



City Council

Community Oversight of Law Enforcement Recommendations Discussion

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Title

Community Oversight of Law Enforcement Recommendations Discussion

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The City Council Community Livability & Public Safety Committee on May 22 unanimously approved discussion of the recommendations at a City Council Study Session.

City Manager Recommendation:

Discuss the Community Oversight of Law Enforcement recommendations.

Report

Issue:

Whether to discuss the Community Oversight of Law Enforcement recommendations.

Staff Contact:

Stacey Ray, Director of Strategic Planning & Performance, Organizational Development and Performance 360.753.8046

Presenters:

Stacey Ray, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance
Kathryn Olson, Change Integration (Consultant)
Deputy Chief Sam Costello, Olympia Police Department
Chief Rich Allen, Olympia Police Department
Genevieve Chan, Co-Chair, Social Justice & Equity Commission
Rachelle Martin, Social Justice & Equity Commission
Karin Arnold, Social Justice & Equity Commission
Mark Hodgson, Social Justice & Equity Commission
Kevin Mattison, Social Justice & Equity Commission
Fauziya Mohamedali, Social Justice & Equity Commission
Marianne Ozmun-Wells, Social Justice & Equity Commission
Dr. Amna Qazi, Social Justice & Equity Commission

Background and Analysis

In November 2021, The City Council accepted a recommendation by a Founding Member Work Group to establish a new Social Justice & Equity Commission. The final recommendation was informed by listening sessions with historically marginalized and underrepresented community members. In addition to an overall mission and scope of work for the Commission, the work group also recommended that the City establish a separate board or commission to oversee complaints specifically related to policing.

In December 2022, the Olympia City Council also accepted a set of recommendations from a community work group on how to reimagine public safety for the City of Olympia. To develop those recommendations, the work group listened extensively to the community over the course of a year, and then developed strategies and actions that reflected the needs and desires of a diversity of residents. One of the strategies they identified was to expand the community's role in the City's public safety system.

The City Council asked that the newly formed Social Justice & Equity Commission (Commission) include in their 2023 work plan development of a recommendation for City Council's consideration on community involvement in law enforcement. The purpose being to ensure the Olympia Police Department is transparent and accountable; fostering confidence and trust through processes that are accessible to all; complaint and use of force investigations that are impartial, thorough, and without bias; and policies, practices, and training that are continuously being improved.

In May 2023, the Commission launched a process to develop recommendations in collaboration with a community member work group and Olympia Police Department (OPD) officers. The goal being to ensure the final recommendations are representative of a diversity of lived experiences, perspectives, and professional expertise, and reflect the community's values and needs.

In the first phase of the process, a Commission subcommittee, the community work group members, and OPD participants each worked independently to:

1. Learn how community members are currently involved in law enforcement;
2. Learn about current systems for oversight and accountability;
3. Identify values to be reflected in the final recommendation; and
4. Identify priorities and draft concepts for community involvement and oversight

In the second phase, participants from all three groups came together for two large group work sessions to develop a set of recommendations for community involvement in and oversight of law enforcement. Throughout the process, the recommendations were informed by agreed upon values, recognized attributes of successful oversight models, extensive research, and intentional outreach, including:

- Shared values amongst the participant groups;
- Nationally recognized best practices in civilian oversight;
- Continuous input from OPD, community member work group, and the Commission;
- Research, including interviews with staff, on other communities with systems of community involvement and oversight;
- Interviews with City staff and current Community Use of Force Board members;
- Input from City Councilmembers;
- Comments from community members; and
- Responses to an *Engage Olympia* community survey.

On March 11, the Commission subcommittee met with the Police Auditor and Police Chief to pilot a conversation about the Auditor's draft 2023 End of Year Report. The Commission's and staff takeaways from that experience also informed the draft recommendations.

The purpose of this agenda item is for the Commission to present to the City Council for discussion their recommendations on community involvement in policing. To support the discussion, attachments to this staff report include an agenda for the study session, the recommendations and implementation considerations as approved by the Commission and recommended for discussion by the Community Livability & Public Safety Committee, and the benchmarking report prepared by the project consultant, Kathryn Olson.

Climate Analysis:

This project is not expected to have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Equity Analysis:

Enhancing Olympia's community involvement and oversight in policing was identified as a need through the process to establish the Social Justice & Equity Commission and highlighted as a priority in the Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations. The co-design process used to develop the recommendations was led by the Social Justice & Equity Commission and intentionally designed to be inclusive of community members with a diversity of lived experiences and perspectives, including marginalized community members and those who have been impacted by policing. The resulting recommendations center equity, including by addressing systems change, reducing barriers and enhancing accessibility, improving transparency and proactive communication, advancing data collection and data-driven decision-making, and creating greater opportunity for community involvement.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Community groups, those most impacted by policing, and underrepresented community groups have requested more community involvement in policing with a goal of building trust and legitimacy in the City's public safety system. Meeting summaries, survey results, and other documentation from the process have continually been made available on *Engage Olympia* to support community members following and engaging in the process.

Options:

1. Discuss the recommendations for community involvement and oversight in policing.
2. Don't discuss the recommendations for community involvement and oversight in policing.
3. Discuss the recommendations for community involvement and oversight in policing at another time.

Financial Impact:

The estimated cost for this project is \$90,250 and was appropriated in the 2023 operating budget.

Attachments:

Agenda
Draft Recommendations
Implementation Considerations

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Benchmarking Report
[Link to Engage Olympia](#)