

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	• 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.				
1.2	Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system	• 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.				
1.3	Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies	• 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.				
1.4	Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values	• 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.				
1.5	Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia	• 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.				

		• Celebrate when the community comes together; share stories of healing and community-building in creative, accessible, and informal ways (art, poetry, photography, etc.).				
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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	- 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.				
2.2	Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals	- 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.				
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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	• 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.				
3.2	Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups	• 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.				
3.3	Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services	• 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.				
3.4	Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training	• 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.				
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	• 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.			Lead/Partners	Timeline		
STRATEGY #	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	Lead/Partners			
4.1	Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders	• 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.				
4.2	Develop and expand pre-arrest and pre-booking diversion programs	• 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.				
4.3	Offer restorative practices and transformative justice options	• 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.				
4.4	Expand the availability and use of therapeutic courts	• 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.			Lead/Partners	Timeline		
STRATEGY #	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	Lead/Partners			
5.1	Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive	- 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.				
5.2	Evaluate public safety system staffing levels	- 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.				

5.3	Improve the responsiveness of emergency services	• 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.				
5.4	Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners	• 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. • 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. • 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.				
5.5	Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe	• 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.).				