



# Meeting Agenda

## City Council

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501

Information: 360.753.8244

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Tuesday, December 6, 2022

5:30 PM

Council Chambers, Online and Via  
Phone

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### Study Session

Attend: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83340643327?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83340643327?pwd=bEtRcDBtY3NyQWNrQTRHckZEa3E3QT09)  
[pwd=bEtRcDBtY3NyQWNrQTRHckZEa3E3QT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83340643327?pwd=bEtRcDBtY3NyQWNrQTRHckZEa3E3QT09)

#### 1. ROLL CALL

#### 2. BUSINESS ITEM

- 2.A [22-1147](#) Receive and Discuss Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations from the Community Work Group

Attachments: [Project Overview](#)  
[Community Input Report](#)  
[Guiding Principles](#)  
[Recommendations](#)  
[Engage Olympia Site](#)

#### 3. ADJOURNMENT

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## City Council

### Receive and Discuss Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations from the Community Work Group

**Agenda Date:** 12/6/2022  
**Agenda Item Number:** 2.A  
**File Number:** 22-1147

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**Type:** study session **Version:** 1 **Status:** Study Session

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#### **Title**

Receive and Discuss Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations from the Community Work Group

#### **Recommended Action**

##### **Committee Recommendation:**

The Community Livability and Public Safety Committee recommends receiving and discussing the Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations from the Community Work Group.

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Receive and discuss the Community Work Group recommendations for Reimagining Public Safety.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to receive and discuss the Community Work Group recommendations for Reimagining Public Safety.

##### **Staff Contact:**

Stacey Ray, Strategic Planning and Performance Manager, Office of Performance and Innovation,  
360.753.8046

##### **Presenter(s):**

Stacey Ray, Strategic Planning and Performance Manager  
Chris Belton, Community Work Group Member  
Christina Daniels, Community Work Group Member  
Larry Jefferson, Community Work Group Member  
Malika Lamont, Community Work Group Member  
Vanessa Malapote, Community Work Group member  
Todd Monohon, Community Work Group Member  
Ally Upton, Community Work Group Member  
Wade Uyeda, Community Work Group Member

##### **Background and Analysis:**

In February 2021, the Olympia City Council approved a community-led process to reimagine public

safety, with a goal to ensure the City's system is just, equitable and without bias. The process launched in July 2021, led by a Community Work Group (Work Group) whose role it was to learn about the City's public safety system, hold listening sessions with the community, and reflect what they learned in a set of recommendations to the City Council.

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 safe to share their honest input. They gathered input by hosting surveys on *Engage Olympia* and listening sessions with the general public, people of color, faith communities, business and property owners, neighborhoods, non-profits, and community organizers. They or a community partner also held small focus groups and listening sessions.

Specific populations engaged through focus groups and listening sessions included:

- Transgender women
- Downtown Mitigation (now Quince Street Village) site residents
- Community members receiving rental assistance
- Drexel House transitional housing residents
- LGBTQ+ community members
- Peer Navigators and Case Managers
- Asian and Pacific Islander community members
- Black community members
- Muslim community members
- Latinx and immigrant community members
- Public safety system staff

Throughout the process, the project consultant, The Athena Group, collected and analyzed the community input to help inform the Work Group. The final community input report is included as Attachment B.

The purpose of this work session is for the Work Group to share and discuss with City Council their principles (Attachment C), recommendations (Attachment D), and priorities. Staff will provide a brief overview of the process and community input on the draft recommendations, including highlighting changes made since the Work Group's Nov. 9 work session with the Community Livability & Public Safety Committee. That will be followed by a facilitated panel discussion with the Work Group, including time for members to share their experience and how what they've learned is reflected in their recommendations and priorities, and for Councilmembers to respond and ask questions.

No action is being requested at the work session. City Council's consideration to accept the Work Group's final recommendations is included on the Dec. 6 Consent Agenda, and the Work Group members will be recognized for their leadership in this process under Special Recognition.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

There has been broad community member interest in a community engagement process to reimagine public safety in Olympia. After the Work Group completed their recommendations, staff notified community partners who supported listening sessions and focus groups and launched an *Engage Olympia* survey that resulted in feedback from over 65 respondents.

**Options:**

1. Receive and discuss the Community Work Group recommendations for Reimagining Public Safety.
2. Do not receive and discuss the Community Work Group recommendations for Reimagining Public Safety.
3. Receive and discuss the Community Work Group recommendations for Reimagining Public Safety at another time.

**Financial Impact:**

The City's approved 2021 Operating Budget included \$100,000 to support the Reimagining Public Safety process.

**Attachments:**

Project Overview  
Community Input Report  
Guiding Principles  
Recommendations  
Engage Olympia Site

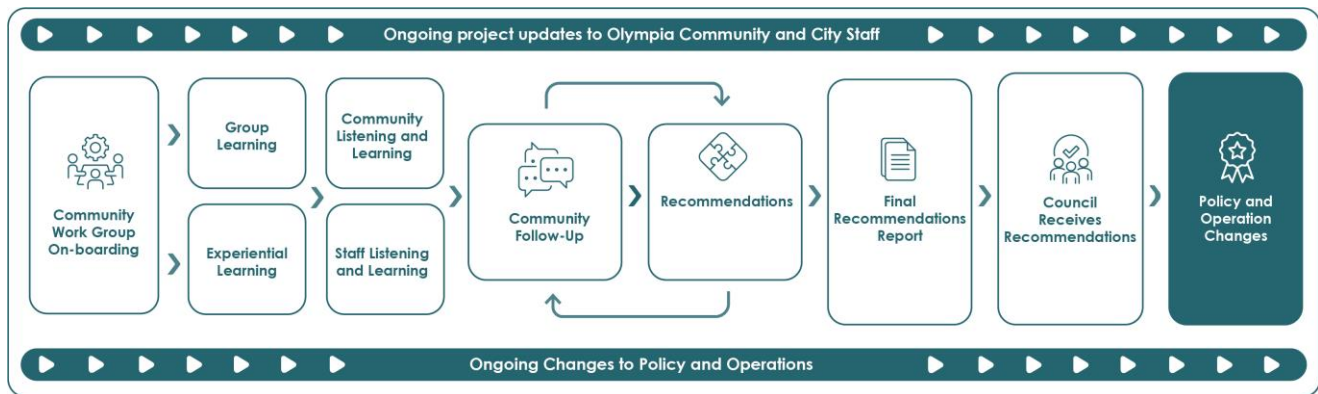


# Reimagining Public Safety

## Building trust with everyone.

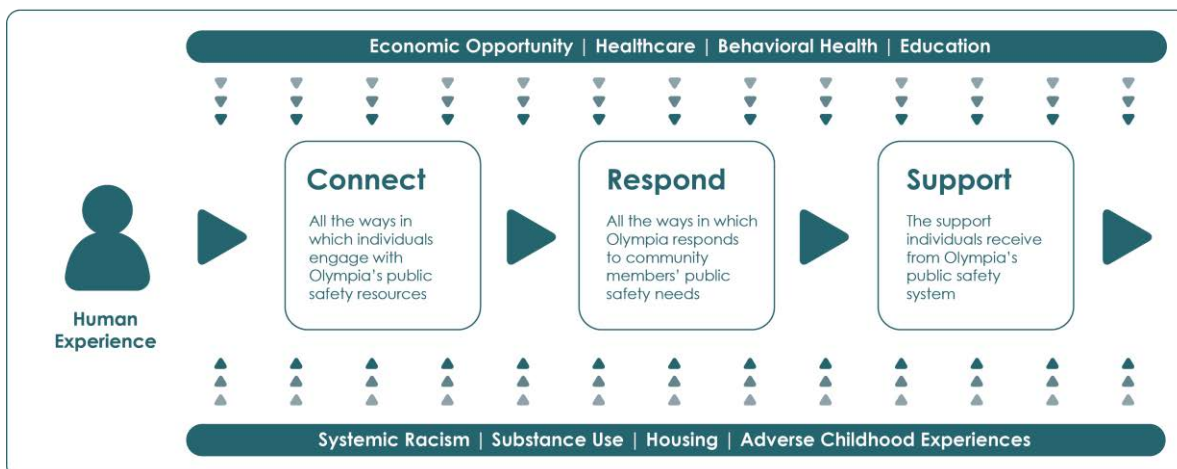
In Spring 2021, the Olympia City Council approved a community-led process to reimagine public safety in the City with a **goal of producing a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone.**

The City launched an inclusive, community-led process in July 2021 to **evaluate and make recommendations for enhancing its public safety system.** It is led by a Community Work Group made up of nine community members who represent a cross-section of Olympia's demographics, expertise, and experiences. They are dedicated to listening carefully to community members and working together to prepare recommendations that represent the needs of our community. The reimagining process will culminate in August 2022 with the Work Group delivering a set of recommendations to City Council.



## Learning from each person's unique perspective.

**The City's approach focuses on the human experience** using a three-part framework for reimagining public safety. We look at the system in terms of how people **connect** with the City's public safety system, how our system **responds** to the needs of community members, and how our system **supports** those who are navigating through it and into the community.



While recognizing that many far-reaching societal factors (education, behavioral health, racism, etc.) can influence public safety in general, this process looks specifically at the City's public safety system, including areas like policing, corrections, prosecution, defense, courts, and medical and fire response.

## How can community members participate?

The Community Work Group will hold a survey and host listening-and-learning sessions to hear individuals' experiences with the City's public safety system. The insights they gather will shape the recommendations they bring to City Council.

*"I am asking our community to work with us to reimagine the City's public-safety system. I want everyone in Olympia who engages with us – whether it is a response to a call for service or working through our criminal-justice system – to trust that our public-safety system is just, equitable and without bias."*

*- Jay Burney, Olympia City Manager*

## Get involved.

- ☐ Subscribe to City of Olympia "Community Safety, Health & Livability" updates at [olympiawa.gov/news](https://olympiawa.gov/news) for more info on the Listening-and-Learning Sessions.
- ☐ Visit [engage.olympiawa.gov/publicsafety](https://engage.olympiawa.gov/publicsafety) for more on the Community Work Group Members, including their bios.
- ☐ Contact Stacey Ray, Strategic Planning & Performance Manager ([sray@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:sray@ci.olympia.wa.us))



# Reimagining Public Safety Community Input Report

December 2022

Prepared by:

Anthony Campbell, PhD; Paul Horton, MLCSSD

Consultants, The Athena Group

Olympia, Washington

Reimagining Public Safety  
Community Input Report  
December 2022

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## Background

The City launched the Reimagining Public Safety process in July 2021 to evaluate and make recommendations that will ensure that Olympia's public safety system is just, equitable, and without bias. Although many far-reaching societal factors influence public safety in general, this process looked specifically at the City's public safety system as it exists today and envisions what it could be in the future.

A Community Work Group made up of community members who represent a cross-section of Olympia's demographics, expertise, and experiences has been leading this effort. The Work Group's role is to learn about the City's public safety system, hold listening sessions with community members and groups, and reflect what they learn in a set of recommendations to the City Council.

The Reimagining Public Safety process will culminate in December 2022 with the Work Group delivering a set of recommendations to City Council. The Community Work Group has been dedicated to listening carefully to community members and working together to prepare recommendations that represent the needs of our community.

## Who We Heard From

The input and data collection processes were designed by the Community Work Group to maximize opportunities for community members to voice their unique perspectives and experiences. The intent was to have an inclusive process that includes a variety of safe spaces for community members to share their views.

### 1. Listening-and-Learning Sessions

Listening-and-Learning Sessions were hosted with the public (both in-person and virtual) to gather input from a wide variety of community members within various groups. The following Listening-and-Learning Sessions were hosted April through October 2022:

- All community members
- Neighborhoods
- People of Color
- Non-profits, community organizers, and advocates
- Business and property owners
- Faith communities
- Black community members
- Public safety system staff

### 2. Focus Groups:

Focus groups provided safe conversation space (usually 6-8 people) for demographics-based small groups. A safe space is not just one where participants are sure they will come to no physical harm, but participants are also confident that no one in the room will cause them emotional harm. The following Focus Groups were hosted May through September 2022:

- Transgender women
- Temporary shelter residents
- Community members receiving rental assistance

- Transitional housing residents
- LGBTQ+ community members
- Peer Navigators and case managers
- Asian and Pacific Islander community members
- Black community members
- Muslim community members
- Latinx and immigrant community members

### 3. Surveys

- Community-wide Survey
  - Community members submitted their ideas, experiences, perspectives and thoughts through Engage Olympia, the City's online engagement platform.
  - 375 responses were collected April 11, 2022 through June 5, 2022
- Internal Survey of Public Safety Staff

## What We Heard

Three questions were asked of all participants, no matter the form and style of engagement.

1. With respect to Olympia's public safety system, what do you feel is working well and what do you feel is not working well?
2. With respect to Olympia's public safety system, what is something the City can do (or do differently, or do more of) today or in the near term?
3. With respect to public safety in Olympia, how will you know that the City is making progress in improving the public safety system? What will that look and feel like to you?

The following themes were developed by looking across all participant responses. As much as possible, themes (primary and secondary) have been developed based on the actual words used by session participants and survey respondents.

## Primary Themes

The following primary themes were developed based on the degree to which the themes (a) extended across multiple participant/respondent groups, (b) were connected to other themes, and (c) were frequently offered by participants/respondents. They are in no particular order, so Primary Theme One should not be interpreted as "stronger" or "more important" than Primary Theme Seven.

### Primary Theme One: Non-traditional Approaches to Public Safety are Supported

Participants/respondents consistently expressed support for non-traditional approaches to public safety. Programs and services such as the Clean Team, Community Court, Crisis Response Units (CRU), Downtown Ambassadors, and Familiar Faces were all referenced in relationship to what is working well when it comes to public safety in Olympia. There was disagreement regarding whether these non-traditional approaches need to be used as a replacement or a supplement for traditional approaches from the OPD and other government bodies. Regardless of that position, participants/respondents emphasized that if non-traditional approaches are going to be successful,

they must have full funding support not just marketing/public speech support. This need for full support was expressed along several lines, the two key perspectives being that (1) full support was needed to properly determine the effectiveness of non-traditional approaches, and (2) inadequate support for non-traditional approaches could make the community highly vulnerable to issues escalating that result in a need for more traditional interventions.

**LGBTQ+ Community Members and Faith Communities Members Note:** Non-traditional approaches to public safety was one of the most frequently discussed topics across the listening-and-learning sessions and focus groups. While the discussions varied immensely, individuals from these two engagements brought forward a topic that was not discussed elsewhere – the importance of training. While discussed in slightly different terms, with members of the LGBTQ+ community focusing on the complex challenge and members of the Faith Communities linking training to sustainability, both agreed that a focus on training was essential for non-traditional approaches to have any degree of effectiveness.

### Primary Theme Two: Houselessness has Reached a Critical Level

One of the most consistently discussed topics by participants/respondents was the impact of houselessness on public safety in Olympia. Individuals went into detail discussing their experiences and observations about the relationship between what is perceived to be a correlation between an increase in houselessness and a decrease in public safety. What participants/respondents covered a wide gamut of aspects of life in Olympia, from fear of attack to property crimes to what was perceived as a general degrading of Olympia by not adequately helping the unhoused. There were a variety of perspectives on how to address houselessness, but the two most dominant perspectives were either (a) the City is providing too much help and/or not holding them accountable for their actions, and (b) the City needs to provide much more help to curtail houselessness. While there was no agreement on the optimal approach to address houselessness, there was almost universal agreement that houselessness has reached a critical level in Olympia that is impacting all aspects of community life. This perception of houselessness reaching an intolerable level was frequently used as support for changing the approach to public safety – be it a stronger commitment to traditional approaches to public safety that utilized OPD in the central role or a more intense focus on non-traditional approaches that results in OPD having a narrower set of responsibilities.

**Muslim Community Members Note:** As it relates to the Muslim focus group, there was specific focus on the importance of addressing systemic poverty as a component of crime mitigation. This had been surfaced in other groups, with various participants and respondents discussing the overall relationship between poverty and crime. What has now emerged as a more pronounced sub-element of this primary theme, because of the focus group with Muslim community members and looking back across previous data, is how people can become “stuck” in the carceral system when they cannot afford to pay fines (potentially leading to getting jailed) or pay for “good” legal representation.

**Black and African American Community Members Note:** When looking at the perspectives shared in this focus group, as well as the Asian and Pacific Island and Muslim groups to a lesser degree, sentiments about providing “too much help” to the unhoused are not present at all. Instead, there are focused statements about the potential to lower overall crime if the City and the

community are more committed to helping those experiencing houselessness. For the Black and African American focus group, this was embedded in a larger sentiment about a need for more compassion from the City of Olympia government, OPD, and Elected Officials, and how that would contribute to new approaches to public safety.

**Latinx Community Members Note:** Aligned in many ways with the sentiments of those who participated in the Muslim focus group, the Latinx focus group participants emphasized that public safety was not simply tied to the number of people who are unhoused or experiencing houselessness, but that the negative impacts on public safety were a product of there not being enough efforts to prevent houselessness and help those who are unhoused.

### Primary Theme Three: More Focus is Needed on the Connections between Public Safety Issues

Participants/respondents indicated that there is a need for more focus on the relationship between public safety issues, specifically the relationship between crime, mental health, addiction/substance abuse, and houselessness. While what was perceived as the nature of that relationship varied (from the unhoused not being arrested leading to more crime to calls for prioritizing treatment of mental health issues across the community leading to lower crime), a significant number of participants/respondents expressed that focusing on single public safety issues is ineffective.

**Latinx Community Members Note:** The facilitator(s) approached the focus group with an emphasis on solutions or “constructive feedback,” and that showed up with participants discussing how public safety could be improved through more efforts to get people out of the “poverty cycle,” to help people who are suffering from addiction/substance abuse, and to reduce recidivism.

### Primary Theme Four: Community Involvement and Civic Relationships are Vital to Addressing Public Safety

Both public safety professionals and non-public safety professionals expressed that the ability of Olympia to improve public safety is directly connected to the degree to which community members are involved. The expressed belief is that little or no community involvement would mean Olympia would be able to improve public safety not at all or only in minor ways, but a high level of community involvement and civic relationships (city-community) could result in significant public safety improvements. Moreover, there was a call from some and a plea from others to focus on improved relationships between city leaders, community leaders (residents and business owners) and public safety professionals. The belief in the need for community involvement was most often tied to the complexity of addressing public safety and the need to have diverse perspectives, with as much community support as possible. Connected to that perspective was a call for as much information sharing and outreach as possible, to weave together professional expertise and community knowledge. These sentiments even included participants/respondents explicitly expressing appreciation for the current stakeholder engagement and requesting more.

**Black and African American Community Members Note:** After reviewing the data collected from this focus group, a new sub-element of this primary theme emerged – a need for more community dialogue. That had been discussed to some degree across all groups, but after this specific focus group it has risen to a level that needs to receive more attention. This was also

discussed by the participants in the Neighborhoods listening session, who asserted that strategies are needed to create spaces for more community dialogue.

**Asian and Pacific Islander Community Members Note:** An interesting and new dimension of this primary theme is a focus on direct engagement from OPD, specifically the Police Chief, with community groups. This new data expands upon the existing theme by illuminating how some degree of rapport between community groups and OPD could result in higher quality outcomes.

**People of Color Community Members Note:** While community involvement was most often discussed as beneficial for addressing public safety, individuals in this listening-and-learning session spoke about the value of creating a greater sense of belonging in the neighborhood. This is important because it could indicate an identified need for more relationship building in the community, as well as a greater focus on inclusivity – both of which could contribute to reimagining public safety.

### Primary Theme Five: The Cleanliness of Olympia is Seen as a Direct Indicator of Public Safety

When asked about current public safety in Olympia, as well as what would “improved public safety” look or feel like, one of the most discussed topics was cleanliness. Specifically, participants/respondents shared their dislike of what is perceived as an unprecedented level of trash in the streets and graffiti throughout the downtown corridor. While most participants/respondents directly or indirectly invoked the logic of the “broken windows theory,”<sup>1</sup> others asserted that the perceived increase in trash and graffiti in certain areas of the city was reflective of an inequitable approach to public safety with only certain corridors and neighborhoods being “cared enough about” to receive the necessary attention to mitigate trash in the streets and graffiti. These expressed perceptions about cleanliness not being a priority are connected to the belief, by some, that Olympia has become a “haven” for unhoused populations due to the City’s laws and policies.

### Primary Theme Six: Increased Crime and Decreased Feelings of Safety Have been Too Normalized in Olympia

One sentiment that repeatedly arose in the data, across all questions, was that elevated crime and decreased in feelings of safety have been too normalized in Olympia. These expressed feelings and perspectives often occurred in close proximity to participants/respondents discussing previous times in Olympia that were perceived as having better public safety conditions. One space of focus is the downtown corridor. Participants/respondents repeatedly spoke about how downtown Olympia has become unsafe at an accelerated rate. This sentiment was expressed across almost all groups, with the perceived effects ranging from economic downturns to the City simply “giving away” downtown to the houseless.

This theme is also connected to statements about the identity of Olympia’s community, which was expressed by many as being one where feeling safety had always been a key priority. While additional research would be needed to explain the exact nature of this sentiment in the community, it’s important because it likely reflects a hope for improvement that can be seized upon before shifting to cynicism or hopelessness.

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<sup>1</sup> Visible signs of crime create an environment that encourages further crime and disorder, including serious crimes.

**Latinx Community Members Note:** Many of the focus group participants compared the current state of public safety in Olympia to the past, asserting that Olympia is less safe today than it was in the past. It's important to note that what constituted "the past" varied between the participants, for some being three years ago and others a decade ago. However, there was no discussion about the normalization of less safety.

### Primary Theme Seven: The Current Approach to Public Safety is Not Working

Regardless of whether a participant/respondent thought that there needed to be a return to so-called "traditional" public safety approaches or there is a need for new or "non-traditional" approaches to public safety, there was a highly shared perspective that the current approach to public safety in Olympia is not working. While that theme does not illuminate much in terms of next steps, it does reflect a degree of alignment between the City of Olympia's ongoing efforts to reimagine public safety and feelings within the community and stakeholders who participated in the engagement efforts associated with this effort.

## Secondary Themes

In addition to the seven primary themes, six secondary themes were identified during analysis of what was heard from stakeholders and community members/groups. While the secondary themes have been identified as relevant for the project, they were not as present<sup>2</sup> as the primary themes. The secondary themes are also in no particular order.

### Secondary Theme One: The Challenge of Changes to Public Safety Approaches

Many participants/respondents recognized that the changing dynamics surrounding public safety approaches, within and beyond Olympia, created immense challenges that needed to be recognized. This sentiment was expressed across different groups, whether in support of traditional public safety or amongst those who argued for an overhaul.

**Business and Property Owners Note:** Participants in this listening session focused on a specific dimension of public safety practices, which was framed as "traditional" and "important" – response times. While others varied in terms of whether changes to public safety approaches were beneficial or harmful, members of this group generally felt that any changes must not negatively impact response times.

### Secondary Theme Two: State of Public Safety in Olympia must be Fully Acknowledged

As previously expressed, there was little disagreement among participants/respondents that public safety is a significant issue in Olympia. However, many felt that the City of Olympia has not fully acknowledged the issue and the challenges that accompany that issue.

**Black and African American Community Members Note:** After incorporating data from this focus group, a secondary dimension of this theme was elevated – the impact of fentanyl on public

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<sup>2</sup> In terms of frequency of expression and/or connected to other themes.

safety in Olympia. The aspect of this issue discussed most is how addiction to fentanyl is ravaging communities but is not being discussed enough and thus not receiving enough attention as a contributor to crime.

### Secondary Theme Three: Crime Data/Statistics are Important Indicators

Crime data/statistics were frequently cited by participants/respondents as having value for assessing current conditions in Olympia, as well as whether certain approaches (traditional/non-traditional) or interventions were being effective. However, many felt that there was a need for crime data/statistics to be independently verified if they were to be trusted.

**Asian and Pacific Islander Community Members Note:** With the inclusion of the data from the Asian and Pacific Islander focus group, a new element of this secondary theme rose to a level of significance – the need for new types of metrics and statistics. Hate crime metrics and other associated statistics were discussed the most.

**Latinx Community Members Note:** Focus group participants cited crime data as a valuable indicator of public safety. There was no reference to the data needing to be verified, but they did assert that the City could do more to share crime data and educate the public on what that data actually means (data translation). The importance of sharing crime data was also brought forward by participants in the Non-profits, community organizers, and advocates listening session and the focus group with community members receiving rental assistance.

### Secondary Theme Four: Important Terms Need to be Community Defined

When complex issues like public safety are being addressed within a community, there is always a need to establish some degree of shared understanding and a common vocabulary. This was recognized across participant/respondent groups and reflects a level of civic sophistication and problem solving in the community. Many participants/respondents expressed that unless terms like “public safety,” “crime,” and “justice” were defined through community involvement, there was great risk of misunderstanding or manipulation by any stakeholder group who could benefit from a specific definition that aligned with their wants but not necessarily with the needs of the community.

**Neighborhoods Note:** When examining the responses from this listening session, facilitating community-created definitions of key terms was asserted as not only having benefit for the complexity of public safety issues but the value that comes from groups sharing and better understanding one another’s perspectives. This was seen as potentially reducing strife between and within groups.

### Secondary Theme Five: The Visibility of OPD has an Impact

While there was no agreement on whether there is a need for more or less OPD visibility in the community (more or fewer uniformed officers on the streets and/or OPD vehicles around the community), a shared sentiment was that OPD visibility does have an impact on public safety – be it positive or negative.



**Olympia Community Members Note:** The participants in this listening-and-learning session offered a unique sub-dimension of the secondary theme – the impact of the OPD uniform and visual appearance of police officers for feelings of safety in the community. This was further deepened by participants from the Non-profits, Community Organizers, and Advocates listening session that specifically spoke about the visual impact of people seeing the officers’ guns.

### Secondary Theme Six: Trust in Public Safety Professionals is Important

Regardless of whether the focus was on OPD or professionals associated with programs like Crisis Response Unit (CRU), participants/respondents consistently shared the importance of trust in public safety professionals. This was expressed in many ways, from experiences of not trusting public safety professionals to the transformative effects of trusting someone tasked with ensuring public safety. The nature of “trust” varied among participants/respondents, ranging from trusting that a public safety professional understood a person or community’s dynamics to more generalized notions of trust aligned with professional ethics.

**Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Community Members Note:** With the addition of data from the Asian and Pacific Islander focus group, a new dimension of this secondary theme emerged – culturally-embedded fear of law enforcement. While this had come forward in some low levels in other datasets, this was especially expressed by individuals within the API focus group. The fear was framed as cutting across multiple groups, from age (youth to old) to specific API subcommunities (Micronesia). It’s important to note that they didn’t frame the fear as insurmountable; nonetheless, it was framed as significant and directly contributing to perceptions of law enforcement.

**LGBTQ+ Community Members Note:** Members of this focus group brought forward a dimension of this secondary theme that was not offered by other individuals and groups – representation. The assertion was that a public safety workforce more representative of the diverse makeup of the Olympia community could have a positive impact, such as increased trust.

### Secondary Theme Seven: Risks of Tolerance for Criminal Activity

Participants and respondents differed when it came to what constituted a “crime” deserving of engagement from the Olympia Police Department (OPD), with some expressing that all crimes needed to be addressed by OPD and others believing that only specific crimes (often of a high and grave threat) needed a response from OPD. However, one sentiment shared by many participants and respondents was that there are certain risks associated with tolerating criminal activity, be it petty or otherwise. Those perceived “risks” ranged from creating an environment that invites crime and/or criminals to increasing the costs for public safety in Olympia by not proactively addressing crime in the earlier stages (perceived as being less expensive) and thus having to engage with subsequent behavior or impacts that were perceived as being more expensive.

### Secondary Theme Eight: Racism Impacts Public Safety in Olympia

From examples of racist interactions to suspected affiliations of public safety professionals with extremist and/or hate groups, many participants and respondents expressed that public safety in Olympia is significantly impacted by racism. Those impacts varied widely between participants and



respondents, but they can generally be grouped into two categories: (a) racism resulting in public safety, specifically OPD, practices that treat people differently based on their race; and (b) racism influencing which groups' or sub-communities' needs in Olympia are prioritized when it comes to public safety (e.g., prioritizing the safety or needs of a white group to the detriment of a non-white group).

**Muslim Community Members Note:** While racism and related racial dynamics have been present across other modes of data collection (surveys, listening sessions, etc.), it was most detailed and pronounced in the focus group with Muslim community members. There was both a focus on: (1) how hate crimes against Muslims have not received enough attention in the community, and (2) how Islamophobia (from subtle to overt) has almost been normalized in Olympia due to unconscious bias based on assumptions that flow from names, dress, and faith practices.

## Areas of greatest tension

In addition to the primary and secondary themes, there were six tensions that emerged within and across respondent groups. These tensions have high value for considering future stages of this work where additional engagement is needed to hear more voices.

### Tension One: OPD Funding

A consistent tension across all groups and mode of engagement was whether OPD needs more funding or less funding. These responses ranged from participants/respondents listing equipment that needed to be purchased and staffing levels that needed to be achieved to expressing that OPD's budget should be significantly reduced to align with OPD only being used for a narrow set of responsibilities.

### Tension Two: OPD Discretion and Power

When it came to the optimal level of discretion and power that OPD should have for pursuing public safety in Olympia, there was no consensus. There were explicitly expressed differences across all participants/respondents. Responses ranged from believing that OPD's role should be restored to what it was before the perceived narrowing of their responsibilities to believing that OPD's public safety role should be limited to only very specific situations where no other group could effectively handle the situation to ensure safety for Olympians.

### Tension Three: Optimal Treatment for Houselessness

One of the central topics brought forward across all groups and forms of engagement was houselessness. As reflected in earlier sections of this report, participants/respondents had a highly diverse perspective on the relationship between houselessness and public safety in Olympia. When it came to how best to treat or address houselessness, perspectives and responses could be grouped into three broad categories: (1) arrest those who are houseless; (2) do not arrest the unhoused, but don't provide them such a high level of services that enables them, makes them "too comfortable," and/or results in Olympia becoming a target destination for those experiencing houselessness; and (3) provide services to treat the causes of houselessness.

### Tension Four: Traditional versus Non-Traditional Public Safety Approaches

While there was little to no disagreement about whether public safety is an issue in Olympia, there was significant disagreement about the optimal approach to pursuing and providing public safety. The responses ranged from belief that traditional public safety approaches are the “answer” to expressions that non-traditional public safety approaches are the only sustainable path forward. An area of central focus and tension was how best to address individuals with behavioral/mental health needs, whether OPD should be involved or not at all.

### Tension Five: OPD Visibility

Participants/respondents consistently shared their ideas and perspectives regarding OPD visibility in Olympia. Sentiments were specifically focused on the presence of OPD vehicles and uniformed professionals in the community. The tension revolved around whether more visibility or less visibility is ultimately the best way to create feelings of public safety, as well as actual public safety.

### Tension Six: Whether Olympia’s Public Safety Issues are Unique

As previously expressed, there was little to no disagreement about whether public safety is an issue in Olympia. However, there was not agreement regarding whether Olympia’s public safety issues are unique. Some participants/respondents expressed what could be characterized as “acceptance” that less public safety should be expected as Olympia grows<sup>3</sup> and broader societal changes occur that are beyond the City of Olympia’s control (e.g., national economic shifts and statewide policies), while others conveyed that something has specifically changed in Olympia that needs to be addressed to restore public safety. This tension is connected to some suggesting that Olympia should employ techniques used by peer cities, others suggesting that Olympia’s public safety issues can only be successfully addressed by focusing on their Olympia-specific nature, and others suggesting that a mixture of the two approaches is needed.

## Additional Observations

In addition to the primary and secondary themes addressed in the previous sections, there were also some observations that the consultants/researchers felt were appropriate to surface.

1. As with all complex issues in society, language matters. Close attention is needed to establish some degree of shared definitions for key terms (Secondary Theme Four), and attention is needed for so-called “dog whistle” words that are used to connote certain sentiments to specific groups. For the first area of needed attention, the concept of “public safety” was used in highly varied ways by participants/respondents. While this is not necessary a surprise given the complexity of the condition captured by the term, an effort to create a more shared understanding of the term could help with relationship building and overall clarity. With regards to “dog whistle” words, it’s by no means new for groups to use words like “accountability” and “control” to support traditional public safety approaches without using more overt terms. This is not inherently a distortion or issue, but instead something that all

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<sup>3</sup> Some described in terms of development or economic “growth” while others spoke about the natural progression of a city.

stakeholders need to be mindful of during this important time of reimagining public safety in Olympia. This is aligned with Secondary Theme Four (Important Terms Need to be Community Defined), as well as the established practice of building a shared or similar vocabulary when collaboration is occurring between a diverse group of stakeholders.

2. While not significant enough to include as a primary or secondary theme, civic pride, or a desire to restore civic pride was consistently addressed (directly and indirectly) by participants/respondents. When discussing what success in public safety would feel like, many discussed the restoration of pride they have in being a resident, business owner, or city employee in Olympia. While such a sentiment is not surprising, it reveals a powerful underlying relationship between stakeholders and the conditions of Olympia that should not be taken for granted.

## Methodology – Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, guided by a constructivist grounded theory orientation, was used to analyze collected data. This specific methodology was selected because of two reasons: (1) the methodology is established as one that prioritizes participants' lived experiences and perceptions, and (2) the consultant's formal training and expertise in using the methodology as a qualitative social scientist. Collected data is analyzed along multiple dimensions, with a focus on remaining as close as possible to the expressed experiences and perspectives of participants and respondents instead of abstraction. What was heard (listening sessions and focus groups) and what was submitted (survey responses) was migrated to NVivo (qualitative data analysis software platform) for coding, followed by grouping codes into categories, and then themes were developed that link together categories. The foremost priority throughout data analysis was to remain as close as possible to the expressed beliefs, perspectives, and thoughts of the participants and respondents to honor their offerings.



# Reimagining Public Safety

## Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles for the City's Public Safety system:

**Any decisions we make, or actions we take,**

- **will not perpetuate or cause additional physical, psychological, or economic harm to any member of the community**
- **will be pro-equity and anti-racist in nature**
- **will be based on meaningful collaboration and authentic engagement among everyone in the community**
- **will be based on the best available information and progress will be measured and regularly reported to the community**

### DRAFT Principle #1

**Any decisions we make, or actions we take, will not perpetuate, or cause additional physical, psychological, or economic harm to any member of the community**

*This means that:*

- actions taken will contribute to members of the community feeling physically safe
- everyone in the community will be treated with respect and dignity
- everyone's unique situation will be considered (a holistic approach)
- a restorative rather than a punitive approach will be taken
- economic barriers that exist to inhibit people's ability to live and thrive in Olympia will be removed
- harm will be reduced
- impacts of actions are considered at both a system and individual level

*To make matters worse,* some members of the community will feel physically unsafe, will be treated without respect or dignity, and economic barriers will exist that inhibit people's ability to live and thrive in Olympia.



## DRAFT Principle #2

**Any decisions we make, or actions we take, will be pro-equity and anti-racist in nature**

*This means that:*

- language used or policies implemented will lead to a reduction in existing disparities for all marginalized groups
- Racial and cultural differences will be seen as assets

*To make matters worse*, Disparities based on race, religion, socio-economic status, age, physical ability, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, will be perpetuated (the normative, privileged – the dominant culture – will continue to receive the greatest representation). Language used or policies implemented will lead to and/or reinforce existing disparities.

### DRAFT Principle #3

**The decisions made, or the actions taken, will be based on meaningful collaboration and authentic engagement among everyone in the community**

*This means that:*

- any decisions made, or actions taken, will be highly collaborative in nature
- meaningful efforts will be made to bridge gaps in relationships and groups both within the City and throughout the community
- community engagement efforts will be conducted in an authentic manner (e.g., considering of the needs of the community as a whole; valuing the input of all stakeholders; inviting the community as partners in community building and co-creating solutions.)
- all members of the community will feel acknowledged, valued, and heard in the public engagement process
- investments of time and financial resources are coordinated to the extent possible without sacrificing successful implementation

*To make matters worse*, the various actors with a stake in making the community safer will operate separately or in silos. The various City departments (police, fire, courts, public defense, administration, etc.) will plan and act unilaterally with little or no collaboration. Decisions and actions will be made without meaningful community input (some members of the community will feel that their voices were not heard) and will not result in outcomes that are widely





shared and owned by the community. Investments of energy, time and resources will not be coordinated to increase impact.

### DRAFT Principle #4

**The decisions made, or the actions taken, will be based on the best available information and progress will be measured and regularly reported to the community**

This means that:

- the City will actively seek the best available information and practices
- the outcome that identifies success must be clearly identified so anyone reviewing the strategies, actions and results can clearly see if things are moving toward success
- there will be a clear way to determine the impact of investments of energy, time, and resources and to prioritize one against another
- strategies and actions will be measured for impact based on science, best practices, local data, community input, and laws/regulations/codes
- progress will be reported on and made visible to the community

*To make matters worse*, there will be no way to determine the priority or the impact of investments of energy, time, and resources. Members of the community will not be aware of the outcomes of the investments. Resources will be wasted.

# Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations

Last Revised: 11/28/22

Purpose: All members of our community can trust that the City’s public safety system is just, equitable, and without bias.

Guiding Principles:

*Any decisions we make, or actions we take...*

- will not perpetuate or cause additional physical, psychological, or economic harm to any member of the community
- will be pro-equity and anti-racist in nature
- will be based on meaningful collaboration and authentic engagement among everyone in the community
- will be based on the best available information and progress will be measured and regularly reported to the community

Goals:

- 1) Build trust and legitimacy in the City’s public safety system.
- 2) Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes.
- 3) Acknowledge and correct the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.
- 4) Reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system.
- 5) Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive.

Goal #1: Build trust and legitimacy in the City’s public safety system.			Lead/Partners	Timeline		
STRATEGY #	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	Lead/Partners	2023-24	2025-28	2028+
1.1	Center the City’s public safety system on moving people towards wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly define the components of the public safety system and what community members need to feel safe (health, emergency response, policing, housing, courts, etc.).</li><li>• Establish a vision, mission, and values for the City public safety system that reflect our community.</li><li>• More clearly identify the City’s role in relationship to community organizations and non-profits, and regional partners.</li></ul>				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a culture that eliminates bureaucracy and centers the needs of real people in the development and implementation of processes and services.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>				
<b>1.2</b>	Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Establish a civilian/community member oversight model for the entire public safety system that meets the needs of the community.</li> <li>• Evaluate how to engage the community in developing and/or reviewing public safety policy.</li> <li>• Regularly share, review, and learn from data with the community.</li> <li>• Gather with community members for visioning opportunities, ways to think outside-the-box, and identify impactful and systemic changes.</li> </ul>				
<b>1.3</b>	Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Include Hispanic/Latino as a race, rather than a separate category for ethnicity.</li> <li>• Gender data will be trans-inclusive in accordance with the City's resolution protecting transgender and non-binary people.</li> <li>• Collect data with sensitivity to the power dynamics involved in who's asking, and always include an option not to disclose.</li> </ul>				



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data should be disaggregated and analyzed along multiple lines of identity intersections.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Enhance the ability to report and collect data on hate crimes and other associated statistics and develop proactive strategies to address hate crimes.</li> <li>• Collect data on racial profiling.</li> <li>• Regularly validate data through independent analysis and share those results with the community.</li> <li>• Share regular data reports and/or dashboards with the community.</li> <li>• Establish success metrics for all public safety system programs and use data to increase efficiencies and effectiveness in all parts of the system.</li> <li>• Proactively seek out new ways to collect data, including enhancing data collection and sharing with Thurston County and the State of Washington.</li> </ul>				
1.4	Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative recruitment strategy to diversify the City's public safety system staff to be more representative of community demographics.</li> <li>• Recruit and hire more multilingual staff.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive, trauma-informed, trauma-responsive, and holistic approach to ensure public safety system staff safety, health, and wellness.</li> <li>• Explore more ways to help ensure public safety staff feel safe and supported when they are on- and off-duty.</li> </ul>				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Create a culture in which public safety staff challenge themselves to always be a curious, innovative, and a learning organization.</li> </ul>				
1.5	Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely, and accessible access to City public safety information.</li> <li>• Host meetings and share information in spaces where people already gather; use community partner networks and connections to share and gather information more effectively.</li> <li>• Ensure cultural humility and fairness in official statements, publications, and web content.</li> <li>• Establish and regularly report on clear metrics of success for all public safety programs and services.</li> <li>• Ensure easy and regular access to crime statistics.</li> <li>• Provide more education to the community on what the municipal public safety system can do with regards to enforcement, investigation, prosecution, and sentencing.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Celebrate when the community comes together; share stories of healing and community-building in creative, accessible, and informal ways (art, poetry, photography, etc.).</li></ul>				
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Goal #2: Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes			Lead/Partners	Timeline		
STRATEGY #	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	Lead/Partners			
2.1	Develop and expand resources to address root causes of individuals engaging with the public safety system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Explore innovative policy around decriminalization of substances and safe supply to address the overdose crisis.</li> <li>Lobby the state legislature for funding for more substance use disorder treatment facilities with capacity to accept individuals immediately.</li> </ul>				
2.2	Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove systemic barriers to stabilization (ex. access to supportive housing, affordable housing, employment, etc.)</li> <li>Ensure the planning and resourcing for reentry is strongly aligned and in collaboration with existing local non-governmental organizations.</li> </ul>				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide supportive living environments where individuals have peer support and can establish community.</li><li>• Prior to release, prioritize establishing permanent supportive housing for chronically houseless individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders.</li><li>• Invest in partner organizations that use peer case managers and peer navigators to support individuals and reduce recidivism.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>				
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Goal #3: Acknowledge and correct the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members				Lead/Partners		Timeline	
STRATEGY #	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	Lead/Partners				
3.1	Work towards healing the community from harm created by the public safety system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge the historical wrongs perpetrated by the public safety system.</li> <li>Acknowledge the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.</li> <li>Educate public safety staff in the disproportionate impacts the system has on marginalized community members.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>					
3.2	Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit to regular meaningful engagement with a diversity of community groups throughout the year to intentionally learn about their cultures, interests, perceptions, and concerns.</li> <li>Host and participate in community conversations, special events, gatherings, service projects, or informal activities with community members.</li> <li>Provide resources to support and/or leverage existing informal gatherings and events as opportunities to make connections and build relationships.</li> <li>Collaborate on reporting hate crimes, sharing public safety data, and identifying solutions.</li> </ul>					
3.3	Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use data and community input to understand, communicate, and educate about the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.</li> <li>Regularly audit all existing policies and procedures using a pro-equity and anti-racist lens.</li> </ul>					

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an equity framework to evaluate all new operational changes, policies, and programs.</li> <li>• Proactively and regularly engage with professional organizations that promote and educate about equitable and anti-racist public safety.</li> <li>• Ensure that all people encountering the public safety system are treated with respect, including respecting chosen names, pronouns, and gender identity.</li> <li>• Ensure the system is fully accessible for all community members, including those with a disability, who are neurodivergent and/or have a language barrier.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>				
3.4	Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand and improve on anti-racist and pro-equity training requirements and opportunities for all public safety system staff.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Include inter-cultural development and an understanding of equity in staff evaluations, and professional growth and development plans (e.g., Intercultural Development Inventory).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Ensure staff have ongoing safe and supportive spaces and resources for continued pro-equity and anti-racist learning, processing, and dialogue.</li> <li>• Review existing training for inherent bias, reinforcing outdated practices and methods that are not in line with our city values.</li> </ul>				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasize de-escalation and non-violent methods for addressing conflict.</li></ul>				
<b>3.5</b>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritize eliminating or significantly reducing fines and fees for individuals who are unable to pay.</li><li>• Join with other municipalities and/or a statewide system for waiving or resolving fees to help people become relicensed.</li><li>• Reform the bail process to address the lack of equity for individuals experiencing poverty.</li><li>• Improve coordination amongst departments and record-keeping to prevent onerous and inappropriate assignment of fees.</li><li>• Streamline the process to resolve fines and fees to prevent them from escalating and avoid an individual needing to navigate the court system.</li></ul>				



Goal #4: Reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system.			Lead/Partners	Timeline		
STRATEGY #	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	Lead/Partners			
4.1	Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more training to emergency call center/911 operators on how to identify community needs that may be handled by non-law enforcement responders.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Provide education on what the Crisis Response Unit can and can't do when responding to a call.</li> <li>• Ensure the public has a direct way to request the Crisis Response Unit.</li> <li>• Explore co-response models that include embedding a social worker with first responders.</li> </ul>				
4.2	Develop and expand pre-arrest and pre-bookings diversion programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize diversion options first; wherever possible, don't exclude people because of their prior criminal history.</li> <li>• Create more diversified options for diversion prior to an arrest.</li> <li>• Build a more robust and available network of services to meet the needs of individuals that are being diverted.</li> <li>• Ensure that required activities within diversion (e.g., domestic violence treatment) are available locally.</li> <li>• Make diversion requirements available at low or no cost to participants.</li> <li>• Expand partnerships with community-based non-profit organizations to create more opportunities to resolve cases before filing and after charges are filed.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Develop a resource for mediation to respond to non-criminal activity or situations that do not require a mental health response.</li> </ul>				
<b>4.3</b>	Offer restorative practices and transformative justice options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Access local and state resources to educate the community about restorative and transformative justice practices.</li> </ul>				
<b>4.4</b>	Expand the availability and use of therapeutic courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the availability and eligibility for Community Court.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>				

Goal #5: Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive.			Lead/Partners	Timeline		
STRATEGY #	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	Lead/Partners			
5.1	Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactively develop materials and tools that help community members understand better how to navigate the public safety system.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Ensure that individuals in the jail have safe and equitable access to their public defenders, and support service providers.</li> </ul>				
5.2	Evaluate public safety system staffing levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Ensure appropriate staffing to be responsive to community expectations for engagement, transparency and reporting, and communications.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Review and implement policies for staffing levels to ensure call responsiveness is appropriate to call volume and needs as established using data.</li> </ul>				

5.3	Improve the responsiveness of emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the coordination and training for 911 dispatchers to ensure the right response entity is dispatched to a call for service.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Ensure that public safety system staff are responding to calls from community members, acknowledging requests, and consistently following-up with individuals.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>				
5.4	Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 and Familiar Faces.</li> <li>• Enhance ongoing coordination amongst the alternative and crisis response teams operating in the city, including both public and non-profit: Arrest and Jail Alternatives, Familiar Faces, and Crisis Response Unit.</li> <li>• Physically co-locate with community partners engaged in public safety response (e.g., Arrest and Jail Alternatives Program).</li> </ul>				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that contracts with community organizations to provide public safety support include a living wage for employees.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>				
5.5	Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Continue to invest in debris removal and maintaining clean public spaces and rights-of-way.</li> <li>• Proactively work with private owners, providing technical assistance, incentives, grants, etc., to increase property maintenance standards.</li> <li>• Expand the staffing and hours for the Police Walking Patrol and/or other models to increase support for public safety in Downtown.</li> <li>• Respond quickly and proactively to neighborhood concerns (ex. newly established encampments, illegal dumping, etc.).</li> </ul>				

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## Reimagining Public Safety



# Reimagining Public Safety

City of Olympia

## What's happening?

In February 2021, the Olympia City Council approved a community-led process to reimagine public safety for the City, with a goal of producing a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone.

The City launched this community-led and inclusive process in July 2021 to evaluate and make recommendations for enhancing its public-safety system. While recognizing that many far-reaching societal factors can influence public safety in general, this process looks specifically at the City's public safety system, including areas like policing, corrections, prosecution, defense, courts, and medical and fire response.

The process is being led by a Community Work Group made up of nine community members who represent a cross-section of Olympia's demographics, expertise and experiences. They are dedicated to listening deeply, working collaboratively with each other and reflecting what they hear from the community.

- [Read Community Work Group bios](#)

## City Council to consider accepting final recommendations on Dec. 6

Throughout April and May, the Community Work Group on Reimagining Public Safety held a series of six virtual and in-person community listening-and-learning sessions and collected input through an online survey. Over 400 community members participated in either small group discussions at the sessions or through the online survey.

From April to October, The Work Group sought to hear from community members with a diversity of perspectives and life experiences, hosting a series of small focus groups to gather input from community members underrepresented in the listening-and-learning sessions and survey.

In November, the Work Group shared a set of draft recommendations with the City Council Community Livability & Public Safety Committee, and launched a survey to collect input from community members from Nov. 7-Nov. 21.

After having reviewed the community input, the Work Group will now share their final recommendations with the City Council on Dec. 6.

- [Read the draft recommendations](#)

NEWS FEED	SURVEYS	IDEAS
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### Council to consider final recommendations

01 Dec 2022



The Reimagining Public Safety Community Work Group has finished collecting and considering community input on their [draft recommendations](#), which include guiding principles, goals, strategies, and actions.



On Dec. 6 City Council will host a 5:30 p.m. Work Session with the Community Work Group to receive their final recommendations. At their 7 pm Business Meeting, City Council will consider formally accepting the Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations.

## Community Work Group recommendations

01 Nov 2022



The Reimagining Public Safety Community Work Group has finished holding community listening sessions and has developed draft recommendations for the City Council. Community members are invited to provide input on the recommendations through an Engage Olympia survey from Nov. 7 – Nov. 21.

The Community Work Group's draft recommendations, which will include guiding principles, goals, strategies, and actions, will be shared at the November 9th Community Livability & Public Safety Committee.

On Dec. 6 City Council will host a 5:30 p.m. Work Session with the Community Work Group to receive their final recommendations. At their 7 pm Business Meeting, City Council will consider formally accepting the Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations.

## Reimagining Public Safety listening session for Black community Oct. 27

30 Sep 2022



In a continuation of its ongoing outreach efforts, the Reimagining Public Safety Work Group will host an additional listening session for Black community members on Thursday, Oct. 27. Black community members, and others, are invited to attend and share their experiences and the impacts of anti-Black racism in our community from 6 to 8 p.m. at Risen Faith Fellowship, 2149 4th Avenue E. Olympia, WA.

The Reimagining Public Safety Community Work Group has been responsive to community participation needs and concern. This listening session reflects a continuation of this aim and recognizes this moment of heightened interest in the Reimagining

[Continue reading...](#)

## Planning for Oct. 27 Black Community Listening Session in Progress

23 Sep 2022



The City of Olympia and its [Reimagining Public Safety Work Group](#) are continuing to listen and learn about how people feel, what they experience, and steps that can be taken to reimagine public safety. We're in the process of creating a safe space and moment for Olympia's Black community to come together and share. It's an opportunity to contribute additional knowledge and understanding to what the Work Group is gathering and learning from our community, and to continue to inform the recommendations they will develop for the City Council.

The listening session will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 27. The location is still being confirmed. If you are a member of the Black community, we invite you to stay connected and informed by contacting Reimagine Public Safety Project Manager Stacey Ray at [sray@ci.olympia.wa.gov](mailto:sray@ci.olympia.wa.gov).

## Ongoing community outreach

16 Aug 2022



The Work Group is still seeking to hear from community members with a diversity of perspectives and life experiences. In July, August, and September, the Work Group is partnering with community groups, individuals, faith communities, and others to host small focus groups to gather input from community members underrepresented in the listening-and-learning sessions and online survey. The Work Group views this outreach as critical to meeting the goals they established for this process:

- Include diverse and inclusive perspectives and experiences
- Hear from historically marginalized community members
- Listen and learn from those with lived experience; and
- Create brave spaces for honest sharing and dialogue

The Work Group will next share the input they've gathered and talk about possible recommendations with the City Council Committee on Community Livability & Public Safety on November 9.

## Updated community input summary

27 Jun 2022



A high-level summary of input collected from listening-and-learning sessions, focus groups, and surveys is available now.

This is an updated summary that reflects input collected as of June 9, 2022. This data update provides a window into what has been heard so far, and it can change as more community input is collected.

- [View the summary.](#)

## Virtual Town Hall with new Police Chief

23 Jun 2022



The City of Olympia will host a Virtual Town Hall with new Police Chief Rich Allen on Tuesday, June 28, 2022, at 6 p.m.

The Town Hall is an opportunity for the community to learn more about Olympia's new Police Chief, the work the Police Department is undertaking, and Allen's plans for the Department's future.

Olympia's Virtual Town Halls provide a safe gathering space for the community to learn and understand the issues and topics important to the City. Attendees will be able to submit questions live through a moderator during the event.

Residents can attend the Virtual Town Hall over Zoom using the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88315612985>.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Rich Allen named Olympia's permanent Police Chief

16 Jun 2022



Olympia City Manager Jay Burney has named Interim Police Chief Rich Allen as the City of Olympia's new, permanent Police Chief. Allen has led the Olympia Police Department as interim chief since October 2021. Allen has worked in law enforcement for 30 years. His first experience in the field came as a 15-year-old volunteer with the Olympia Police Department's Police Explorers Program.

[Continue reading...](#)

## High-level summary of community input available

07 Jun 2022



A high-level summary of input collected from listening-and-learning sessions and responses to a community-wide online survey is available now. The summary reflects input that has been collected as of May 18, 2022. This data update provides a window into what has been heard so far, and it can change as more data is collected from additional listening-and-learning sessions, focus groups and survey responses.

- [View summary of community input](#)

## Seeking Input from Faith Community Members and Leaders

18 May 2022



The City is seeking input from *faith community members and leaders* at our next “Listening-and-Learning Session” on **Tuesday, May 31 | 6-8 p.m.\*** [Register now >](#)

We want to understand how you have experienced Olympia’s public safety system as a religious community or through your ministry programs and outreach efforts.

- What does feeling safe and being safe mean to you and those you serve?
- What should the City keep doing? What could we change?
- How will we know if our safety system is improving?

Your insights will help our diverse, nine-member Community Workgroup form their recommendations to the Olympia City Council this summer.

Please join us!

### Reimagining Public Safety

#### Listening-and-Learning Session: Faith Communities

Where: [The United Churches of Olympia](#)

When: Tuesday, May 31 | 6-8 p.m.

[Register now >](#)

Unable to attend? You can still share your perspective [HERE](#).

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## Who's Listening

### Jay Burney

City Manager

Email [cityhall@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:cityhall@ci.olympia.wa.us)



### Stacey Ray

Strategic Planning & Performance Manager

City of Olympia

Email [sray@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:sray@ci.olympia.wa.us)



## Timeline



### Phase 1: Early learning

*March-June 2021*

Interviews with stakeholders, presentations to Ad Hoc Committee on Public Safety, work session with City Council.



### Phase 2: Community Work Group onboarding

*June-Aug 2021*

Ten-member workgroup learns about Olympia criminal justice system and prepares for community conversations.



**Phase 3: Community Work Group and City Council learn about the City's public safety system**

*Oct.-Jan. 2022*



**Phase 4: Community Work Group hosts Listening-and-Learning Sessions with community members/groups.**

*April-Oct 2022*



**Phase 5: Develop and Deliver Recommendations to the City Council**

*Oct-Dec 2022*

## Documents



Draft recommendations (324 KB) (pdf)



Updated community input summary: June 24, 2022 (85.7 KB) (pdf)



Community input summary: May 26, 2022 (78.1 KB) (pdf)



Public-Safety-At-A-Glance-042722.pdf (211 KB) (pdf)



Social Justice & Equity Commission Commitments in Action (215 KB) (pdf)



Summary of Stakeholder Interviews (156 KB) (pdf)

 [Evolving Response Timeline \(1.61 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

 [Public-Safety-Snapshots-042722.pdf \(850 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)

 [Presentations to the Ad Hoc Committee for Public Safety](#)

[more..](#)

## Email updates



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