trust built between peer navigators and the individuals they assist comes from shared life experiences. Having personally faced similar lived experiences, the peer navigators within OPD's Familiar Faces program can relate directly to the circumstances of their clients, allowing them to build the kinds of relationships needed to provide impactful assistance.

The **Olympia Fire Department (OFD)** plays a key role in public safety by responding rapidly to emergencies and reducing risk through prevention, fire and medical education, and disaster preparedness. To expand on and enhance its services, the OFD has moved to support individuals with low-acuity psychiatric or behavioral issues through social work in **OFD CARES** (Community Assistance Referral Education Services). These services help give the OFD the flexibility to respond to various crises in more specialized, efficient and effective ways. They also divert cases that would have otherwise been unnecessarily transported to hospitals, connecting them instead with the social support they require.



With its mission of providing objective, accessible, and timely resolution of all cases appropriately coming before it, protecting the rights of all individuals, and ensuring the dignified and fair treatment of all parties, the **Olympia Municipal Court** works to end the cycle of criminal activity. Public trust and confidence in the court are of paramount concern. To foster them, the court facilitates a fair and impartial process geared toward speedy resolution of cases. In addition to these commitments, the court seeks to provide individuals with resources and possibly alternatives to jail or fines. Coordinating these efforts with **probation programs** like probation supervision, community service, the Safe and Sober Driving Program, a 24-hour alternative DUI program, electronic home monitoring, Day Jail, Work Crew, moral reconnection therapy and the Community Court's criminal court assessment tool helps match individuals with options that give them the support they need. Such considerations can make the difference in helping individuals avoid criminal activity in the future.

The **Olympia Community Court** takes a non-traditional approach that employs practical, targeted solutions instead of traditional punishment. Working together with community partners who specialize in housing services, education, employment, chemical dependency, health care, licensing, mental-health services and veterans services, the program offers individuals a hand up. Personnel emphasize the importance of identifying what immediate social-service resources a person needs and making available options that meet those needs and help the person become self-sufficient.

Taking an approach tailored toward minimizing re-offenses, the **City Prosecutor's Office** meticulously evaluates cases. One objective of this work is to ensure cases are addressed in a timely manner. Another objective is to determine which cases should be declined because they (1) serve no public purpose, (2) are against the purpose of the law or (3) would result in a decreased respect for the law. A third objective is to identify cases that might need to be diverted to another court. Once a case goes to trial, the Prosecutor's Office pursues a fair and just resolution for victims and defendants. Along with the work evaluating and prosecuting cases, the Prosecutor's Office provides services to victims of crime and advocates to protect victims' rights in criminal cases. Meanwhile, the City of Olympia maintains a set of attorneys who provide services as **public defenders**. These attorneys are contractors who work out of their own offices. They advocate for the best outcomes based on defendants' individual situations and seek to connect them with any social services they need. Additionally, the public defenders uphold standards for indigent defense services. Two elements that distinguish Olympia's program from those in many other places are the public defense coordinator and the social-services worker for public defense that are on staff. These staff members help enhance the support defendants receive.

Olympia's **corrections program** focuses on connecting offenders with services that help keep them from re-offending and that give them the best opportunity for a successful return to the community. To do this, corrections staff work with police, courts, the defense, probation, alternative programs and community partners. For example, peer navigators provide support that helps offenders upon their release. Corrections has also made changes to its booking philosophy that are designed to address the needs and circumstances of each offender. These considerations can make a substantial difference in the long-term outcomes of the corrections work.

Public safety contains many different components. However, the process for Reimagining Public Safety prioritized a comprehensive approach aimed at incorporating each department and program in ways that fully account for the needs of the community and allow for the best, most precise response to each situation.

The Community Work Group

In early 2021, the City of Olympia sought nominations for a nine-member Community Work Group that would lead this community-driven process. Integral to the success of this approach was identifying community members dedicated to learning about the public safety system, deeply listening to the communities' lived experiences, and collaborating with staff and one another to develop recommendations that reflect what they heard and learned.

Nominations were received via interviews with key community stakeholders, City staff who work in the public safety system, community partner organizations, community members and City Councilmembers. As a result, ten community members were initially identified to be part of the Work Group, with two members needing to leave the process mid-way due to other obligations.

Reimagining Public Safety Community Work Group Members



Chris Belton



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The Community Work Group put in the time to learn about the public safety system, and how community members experience Olympia's public safety system in terms of how people connect with the system, how our system responds to the needs of community members, and how our system supports those who are navigating through out and into the community. Each Work Group member spent more than 66 hours attending meetings, plus additional time at listening sessions, reviewing process materials, pursuing additional education and shadowing public safety staff.

To hear from the community, the Work Group hosted extensive public engagement opportunities, made shifts to their approach and timeframe, and worked to remove barriers to community members participating and feeling comfortable speaking to their experiences. The Community Work Group's outreach and engagement over the past year has included:

- Interviews with individual stakeholders
- City Council work sessions
- A survey and eight listening sessions with public safety staff
- A communitywide survey on *Engage Olympia*
- Seven community listening sessions
- Ten smaller focus groups; and
- Feedback from the public on the proposed recommendations before proceeding to City Council.

Through that outreach and engagement, the Work Group's efforts have centered equity in the final recommendation through the following ways:

- Focus on long-term, systems change
- Approach safety holistically and through the lens of the human experience
- Move people towards wellness
- Acknowledge and address harm
- Assumes those closest to the problem are closest to the solutions
- Reduce barriers and improve system accessibility

The recommendations will be implemented in a variety of ways, including incorporation into strategic planning efforts, the City's annual budget process, department and program work plans, policy changes, updates to operations, expansion of community partnerships, grants and pilot projects.



“The work of this group has been comprehensive and heartfelt. Thank you for creating safe spaces for difficult conversation. Thank you for being courageous and bringing your knowledge, expertise and care for others to this process. Your commitment is deeply appreciated.”

~Cheryl Selby
Olympia Mayor, 2016-2023

The recommendations: Four guiding principles

The reimagining public safety work group recommended, and Olympia city council adopted, four guiding principles for the Reimagining Public Safety's goals, strategies and actions.

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 progress will be measured and regularly reported to the community.



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

Strategy 1.1 Center the City's public safety system on moving people towards wellness

Actions

- Clearly define the components of the public safety system and what community members need to feel safe (health, emergency response, policing, housing, courts, etc.).
- Establish a vision, mission and values for the City public safety system that reflect our community.
- More clearly identify the City's role in relationship to community organizations and non-profits, and regional partners.
- Establish a culture that eliminates bureaucracy and centers the needs of real people in the development and implementation of processes and services.
- Balance compassion and accountability; hold individuals responsible and accountable in a safe, relational and equitable way when laws are violated to influence behavior and assist individuals in moving towards wellness.

Strategy 1.2 Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system

Actions

- Public safety staff regularly meet with and listen to community members to understand and be responsive to their needs; invest in more collaboration on identifying public safety challenges and solutions.
- Establish a civilian/community member oversight model for the entire public safety system that meets the needs of the community.
- Evaluate how to engage the community in developing and/or reviewing public safety policy. Regularly share, review and learn from data with the community.
- Gather with community members for visioning opportunities, ways to think outside-the-box, and identify impactful and systemic changes.

Strategy 1.3 Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies

Actions

- Track and report on data for race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, economic status, sexual orientation, age and disability status to better understand disparities and areas of concern.
- Include Hispanic/Latino as a race, rather than a separate category for ethnicity.
- Gender data will be trans-inclusive in accordance with the City's resolution protecting transgender and non-binary people.
- Collect data with sensitivity to the power dynamics involved in who's asking, and always include an option not to disclose.
- Data should be disaggregated and analyzed along multiple lines of identity intersections.
- Collect data on individuals included in Community Court and other diversion programs, including numbers and demographic data on who is and is not being diverted.
- Enhance the ability to report and collect data on hate crimes and other associated statistics and develop proactive strategies to address hate crimes.
- Collect data on racial profiling.
- Regularly validate data through independent analysis and share those results with the community.
- Share regular data reports and/or dashboards with the community.
- Establish success metrics for all public safety system programs and use data to increase efficiencies and effectiveness in all parts of the system.
- Proactively seek out new ways to collect data, including enhancing data collection and sharing with Thurston County and the State of Washington.

Strategy 1.4 Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values

Actions

- Develop a comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative recruitment strategy to diversify the City's public safety system staff to be more representative of community demographics.
- Recruit and hire more multilingual staff.
- Hire, retain and promote staff that are in alignment with the culture and values of our city; demote and remove staff that are not in alignment.
- Develop a comprehensive, trauma-informed, trauma-responsive and holistic approach to ensure public safety system staff safety, health and wellness.
- Explore more ways to help ensure public safety staff feel safe and supported when they are on- and off-duty.
- Look at offering early retirement or other transition opportunities in response to the toll that strenuous conditions, burnout, and stigma can have on staff members.
- Create a culture in which public safety staff challenge themselves to always be a curious, innovative, and a learning organization.

Strategy 1.5 Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia

Actions

- Ensure the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely, and accessible access to City public safety information.
- Host meetings and share information in spaces where people already gather; use community partner networks and connections to share and gather information more effectively.
- Ensure cultural humility and fairness in official statements, publications and web content.
- Establish and regularly report on clear metrics of success for all public safety programs and services.
- Ensure easy and regular access to crime statistics.
- Provide more education to the community on what the municipal public safety system can do with regards to enforcement, investigation, prosecution and sentencing.
- Regularly acknowledge and share with the community the challenges associated with public safety; helping the community to understand the intersections amongst different parts of the system, mental health, economic disparity, substance use, etc. Regularly share the innovations, the progress made on addressing issues, and achievements of the staff, programs, and departments within the City's public safety system.
- Close the loop whenever the public is engaged - do a better job of letting them know how their input is used and draw clear connections to decisions, and changes in policies and programs.

Goal 2: Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes

Strategy 2.1 Develop and expand resources to address root causes of individuals engaging with the public safety system

Actions

- Promote the safety of the houseless community by expanding access to low-barrier transitional and temporary shelter and supportive housing options while reducing unlawful encampments.
- Lobby the state legislature for funding for a Mental Health Crisis Facility to provide a resource for people diverted away from the criminal system or in need of additional crisis support.
- Lobby the state legislature for funding to establish and operate long-term mental health care facilities to divert individuals away from the jail or hospital and reduce the likelihood of them being released back onto the street with little or no connection to care.
- Lobby for reforms to the mental health system to allow for people to be committed without consent when they are a danger to themselves or others.
- Coordinate across government and non-governmental programs to proactively address the substance use disorder and overdose crisis in way that moves people towards stabilization, recovery and wellness.
- Explore innovative policy around decriminalization of substances and safe supply to address the overdose crisis.
- Lobby the state legislature for funding for more substance use disorder treatment facilities with capacity to accept individuals immediately.

Strategy 2.2 Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals

Actions

- Remove systemic barriers to stabilization (ex. access to supportive housing, affordable housing, employment, etc.)
- Ensure the planning and resourcing for reentry is strongly aligned and in collaboration with existing local non-governmental organizations.
- Provide supportive living environments where individuals have peer support and can establish community.
- Prior to release, prioritize establishing permanent supportive housing for chronically houseless individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders.
- Invest in partner organizations that use peer case managers and peer navigators to support individuals and reduce recidivism.
- Invest in developing new opportunities for formerly justice-involved individuals to achieve stability through economic opportunity, including education, technical skills training and/or entry-level employment.
- Develops ways for community members that are incarcerated with the Department of Corrections and/or Thurston County to work with City-employed peer counselors to connect with reentry services and develop a comprehensive reentry plan well before reentering the community.

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

Strategy 3.1 Work towards healing the community from harm created by the public safety system

Actions

- Acknowledge the historical wrongs perpetrated by the public safety system.
- Acknowledge the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.
- Educate public safety staff in the disproportionate impacts the system has on marginalized community members.
- Engage with historically marginalized community members to co-create a comprehensive plan for how to repair relationships and work towards healing the community from harm and trauma associated with the public safety system.

Strategy 3.2 Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups

Actions

- Commit to regular meaningful engagement with a diversity of community groups throughout the year to intentionally learn about their cultures, interests, perceptions and concerns.
- Host and participate in community conversations, special events, gatherings, service projects or informal activities with community members.
- Provide resources to support and/or leverage existing informal gatherings and events as opportunities to make connections and build relationships.
- Collaborate on reporting hate crimes, sharing public safety data and identifying solutions.

Strategy 3.3 Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services

Actions

- Use data and community input to understand, communicate and educate about the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.
- Regularly audit all existing policies and procedures using a pro-equity and anti-racist lens.
- Use an equity framework to evaluate all new operational changes, policies and programs.
- Proactively and regularly engage with professional organizations that promote and educate about equitable and anti-racist public safety.
- Ensure that all people encountering the public safety system are treated with respect, including respecting chosen names, pronouns and gender identity.
- Ensure the system is fully accessible for all community members, including those with a disability, who are neurodivergent and/or have a language barrier.
- Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate translation services, outreach and education to ensure the community understands the public safety system and how to use its services.

Strategy 3.4 Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training

Actions

- Expand and improve on anti-racist and pro-equity training requirements and opportunities for all public safety system staff.
- Communicate the value of anti-racist and pro-equity training and connect that value back to the overall City and public safety system vision and values.
- Include inter-cultural development and an understanding of equity in staff evaluations, and professional growth and development plans (e.g., Intercultural Development Inventory).
- Intentionally create opportunities for staff to engage in formal and informal learning experiences (outreach, volunteering, recreational activities, etc.) with community members who are different from them.
- Ensure staff have ongoing safe and supportive spaces and resources for continued pro-equity and anti-racist learning, processing, and dialogue.
- Review existing training for inherent bias, reinforcing outdated practices and methods that are not in line with our city values.
- Emphasize de-escalation and non-violent methods for addressing conflict.

Strategy 3.5 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 groups

Actions

- Prioritize eliminating or significantly reducing fines and fees for individuals who are unable to pay.
- Join with other municipalities and/or a statewide system for waiving or resolving fees to help people become relicensed.
- Reform the bail process to address the lack of equity for individuals experiencing poverty.
- Improve coordination amongst departments and record-keeping to prevent onerous and inappropriate assignment of fees.
- Streamline the process to resolve fines and fees to prevent them from escalating and avoid an individual needing to navigate the court system.



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

Strategy 4.1 Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders

Actions

- Provide more training to emergency call center/911 operators on how to identify community needs that may be handled by non-law enforcement responders.
- Use technology solutions to provide for known alternative responders to be called when an individual is experiencing a mental health crisis; this can include case workers, family members, peer navigators, mental health professionals, etc.
- Provide education on what the Crisis Response Unit can and can't do when responding to a call.
- Ensure the public has a direct way to request the Crisis Response Unit.
- Explore co-response models that include embedding a social worker with first responders.

Strategy 4.2 Develop and expand pre-arrest and pre-booking diversion programs

Actions

- Prioritize diversion options first; wherever possible, don't exclude people because of their prior criminal history.
- Create more diversified options for diversion prior to an arrest.
- Build a more robust and available network of services to meet the needs of individuals that are being diverted.
- Ensure that required activities within diversion (e.g., domestic violence treatment) are available locally.
- Make diversion requirements available at low or no cost to participants.
- Expand partnerships with community-based non-profit organizations to create more opportunities to resolve cases before filing and after charges are filed.
- Regularly evaluate partners being used for diversion programs and ensure that they are not creating barriers to participants being able to use or succeed within their programs.
- Use the LEAD diversion model to provide intensive case management services in lieu of charging and booking individuals who have committed low level drug crime and "nuisance crimes," and have continual repeat contact with law enforcement due to their behavioral health issues and poverty.
- Develop a resource for mediation to respond to non-criminal activity or situations that do not require a mental health response.

Strategy 4.3 Offer restorative practices and transformative justice options

Actions

- Learn about and offer safe and equitable restorative justice practices where victims and offenders can choose to be involved in structured conversational processes where a victim can voice how they have been affected and the offender to take full responsibility and be present for the development of a restitution agreement.
- Access local and state resources to educate the community about restorative and transformative justice practices.

Strategy 4.4 Expand the availability and use of therapeutic courts

Actions

- Expand the availability and eligibility for Community Court.
- Establish additional evidence-based therapeutic courts, such as Substance Use Court, Mental Health Court and Veteran's Court as an intervention option that provides supervision, accountability and access to treatment services.



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

Strategy 5.1 Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive

Actions

- Proactively develop materials and tools that help community members understand better how to navigate the public safety system.
- Expand support available to victims of all crimes, including those without a suspect, to help them access the system, navigate the system and take the necessary steps to help remedy their situation.
- Ensure victims and defendants can get ready access to reports, filings and other documents they need to understand the status of and expedite their case (e.g., police reports).
- Invest in a municipal facility that supports crisis resolution, detox, medical respite for the houseless and support and space for diversion and therapeutic court options.
- Ensure that individuals in the jail have safe and equitable access to their public defenders, and support service providers.

Strategy 5.2 Evaluate public safety system staffing levels

Actions

- Evaluate current public safety system staffing levels in relationship to the growing community needs and expectations for moving individuals towards wellness, expanding the collection and use of data and enhancing call responsiveness.
- Ensure appropriate staffing to be responsive to community expectations for engagement, transparency and reporting, and communications.
- Review and implement policies for staffing levels that ensure manageable court caseloads in which individuals and cases can receive the time and attention needed, with an emphasis on parity between prosecution and public defense.
- Review and implement policies for staffing levels to ensure call responsiveness is appropriate to call volume and needs as established using data.

Strategy 5.3 Improve the responsiveness of emergency services

Actions

- Increase the coordination and training for 911 dispatchers to ensure the right response entity is dispatched to a call for service.
- Right-size the response to the situation; start with the lowest level of department and staffing response needed to assess and respond to the situation.
- Ensure that public safety system staff are responding to calls from community members, acknowledging requests and consistently following up with individuals.
- Expand and resource the types of services that can be provided by unarmed peer responders or an appropriate service provider to meet the level of need.
- Explore creation of a civilian investigation unit to respond to low-level property crimes and other situations in which people do not feel safe interacting with law enforcement.
- Establish clarity on what program and/or responders community members should contact for different public safety situations and needs; provide clear information and instructions for the community.
- Connect frequent and persistent users of the 911 system to long-term, holistic case management that can better address those individuals' behavioral and emotional health needs.

Strategy 5.4 Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners

Actions

- Organize the City's unarmed responders into a new "Community Safety Response" Department outside of the Police Department that would include, for example, Crisis Response Unit and Familiar Faces.
- Enhance ongoing coordination amongst the alternative and crisis response teams operating in the city, including both public and non-profit: Arrest and Jail Alternatives Program, Familiar Faces and Crisis Response Unit.
- Physically co-locate with community partners engaged in public safety response (e.g., Arrest and Jail Alternatives Program).
- Ensure that contracts with community organizations to provide public safety support include a living wage for employees.
- Strengthen regional cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies that may co-respond or work closely with Olympia to help ensure our community's innovative and community-driven approaches are recognized and utilized by others.
- Work closely with the local hospitals to identify more effective approaches to treating, holding and releasing individuals experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis.

Strategy 5.5 Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe

Actions

- Expand the Neighborhood Policing unit so that officers not dedicated to responding to 911 calls can spend more time developing relationships with community members and addressing emerging issues of concern.
- Continue to invest in debris removal and maintaining clean public spaces and rights-of-way.
- Proactively work with private owners, providing technical assistance, incentives, grants, etc., to increase property maintenance standards.
- Expand the staffing and hours for the Police Walking Patrol and/or other models to increase support for public safety in Downtown.
- Respond quickly and proactively to neighborhood concerns (ex. newly established encampments, illegal dumping, etc.)

Implementation

This is not a plan that will sit on a shelf, but instead will continue to inform the City's commitment to centering equity in public safety, fostering trust, building capacity to meet the expectations and needs of our community and move people towards wellness.

The Reimagining Public Safety recommendations will be implemented in a variety of ways, including incorporation into strategic planning efforts, the City's annual budget process, department and program work plans, policy changes, updates to operations, expansion of community partnerships, grants and pilot projects. This work will inform the City's Focus Areas of Public Safety and Community Livability.

Some of the recommended actions are already underway and others will take time. These recommendations were put forward knowing that the Olympia City Council, City staff and partner agencies will need to further study the efficacy, prioritize and identify funding to make this work possible.

The City uses, and is currently developing, measures of success to assess and guide implementation of these recommendations on an ongoing bases.

Further Acknowledgements

This process was made possible through the vision and guidance of the 2021* and 2022 Olympia City Council who provided funding, support to the Community Work Group and trust in the Olympia community. Thank you to Mayor Cheryl Selby, Mayor Pro Tem Clark Gilman, Councilmember Jim Cooper, Councilmember Yến Huỳnh, Councilmember Dani Madrone, Councilmember Lisa Parshley, Councilmember Dontae Payne and Councilmember *Renata Rollins.



