

**TAKOMA PARK
REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY
TASK FORCE**



Charge to the Task Force

Purpose:

The purpose of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force is to develop recommendations that make Takoma Park a safer, more livable community for all residents, with an emphasis on addressing racial inequalities that exist in government and services evolving around public safety. This Task Force is our opportunity to bring new voices into the process as we take stock of what is working, what is not, and as we explore best practices in public safety.



Task Force Members

- **Olajide Atoyebi**
- **Cedric Boatman**
- **Adam Braskich**
- **Sadie Arlene Cheston Harris**
- **Sawa Kamara**
- **Christina Morado**
- **Jumana Musa**
- **Kiminori Nakamura**
- **Emil Parker**
- **Ajmel Quereshi**
- **Michael Rubin**
- **Duane Scott**
- **Lauren Van Tol**
- **Xitlalli Velasquez** (left the Task Force midway through due to a move)



Research and Resources

- More than 600 pages of foundational materials
- 25 subject matter experts, requested by Task Force members, from multiple disciplines and local, state, and national levels
- Deep dive into Takoma Park traffic stop, arrest, budgetary, and city agencies data
- Additional information based on specific questions and recommendations



City of Takoma Park Resources and Documents

- City of Takoma Park Community Survey Presentation
- COVID-19 Impact in Takoma Park Factsheet_061520-Final
- Final FY21 Adopted Budget
- Final Takoma Park Housing Economic Data Analysis Oct 2017
- Takoma Park Focus Group Report 11-09-2018 Final
- Takoma Park Report of Results 2019 (2019-03-04)
- Takoma Park Strategic Plan Final 10-15-17 Draft

Takoma PD Documents

- #8CANTWAIT
- 2020 Annual Report Final
- 202 PL Utility Mini Brochure2
- Chief DeVaul Messages to Community
- Council Questions June 26, 2020
- MSPTest Results Combined MY2020_666841_7 (1)
- PTSC General Regulations
- TPPD Hiring Process
- TPPD Training 2019-2020
- Use of Force Continuum
- Use of Force Incidents Reporting
- TPPD Arrest Data Presentation
- TPPD Traffic Data Presentation

External Documents – Task Force

- ArlingtonPolicePracticeGroup.Subcommittee.Report..FINAL_.2.15.21
- CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) Eugene, Oregon
- Council on Criminal Justice Launches Task Force to Advance Fair, Effective Policing
- External Resource Documents Links
- Montgomery County, Maryland 2021 Reimagining Public Safety Task Force Recommendations Report
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) Report of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force
- Prince George's County, Maryland, Police Reform Work Group
- Public Safety Reimagined in Ithaca and Tompkins County, New York
- Tempe, Arizona Public Safety Advisory Task Force
- The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing

All of this information can be found on the project website:
<https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/reimagining-public-safety/>



Community Quality of Life

Community Quality of Life

This subcommittee will consider the intersection of public safety and quality of life issues, including housing, mental health, and more, as well as the implications for Takoma Park programs, policies, and budget.

Facilitator: Jevin D. Hodge

Committee Members:

- § Sawa Kamara
- § Duane Scott
- § Ajmel Quereshi
- § Emil Parker
- § Christina Morado



Alternative Methods and Responses

Alternative Methods and Responses

This subcommittee will assess Takoma Park's current policing practices for emergency and non-emergency calls, including calls related to mental health. Also, this subcommittee will compare and contrast new potential approaches and best practices that may apply to Takoma Park.

Facilitator: Cordell Carter II

Committee Members:

- § Michael Rubin
- § Jide Atoyebi
- § Sadie Cheston-Harris
- § Cedric Boatman
- § Xitlalli Velasquez



Community Engagement and Transparency

Community Engagement and Transparency

This subcommittee will evaluate practices and policies related to sharing data and budget information among the public as well as efforts to engage community partners in public safety efforts. Additionally, this subcommittee will review existing efforts and consider new approaches to recruiting and retaining public safety professionals.

Facilitator: Jamal Holtz

Committee Members:

- § Lauren Van Tol
- § Adam Braskich
- § Jumana Musa
- § Kiminori Nakamura



Task Force Meetings

The Task Force met from March 16 through July 8 for a total of 18 meetings, spanning over 40 hours of direct Task Force meeting time. Task Force members also spent dozens of hours reviewing extensive materials to inform their work.

Additionally, three Community Listening Sessions were held throughout the process to solicit direct community feedback on the Task Force's work.

Task Force Meetings:

- 03/16/2021
- 03/23/2021
- 04/06/2021
- 04/20/2021
- 05/04/2021
- 05/18/2021
- 06/01/2021
- 06/15/2021
- 06/29/2021
- 07/06/2021
- 07/08/2021

Sub-Committee Meetings:

- 03/30/2021
- 04/13/2021
- 04/27/2021
- 05/11/2021
- 05/25/2021
- 06/08/2021
- 06/22/2021

Community Listening Sessions:

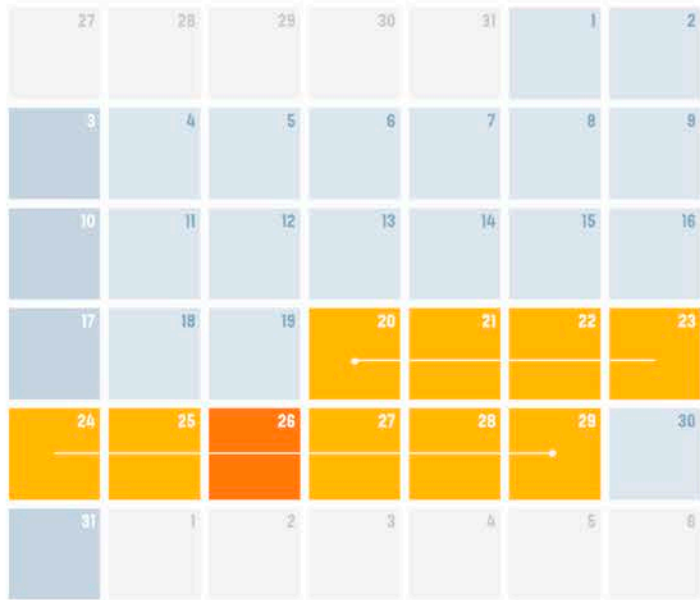
- 04/29/2021
- 05/26/2021
- 06/28/2021

City Council Work Session

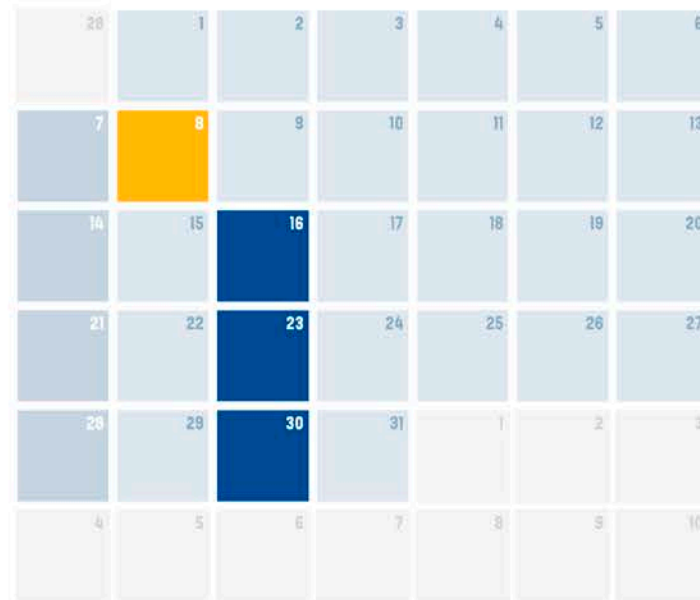
- 07/13/2021



JANUARY



MARCH



 **Process/Administrative**

 **Task Force Meetings**

 **Subcommittee Meetings**

 **Community Meetings**

APRIL



MAY



JUNE - JULY



June 22, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Recorded Session](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)

June 15, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Recorded Session](#)

June 8, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Recorded Sessions](#)

June 1, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Recorded Session](#)

Community Listening Session
Wednesday, May 26, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Recorded Session](#)

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Recorded Session](#)

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Recorded Session](#)

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Recorded Session](#)

Thursday, April 29, 2021

Community Listening Session:

- [Recorded Session](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Recorded Meeting](#)

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 (Virtual Meeting)

- [Agenda](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Meeting for All](#)

Tuesday, April 6, 2021 (Virtual Meeting)

- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [Slide Presentation](#)

Tuesday, March 30, 2021 (Virtual Meeting)

- [Recorded Meeting](#)
Part 1 – <https://youtu.be/fLfus1yxQE0>
Part 2 – <https://youtu.be/mRnWYLV1Ac>
- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)

Tuesday, March 23, 2021 (Virtual Meeting)

- [Meeting Minutes for All](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Slide Deck:](#)
 - [City Government Overview](#)
 - [Housing and Public Safety](#)

These meetings have been viewed over 600 times, as of July 9, 2021.



Community Engagement

- Three Community Listening Sessions (April, May, and June)
- Stakeholder interviews, including one-on-one interviews and focus groups
- A Business Walk at Takoma/Langley Crossroads
- A Focus Group of the Takoma Park Police Department was convened.
- A Focus Group was convened with Ambassadors comprised of Takoma Park residents who had applied to participate in the Task Force but were not named to the Task Force.
- Tour of Dispatch Center
- Public Comment Form ([on the project website](#))
- Public Comments (Email)



Links of Interest:

- **Focus Group Report**
- **Task Force Application**
- **Task Force Rubric/Application summary slides**
- **Public Comment Form Responses**
- **Public Comments from Email**
- **Community Engagement Overview**
- Public Task Force **Resource Folder**
- City Council **Resolution 2020-21** Establishing a Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety to Ensure Racial Justice
- **Task Force Facilitation Team**
- Takoma Park's **Racial Equity Initiative** Project Page
- To watch the recorded Reimagining Public Safety Task Force informational meeting on **YouTube** please **click here**.

All of this information can be found on the project website:

<https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/reimagining-public-safety/>



Recommendations

Each subcommittee developed a list of initial topics and recommendations , which were then discussed with the full Task Force. In addition to regular updates at all weekly public Task Force meetings, a “discussion draft” of the recommendations was presented for feedback at a Community Listening Session on June 28, 2021.

Some recommendations come from a belief that specific things can and should be done better, and others build on the many things that Takoma Park does well, while others come from a belief that Takoma Park can and should be “Best in Class” on these issues.



Recommendations

The Task Force sought to answer three questions:

- 1. What are we trying to solve for?*
- 2. What solutions can we offer?*
- 3. How will implementation and evaluation recommendations be handled/monitored?*

Topic Areas

- Community-led Engagement/Oversight
- New Departments/Functions
- Communication
- Policing/Enforcement
- Education & Training



Recommendations

The recommendations represent the best thinking of the Task Force as a whole, as of the time of submission, informed by the resources they had access to, and constrained by the limitations of a time bound process.

In some cases, individual Task Force members may have considered even more transformative changes but were not supported by all members of the Task Force. In the few instances where the Task Force did not find unanimity, a majority and minority view was provided to best inform future work on these issues.

These recommendations, 50 in total, are presented to the City Council proudly, in the hope that they drive real and lasting positive change.



Community Engagement/Oversight

COMMUNITY-LED ENGAGEMENT/OVERSIGHT

Goal: Given the compressed time frame for the Task Force to analyze data and develop recommendations, it is important to ensure a community standing committee monitors progress in implementing these recommendations and develops new recommendations after the review of future practices.

1) Establish a permanent, civilian-staffed volunteer Takoma Park Public Safety Task Force:

- a) The Task Force will help the City work through the evaluation and implementation of the recommendations below.
- b) Responsible for engaging with community residents and businesses to discuss their needs, issues, and concerns with respect to public safety. This should include the creation of accessible communication channels, possibly through the establishment of volunteer liaison positions to represent specific wards/neighborhoods and interest groups, such as multi-family housing units, business owners, youth, LGBTQ, individuals with disabilities, and individuals proficient in languages other than English.
- c) May also provide an annual report that cites its observations, questions, and analysis of public safety over the last 12 months, and/or provide quarterly updates to the City Council on these same matters.
- d) We recommend members of the committee be offered a stipend to ensure equitable representation from a cross-section of community members, particularly given the consistent level of effort required from the residents who participate, and that membership be proportional by population or level of police interaction.
- e) The Task Force should review police budget increases, review all police-related legislation being considered by the Montgomery County Council and the Maryland General Assembly and provide recommendations to the Mayor and City Council as to the City's and the TPPD's official position on the legislation, and participate in the creation of policies impacting City residents, including but not limited to use of force, use of police technology, and interaction with residents of differing physical and mental abilities, language abilities, and immigration status.
- f) The Task Force should have the authority to make recommendations on the resolution of department recruiting practices and department policies. For any recommendations that are declined, the City Manager and/or Police Chief would be required to provide their reasons in writing as well as lay out the alternative policy or course of action. All such exchanges should be available to the public.
- g) The proposed Task Force should also explore issues such as if it makes sense to buy into the Maryland state pension plan for local police officers and if that would help to relieve Takoma Park of that financial obligation going forward. Our group began to explore this issue but were not able to dig into it deeply in the allotted time.
- h) The Task Force should look at public safety broadly, beyond just policing issues, including items such as any changes to the City's apartment inspection guidelines, policies, or protocols.

New Departments/ Functions

NEW DEPARTMENTS/FUNCTIONS

Goal: Move non-policing functions and functions that are not tied to a violation of the criminal code outside of the police department, including providing funding to support alternatives to policing and support human services and mental health. Often police are called when other types of support may be needed. In short, do not have an armed officer respond to calls that don't require an armed officer.

The organizational structure for these non-policing functions will need further development. It is possible they could be all part of one function/office or may live in different places outside of TPPD. Initial ideas include:

2) Create a Community Assistance Office and Community Safety Team

- a) This office shall be primarily responsible for responding to requests for mental health support/emergencies, neighbor relations, addiction service referral, domestic violence relocation (when appropriate), referrals for social services, homelessness, etc.
- b) Incorporate additional new staff dedicated to serving as case managers and outreach specialists.
- c) As part of the Community Assistance Office, form and fund a **Community Safety Team** staffed by multiple mental health professionals who shall, among other things, respond to calls requiring mental health and substance abuse prevention services without police.
 - i) The team should work to identify community health providers to refer community members and families for wraparound support.
 - ii) The team will have the ability to refer disputes to the mediation center and conflict resolution services.
- d) This new office can produce Resource Guides on mental health resources, substance abuse treatment and more, including information on community partners serving the Takoma Park community. The guides should be published online as well as in printed form.
- e) The Community Assistance Office/Community Safety Team will be separate from the police, but coordination will be made regarding emergencies when necessary (including potentially violent emergencies).
 - i) Accordingly, there should be continued investments made in enhanced TPPD training (such as Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training) and specialized models, such as co-responder models, for when police are involved in non-enforcement related calls.
- f) Initial funding for the Community Safety Team and other items within this recommendation should be prioritized for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Once this pilot program is launched, the impact of the new department should be reviewed in consultation with the permanent Public Safety Task Force to determine its permanent funding structure, which may include reallocation of police budgets and/or other funding sources.

2.1) Establish a Neighborhood Services Division in Takoma Park government that is separate from TPPD.

- a) Responsible for functions such as parking violations, speed camera monitoring, red light camera operation, crossing guards, and code enforcement and assistance (with the goal being to not just identify violations but to provide resources to help correct them).
- b) Funding for these functions shall be redirected from TPPD to the new Neighborhood Services Division.
- c) Employees of the proposed Neighborhood Services Division shall not be assigned or allowed to carry firearms.
- d) Consider if this fits best as part of the proposed new Community Assistance Office.

Goal: Ensure the staff who answer 911 calls are trained to deploy non-police resources when needed and that the public has a direct way to request a non-police response.

3) Establish a 24-hour line and an online system where residents can request a non-armed-police response.

- a) This line would allow Takoma Park residents to request the services of the Community Assistance Office/Community Safety Team/Neighborhood Services Division in a real-time basis without the need for calling 911. The response line should be able to provide residents with assistance to resolve crises including, connecting callers to government/ community resources and services.
- b) The Task Force understands that the Montgomery County Crisis Center now offers a 24/7 hotline. Additional research and coordination are needed on how this hotline would work with local Takoma Park efforts to enhance crisis response, but the goal is to ensure that Takoma Park residents have a 24/7 way to request a non-police-led response.
- c) It is likely that such a hotline may need to be initially created as a pilot program. If that is case, it is critical that data should be collected on calls for service to determine the feasibility of continuing with a 24/7 model.
- d) Improve the ease of filing and accessing reports online to reduce the need to call 911 and the involvement of armed police officers. Numerous cities and counties (e.g., Arlington, Washington, DC) have systems of online police reporting for non-emergency incidents, such as a minor car crash, larceny and theft from vehicle, and vandalism.

4) Train 911 dispatchers and establish protocols to refer mental health emergencies and other non-police calls to non-police resources. As all 911 calls are initially answered outside of Takoma Park (usually at the County level), it is essential that the routing of such calls allows for police and non-police responses as appropriate.

- a) Train 911 dispatchers to refer callers to the Community Assistance Office and other resources and correct departments, and provide hours of availability, phone numbers, addresses, etc.

Goal: Support community programming and coordinate community engagement and ensure the City has the resources that it needs to support programs that improve quality of life.

To support this goal, the Task Force identified additional staffing and personnel needs. These may be new positions/roles or reallocation of existing tasks, they may be housed in existing departments, and/or they may be part of the new offices/functions proposed above. These include:

5) A City Resource Coordinator to coordinate community activities, groups, and neighborhoods.

6) Adding additional staff to the Takoma Park Housing and Community Development Department, including a social worker who can respond to housing conditions and safety issues, landlord-tenant issues, homelessness crisis situations, and issues such as evictions or nonviolent disputes between neighbors.

7) The Victim-Witness Coordinator position should be two roles (versus a combined role as it is currently). Whereas it can make sense for a Witness Coordinator to be housed within TPPD, a Victim's Advocate should be housed outside the Department (possibly in the proposed new Community Assistance Office).

Communications

COMMUNICATIONS

Goal: Ensure the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely and accessible access to City information by improving and resourcing City-led communications:

8) Provide training and update protocols to ensure sensitivity, cultural competency, and fairness in official statements released by all City agencies.

- a) This may be best supported by a dedicated Public Information Officer for City communications.

9) Improve the structure and content of City and Police department websites. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Addressing cultural and language barriers, as well as hearing, vision, and speech difficulties. Currently, key information on the City and police department websites can appear in multiple languages. If literacy is a known concern, adding a function to listen to the websites with a web reader should be considered.
- b) Improving web navigation on the City's website. In addition, create individual web pages/URLs for agencies (e.g., police.takomaparkmd.gov, recreation.takomaparkmd.gov)
- c) Create an FAQ section about TPPD policies and practices. Most of the information that appears in the FAQ section may already exist in City websites, but often not visible or accessible behind linked documents, news, and announcements. This new section can address changes in policies (e.g., the use of force reporting), explain the training officers receive (e.g., implicit bias, mediation, opioid overdose prevention, the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement project), statistical highlights, and clarifications of commonly held perceptions about what the police do and do not do (e.g., What percentage of the calls for service that the City receives each year are about crimes? What percentage of their time do officers spend responding to calls?), as well as fundamental questions about policing in the City (e.g., What is the department doing to address concentrations of serious crimes in certain pockets of the City?).

10) Strengthen the existing methods of communication (email, alert, social media, neighborhood platforms, etc.) and explore new methods to reach residents with limited Internet access (e.g., non-digital), with other information access difficulties (e.g., language barrier).

Goal: Increased transparency and advance notice regarding the budgeting process for police funding.

11) Publicize via City website and social media any changes in funding for police in Takoma Park's annual budget at least 30 days before the budget is voted on by the County Council. The Takoma Park Public Safety Task Force described above will be responsible for reviewing and providing a recommendation regarding any such increase.

Goal: Increase transparency and awareness surrounding housing safety.

12) Ensure that the City publishes on their website all code violations in apartments in Takoma Park over the last calendar year.

Goal: Increase transparency and awareness surrounding public safety data.

13) In recognition that the extensive public safety and policing data provided to the Task Force was of service to our work, and to promote ongoing transparency, we recommend that data provided be made public.

- a) Such data should be updated on a continuous basis with a goal of reaching real-time updates.
- b) Ideally, data should be disaggregated by race, gender, age, and ward. Dispatch data should also be disaggregated by officer initiation versus community initiation, as well as by ward.
- c) Consider participating in the Police Data Initiative and making data available in formats similar to other participating agencies through open data portals (e.g., Baltimore, Montgomery County), allowing access to more complete crime, arrest, traffic, dispatch and call for service, and other public safety-related data through multiple methods of visualization (e.g., map, graphs) and downloading capabilities for systematic analysis.
- d) To continue providing interactive maps and statistical presentations, efforts should be made to maintain expertise and related resources (e.g., funding, computer code).

Goal: Educate around when calling 911 is most appropriate and when options of alternative hotlines, such as the Community Safety Team proposed elsewhere, should be used.

14) Both the members of the public who shared their thoughts and the police officers who participated in a focus group generally expressed their support for implementing either non-emergency call services or new call-taking and dispatching protocols to divert 911 calls to non-police services, if appropriate. If these initiatives are implemented, the City should promote community engagement and outreach to increase awareness (and the use) of a new number or process.

Policing/Enforcement

POLICING/ENFORCEMENT

Goal: Recruit and retain a quality police force by ensuring the mental health needs of officers are supported and resourced appropriately.

15) The Takoma Park City Council shall ensure that the police employee assistance program has appropriate funding to ensure that Takoma Park police officers are provided with access to confidential counseling, crisis intervention, stress management, and peer support services for police officers.

16) The Takoma Park City Council shall also pass a resolution stating that that the City of Takoma Park supports the right of all Takoma Park employees to have access to confidential mental health, stress management, and/or peer support services without fear of retaliation.

17) Explore the viability of rental housing subsidies and programs to ensure that officers can live in Takoma Park and become integrated into the community (which may also support officer retention).

Goal: To ensure patrol staff focus policing resources on serious crime and deprioritize minor infractions.

18) The TPPD shall use their discretion to end police traffic stops for low-level offenses. The proposed permanent Public Safety Task Force would work with TPPD to develop detailed guidance on what sorts of

19) Provide clear communication of policing priorities. The TPPD Chief should continue to communicate to patrol staff that policing resources should be concentrated on serious criminal activities, with a focus on community engagement and investigating serious crimes.

Goal: Require that officers obtain written and informed consent before searching a vehicle or residence to address the common scenario in which individuals are unable to distinguish where and when they may refuse an officer's request to search their property.

20) An officer may not search a vehicle or a residence unless they have appropriate probable cause, or they obtain written, informed consent in a language with which the driver is familiar before they search a vehicle.

- a) For vehicle stops, the officer shall also document the race and ethnicity of each driver stopped, whether a search was conducted, and the basis for the search.

Goal: Develop speed camera policies that appropriately balance the need for traffic safety and for assuring that civil fines do not unfairly burden those of limited financial means.

21) Create a poverty exemption/fine reduction program for recipients of speed camera tickets, whereby if an individual's income falls below a certain amount (proposed to be 150% of the federal poverty limit), their fine for speeding tickets issued via speed camera is excused. Models for how this could look are included in the footnotes.

22) The establishment of additional speed camera zones should be the subject of properly noticed public engagement and focused on areas with high rates of traffic accidents.

Goal: Too often the people and businesses that are most likely to be the victims of crime are over-policed and under-policed at the same time, and we understand that addressing the over-policing concern alone is not a complete solution for public safety. Accordingly, we must also foster community/police relationships, promote procedurally just policing, and incentivize de-escalation.

23) Support community-oriented policing services, procedures, and partnerships. In our conversations, some local area businesses suggested that increased police presence would help them in some way. We suggest that the TPPD check in with businesses to see if that is necessary in order to increase public safety. If so, we recommend bicycle or foot patrols. The City Council may want to consider procuring electric bicycles. The new permanent Public Safety Task Force and recommended community liaisons should facilitate the implementation.

24) TPPD should continue practicing "guardian policing," and to reinforce this, all officers should have annual de-escalation refreshers/training.

25) Quantify instances where officers attempted to use and successfully used de-escalation techniques and create an award/bonus to incentivize de-escalation and crisis avoidance.

Goal: Increase accountability and transparency in policing.

26) Update the police department's body-worn camera (BWC) policy to ensure accountability and transparency:

- a) All BWCs must record 120 seconds of video prior to the officer pressing the "record" button and ensure that valuable video evidence is not lost due to officer delay in beginning the recordings.
- b) Explore whether the BWC vendor (Axon) could offer a feature that would provide a short (15- to 30-second) period of pre-activation audio recording, to ensure that officers do not fail to record statements made at the beginning of resident encounters, which are often important in determining the legality of police conduct.
- c) Within 10 days following any in-custody death, use of deadly force or use of less lethal force by a Takoma Park police officer, the department must release all body camera footage of the incident, unless the police department applies for and is granted an extension of time by the City Council, with input from the new public safety auditor recommended below. Extensions shall be authorized only to protect the integrity of ongoing criminal or internal investigations, and the rationales shall be made public.
- d) BWC's must not be used with other biometric technologies such as facial recognition software, iris scans, etc.
- e) In all cases in which officers engage in reportable uses of force (as defined in [G.O. 617\(08\)](#)), before reviewing their BWC footage, they must submit a preliminary written report describing the force that was used and explaining their justification for it. The officers may then review the BWC footage and submit a supplemental report.
- f) Body camera policies should be updated regularly every two years with input from the community (including the proposed new Task Force and police auditor(s)).

Goal: In accordance with national best practices and to ensure Takoma Park residents experience maximum transparency and understanding around the policing process, provide for resident (non-police) oversight of TPPD to ensure that its policies and practices are fair, lawful, unbiased, and evidence based.

27) Create a public safety auditor, consisting of: 1) A single individual employed by the City, not under the control of TPPD, whose responsibilities may or may not extend beyond police-auditing functions; or 2) A subcommittee of the permanent Public Safety Task Force, consisting of volunteer civilians with relevant professional expertise that would make their work and findings as transparent to, and driven by, the public as possible.

- a) This would include coordinating community input around police policies, training, and practices, and ensuring that the outcomes of all evaluations are made public in a timely and transparent manner. The Communications section of this report contains recommendations about improving public engagement and input.
- b) The auditor(s) would work closely with the Police Accountability Board (PAC) and the Administrative Charging Committee (ACC) at the county level while providing additional oversight at the city level by reviewing TPPD internal investigations, receiving internally generated complaints, identifying broad patterns of resident complaints, and conducting evaluations of police policies, training, and practices.
- c) The auditor(s) would oversee TPPD's investigation of complaints against police officers. Under HB670, resident complaints against TPPD officers will be submitted to the county PAB, investigated by TPPD, reviewed for charging decisions by the ACC, and if necessary, adjudicated by trial boards that include civilian members. Once complaints are fully resolved, the auditor(s) would be given access to all materials in TPPD's internal investigative file, including body-worn camera footage. This will allow the auditor(s) to: (1) review the sufficiency and impartiality of the investigation conducted by TPPD, and (2) identify areas where improvements to TPPD practices may be needed, even if no formal misconduct was found.

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- d) The auditor(s) would be available to receive confidential complaints from TPPD officers. The auditor(s) would serve as an avenue for TPPD officers and civilian employees to lodge complaints or concerns about general TPPD practices or specific instances of misconduct when they are uncomfortable raising those issues within their chains of command. The auditor(s) would then be entitled to request and receive any relevant materials in TPPD's possession to evaluate the complaint. To the extent an internal complaint involves possible criminal activity, the auditor(s) would consult with the chief of police and the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office to determine whether an independent criminal investigation is warranted.
- e) The auditor(s) would track patterns of complaints and broader systemic issues within TPPD. Apart from reviewing the investigations into individual complaints, the auditor(s) would track resident complaints in the aggregate and identify patterns of alleged misconduct that might require greater scrutiny. The auditor(s) would also receive resident complaints about general TPPD practices (as opposed to specific instances of alleged misconduct) and would develop any appropriate policy recommendations for delivery to the chief of police and the City Council.
- f) The auditor(s) would serve as a liaison to other City departments on matters of public safety. The auditor(s) would assist the city manager in ensuring that TPPD and other City departments were coordinating effectively in delivering all aspects of public safety (e.g., working with TPPD and Public Works to ensure sufficient street lighting in areas where it is needed for crime prevention).
- g) The auditor(s) would review TPPD policies and recruiting practices.

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- h) The auditor(s) would review any specific incidents involving TPPD that generate widespread community concern, including at the request of City Council.
 - i) This should include the May 2020 incident involving defendant David Dixon.
 - ii) Defendant David Dixon is currently charged with two counts of murder in relation to an April 2021 shooting. He is also charged with felony assault and firearm charges in relation to a May 2020 incident. Both crimes occurred at the Takoma Overlook Condominiums.
 - iii) The charges relating to the May 2020 incident are based on video evidence that Dixon pointed a long gun at an unarmed woman in the lobby of the Takoma Overlook building. Although TPPD responded to the location at the time and spoke with Dixon and the victim, officers did not discover that this assault had occurred. TPPD states that it became aware of the crime in April 2021, when an unidentified source provided the media with surveillance footage of the May 2020 assault.
 - iv) Upon conclusion of defendant Dixon's criminal cases, or sooner if practicable, the auditor(s) would be given all materials related to the May 2020 investigation, including police reports and body-worn camera footage, and would undertake a review to determine whether TPPD failed to follow any policies or best practices in not discovering the assault. The auditor(s) would then issue a written, public report recommending any appropriate changes to TPPD training, policies, or practices.

Goal: Coordinate police response across the multiple jurisdictions that operate in and around Takoma Park to improve police responses and ensure Takoma Park's innovative and community-driven approaches are recognized and modeled by others who operate here.

28) Continue efforts to create and/or strengthen mutual agreement/MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] with MPD [DC Metropolitan Police Department], PGPD [Prince George's County Police Department], and MCPD [Montgomery County Police Department].

29) Review and update cross-jurisdictional coordination protocols for incidents and encourage joint training on said protocols to ensure everything functions and makes sense (run throughs).

Goal: Evaluate the proper use (if any) of new policing technology, including a reevaluation of any current technologies already in use, given privacy concerns.

30) The Task Force was unified in their agreement that **emergent and rapidly changing policing technologies are an important issue deserving of additional study and public input.** This should be a focus of the proposed ongoing Task Force and involve public engagement and transparency.

The Task Force also shares the following views on license plate readers (LPRs), which are currently in use by TPPD:

31) A majority of Task Force members recommend eliminating all funding for the current use of and the purchase of additional LPR technology. As civil rights groups around the country have repeatedly noted, LPR technologies raise serious privacy concerns without a legitimate police interest sufficient to counterbalance the intrusion on privacy. Takoma Park only adopted this technology within the last seven years and did so at that time over significant opposition from the ACLU of Maryland. Given the potential privacy intrusions, it remains unclear whether this technology is really necessary to prevent crime in Takoma Park and should be eliminated.

32) A minority of Task Force members recommend that the City Council request information from TPPD about how LPRs have been employed and the investigative value that they provide and then weigh any benefits against the privacy concerns articulated in the majority recommendation. If it is determined that LPRs should continue to be used, clear rules on their usage should be established, including but not limited to requirements regarding the cause required to use the data, and limitations on sharing such data with other departments, along with reporting requirements to ensure it is used in an even-handed way.

Goal: Limit or eliminate the use of police canines to prevent unreasonable uses of force and investigative tactics.

The Task Force was unified in their agreement that this was an important issue, but had differing views on the proposed solution:

33) A majority of the Task Force recommends eliminating all funding for the use of canines by the Takoma Park Police Department and the retirement of the single canine currently employed.

34) A minority of the Task Force supports future canine use for tracking and detection purposes, but not for use against individuals (e.g., biting and holding) and in the context of vehicle sniffs only when reasonable cause exists.

Goal: Evaluate the need for proposed renovations to the Takoma Park Police Department Space, and if this is the best use for these funds (approx. \$800k) in a “reimagined” public safety environment.

The Task Force was unified in their agreement that this was an important issue, especially in the context of reimagining public safety and our proposed shifting of functions away from TPPD, but had differing views on the proposed solution:

35) A majority of the Task Force recommends reevaluating plans for funding for the construction of a new dispatch area and additional spaces for TPPD, as significant portions of the dispatch responsibility will be shifted to non-police officials, or alternatively, redirect the funding for a secure, private dispatch area with the necessary technological capabilities outside of the physical confines of the Police Department. If anything, the Task Force recommends a new plan envisioning a smaller construction project in light of our proposed shifting of functions away from TPPD.

36) A minority of the Task Force recommends proceeding with the budgeted improvements given the subpar conditions of the current space, which have led to concerns regarding victim privacy and staff recruitment and retention. However, it is recommended that ARPA funds be used where possible, that these renovations be done in a way that allow for non-police office/meeting space use in the future, and that continued efforts be made to shift funding from “enforcement” to “assistance.”

Goal: Increase transparency of investigations into complaints against police officers.

37) Post reports online documenting investigations into resident complaints filed against police officers.

- a) Pursuant to Maryland House Bill (HB) 183, expected to take effect in July 2022, the police department should adopt a policy that it will proactively disclose police records of any complaints made against officers and related investigations into police misconduct. Such records, under SB178, (Anton’s Law) will no longer be deemed confidential “personnel records” under the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA).
- b) Under HB183, the police department may proactively post such records on its government website without waiting for a resident to file an MPIA request.
- c) The proactive disclosure policy should be subject to limited exceptions and limitations:
 - i) In accordance with the MPIA, the department must redact sensitive information from otherwise disclosable documents before posting them online, such as dates of birth, social security numbers, personal financial records, and medical information. Officers’ names should not be redacted once SB178 (“Anton’s Law”) takes effect.
 - ii) In cases of resident complaints, the identity of the complainant should be redacted to avoid discouraging residents from making complaints out of concern for their privacy.
 - iii) The police department may delay public disclosure of such records until its own internal investigation is completed, but the documents should be posted no later 30 days after the conclusion of the investigation.

Education and Training

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Goal: Crime is often not a product of individual choice but societal and structural deficiencies including the lack of sufficient educational, employment, and social programs and opportunities. Increasing access to after school, job training, and mentorship programs seeks to address the true root causes of crime.

38) Invest in an increased number of scholarships for after school and weekend programs for children in Takoma Park.

39) Invest in additional scholarships for job training programs for Takoma residents who are un- or underemployed or who are reentering the community after release from incarceration.

40) Create a Takoma Park mentorship program. High school students who are residents of Takoma Park would be offered the opportunity to pair with residents and/or business owners in order to expose students to new opportunities and realities and expose both mentors and students to new cultural backgrounds and frames of reference.

The Task Force was unified in the above scholarship and mentorship recommendations. There were some differences regarding the proposed funding stream for these programs.

41) A majority of Task Force members recommend the funding of the above scholarships should be accomplished through reallocation of any TPPD funding that happens if/when non-police responsibilities and functions are shifted away from TPPD, and other sources, if needed, and that the evaluation of these funding streams should be a focus of the proposed permanent Task Force.

42) A minority of Task Force members believe that determining the specific source of the funding is not of primary importance to for these recommendations, and that they should be invested in from any available resources, while also agreeing that that the evaluation of funding streams should be a focus of the proposed Task Force.

Goal: Existing research shows that school resource officers (SROs) disproportionately discipline Black and Brown students, contribute to a school-to-prison pipeline, and often drain resources that could be devoted to more counselors and social workers.

43) The Takoma Park City Council should pass a resolution reinforcing that Takoma Park continues to support not having Montgomery County School Police/Resource Officers (SROs) in public schools located in Takoma Park.

- a) The resolution is an opportunity to go “on record” regarding our local beliefs around this important regional and national issue, and should call for SROs to be replaced with school counselors, specify that SROs should not be effectively replaced by other police officers whose assignments are geographically tied to schools and/or who are specifically tasked to respond to incidents in schools, include a commitment for schools to adopt a restorative justice approach to resolving student discipline, and call for the elimination of racial disparities in school discipline and an end to the school-to-prison pipeline.
- b) A copy of the resolution should go to the Montgomery County Executive, and all members of the Montgomery County Council.

Goal: Students should know their rights when interacting with police, particularly as students may not be aware that they may refuse certain demands for information.

44) Establish funding for Know Your Rights/Street Law training for all students enrolled in any school in Takoma Park. The training should be consistent with relevant Maryland and/or Montgomery County Education standards, and groups such as the ACLU of Maryland should be consulted during the process of developing the training curriculum.

Goal: We recognize that historically speaking there has been a transfer of youth of color from the education system to the criminal justice system. To eliminate that pipeline, we recommend the additional training resources:

45) Advocate to Montgomery County that school administrators and teachers receive training/increased training regarding the unequal distribution of discipline and lack of praise regarding students of color.

46) Create grants for Takoma Park teachers to encourage attendance of teacher-specific training on topics such as: cultural competency, implicit bias, mindfulness and its impact on lowering implicit bias, empathy and empathic communication training, the history of the disproportionate way discipline is handed out in the school system, the correlation between over-disciplining of students and low graduation rates/poor school performance, the over-eagerness to classify students as having a learning disability/move students into special education and out of general education classrooms, etc.

Goal: Collect data to ensure that the Educational and Training suggestions are bearing fruit.

47) Takoma Park shall request disaggregated data on public schools from MCPS (discipline, tardies given, suspensions), and use that to determine if community engagement suggestions are working or need to be adjusted. The recommended permanent Public Safety Task Force can help with this evaluation.

Goal: Promote and create cultural competency and anti-racism in Takoma Park.

48) Offer courses that allow Takoma Park residents and staff to: learn about the breadth of identities in Takoma Park, enhance cultural competency and anti-racism practices, explore the cultural diversity of Takoma Park through fostering conversations and team building scenarios, and provide communities with divergent backgrounds a vehicle to explore their commonalities and shared humanity.

Other Items

OTHER ITEMS

Near the end of our time together, Task Force members formulated two additional recommendations. Given their addition later in the process we did not get the chance to fully explore them together as a group. But, they are important issues and are included here for additional study and action. The Task Force was unified in support for including #49, with majority in support of #50 and minority opposed to it based a need for more information.

Goal: Prohibit the militarization of civilian law enforcement agencies and prevent the excessive use of force by police.

49) The Takoma Park Police Department does not currently participate in the federal 1033 program or other federal programs that transfer military equipment to civilian law enforcement agencies, or otherwise purchase military equipment for use. The Task Force recommends that the Department continue to follow this prohibition.

Goal: The Council should review practices related to the use of civil asset forfeiture.

50) The council should review practices related to the use of civil asset forfeiture with a goal of prohibiting its use by TPPD. Given the limited time the Task Force had to explore this issue, it should also be the subject of further review by the proposed new Task Force.

Thank you! Questions?

