

**City of Takoma Park
Reimagining Public Safety Task Force
5.11.2021 Meeting Summary**

Agenda

Welcome, Review Charge, Timeline, Public Comment Form, and Community Listening Session 5.24

Jevin Hodge (*co-facilitator*) welcomed Task Force members and the public and outlined the structure of the meeting. The Charge, Timeline, Public Comment Form, and Community Listening Session on 5.24 at 6:30 PM were reviewed.

Timeline

Facilitators then led a discussion on the results of the survey regarding keeping to the original schedule for delivering recommendations to the City Council versus extending the work of the Task Force. It was pointed out that there is a risk of losing additional Task Force members if the timeline is extended and a process would have to be developed to replace them.

As of the start of this session, eight Task Force members had responded to the survey with the majority being in favor of extending to the first week in July. The link to the survey was circulated and two more Task Force members responded. Of ten responses, eight are in favor of extending to July, one is willing to extend beyond the summer, and one wished to keep to the original deadline with more meetings compressed in the timeline.

It was noted that when this task force was initially thought of it was expected there would be time to get recommendations about this current budget cycle. However, the task force wasn't formed in time to meet the council's FY22 budget timeline. Additionally, there may be new federal funds that need to be allocated by July that the task force can give recommendations.

Task Force members offered the following comments:

- We would like to extend long enough to get recommendations somewhat finalized and then reviewed by the community.
- It makes sense for each subcommittee to have dedicated time with a speaker who will speak specifically to a topic they are tackling.
- It feels like there is a lot of information we need to know before we can make further recommendations. Things may not happen till FY23 so there will need to be someone to

follow up. We don't want to be like the County and fail to follow through – would be willing to go through summer and get it right.

- Extend for one month, have the May listening session as an open format meeting where we can hear more community feedback, and then add a second listening session in mid-June where we can preview recommendations and gather additional feedback.

General consensus seemed to be that a one month extension made sense, as did adding one additional listening session in June. The facilitators are going to discuss this timeline with the Steering Committee with a goal of having a final schedule decision made before our next meeting on 5.18.

Subject Matter Experts

Next the group discussed the various subject matter experts (SMEs) who have been mentioned or requested and the need to get them scheduled in the near future to inform the Task Force's work. Some SMEs may be particular to one subcommittee or appropriate for the full Task Force. SMEs mentioned so far include:

Claudia Tolson, Takoma Park Police Department Victim/Witness Coordinator

David Moon, Maryland House of Delegates for Takoma Park

Roy Austin, Takoma Park resident, former Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice

Dara Baldwin, Center for Disability Rights

Someone who can speak about CAHOOTS

Montgomery County Task Force representatives such as Bernice Merku-North (Co-Chair), Marc Mauer (Co-Chair), and Simone Walton, DSW, LMSW (Mental Health sub-committee lead)

Public Listening Session

The next community listening session will be on 5.24 at 6:30 PM. It was noted that the city is making an extra level of outreach to have broader group participation in the May listening session and the Task Force was asked to help with this effort by sharing with their networks.

The public meeting ended at this point and Task Force members broke into their subcommittees for additional small group discussion. Below is a summary of those working sessions:

Subcommittee Discussions Takeaways

#1 Community Quality of Life

How this subcommittee wants to divide up tasks:

- Tackle the budget
- Look at mental health along with housing, substance abuse, homelessness, and other issues that tend to dovetail with mental health issues.

- Touch base throughout the week to relay what we discuss and gather (via email)? Can collaborate together outside of task force times?

Initial brainstorm on recommendations:

- A civic group within TP comprised of community members, non-profits, etc. that advises
- Fund resource coordinator who supports the work of that civic work
- Resource guide for mental health and community partners
- A 24/7 non-emergency line
- A crisis response team that answers calls without the police
- Increase communications with the general public

#2 Alternatives, Methods, and Responses

Extending is a good option, schedules seem to be more available to use time effectively and prioritize Task Force work going into the summer.

- More understanding of the budget changes and data from Suzie; where funding streams need to come from if they're a separate entity
- Interest of TF and interest of city differs. Seems more effective to streamline existing funds and divide them up differently.
- Possible to get info in advance? Difficult to review data during the week. Don't like coming into the meetings blind. Wanting to prepare intelligent questions.
- Does TF have police sensors or facial recognition? Data on AI may have certain biases towards darker skin individuals. TP may not have this kind of technology
- Would be good to see any other regulations department might have. Such as training, policies, and procedures in the use of force. More details.
- Important for an unarmed dispatch for calls such as mental health and special calls that require specific training.
- Data on general calls for service? Nothing has been provided about this. On all dispatch data. How widespread are the number of calls daily? If we know the calls for service, it would help us provide better recommendations for dispatch
- Specific jobs and requirements of PD and what their daily role looks like.
- K9 unit - providing recommendations on whether to move it. May cost more than it benefits.

#3 Community Engagement and Transparency

Transparency in policies for all agencies/departments:

- Website difficult to navigate; look for good models and how they are organized

- Every agency should have an individual site page listing the policies associated with that agency

Transparency around complaints and how to handle oversight:

- Police complaints should not be housed in the police department – should be independent
- Set up a board appointed by all parties to review complaints as they come in
 - Takoma Park is so small can it create a sufficient sized board to review?
- Have a better sense if we could see the complaints – transparency in complaints

Bodycam policy going forward:

- Body cam policy, set to be reviewed in 2022; It was set up in 2015, which is too long in the tech world to wait to review; Takoma Park should consider a review sooner than 2022
- ABA issuing guidelines – can be useful

Move activities not part of policing out of the police department

- E.g., crossing guards; code enforcement

Improve communication:

- Source of the communication identified
- Timeliness
- Cultural sensitivity
- Multi-channel, multi-mode

Focus group planned 5.12 with community members to receive additional input

For next week:

- Have active discussions between meetings
- Develop a list of ideas
- Identify experts to invite – Internal Affairs specifically
- Set parameters – additional data?
- Explore best models