

Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee

Police Reforms Work Plan: Reimagining Community Safety Status Report

May 20, 2021

Item (d)1

Angel Rios

Deputy City Manager



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1. Project Background

June 2020 Council Direction

Source	Direction
Memorandum from Councilmember Peralez from June 12, 2020 City Council meeting	“Accept the recommendations in the memorandum dated June 5, 2020 , amending recommendation 6 to establish not only a process to review our use of force policies, but to also include a process that broadly engages our community on what the future of policing should look like in San José.”
Memorandum from Vice Mayor Jones from June 16, 2020 City Council meeting	“Allocate an additional \$100,000 to create a Public Safety Community Process tasked with evaluating and recommending new ways in which our police department intervenes with social issues and reduces social conflicts that are noncriminal in nature.”
Memorandum from Councilmember Arenas from June 16, 2020 City Council meeting	“Direct the City Manager to explore and return to Council with recommendations on initiatives to help improve community/police relations and opportunities for taking ongoing community feedback as a continuation to the My Brother’s Keeper process as referenced in the Mayor’s memo.”
Memorandum from Councilmember Carrasco from June 16, 2020 City Council meeting	“Direct the City Manager to explore and return to Council with recommendations on initiatives to help improve community/police relations and opportunities for taking ongoing community feedback as a continuation to the My Brother’s Keeper process as referenced in the Mayor’s memo.”

Project Scope Based on Council Direction

- **Alternatives to Policing:** Develop recommendation on how the City can respond differently to issues that currently fall under the responsibility of the Police Department. This effort includes identifying alternative, non-police programs or services that could address calls for service currently handled by the police, with the goal to reduce social conflicts that are noncriminal in nature.
- **Community/Police Relations:** Develop recommendations on improving the relationship between the Police Department and the community and on providing opportunities for ongoing community feedback.

Reimagining Community Safety Advisory Group

Goals of the Advisory Group, based on project scope:

1. Creating a shared vision of community safety;
2. Engaging community stakeholders in a dialogue and community process that evaluates and recommends new ways in which the police department and non-law enforcement sectors intervene with social issues and reduce social conflicts that are non-criminal in nature, and
3. Carrying out an effective and inclusive community engagement process that is transparent, yields high participation from all sides of the issues, and builds strong sustainable relationships and partnerships between community and police.
4. Generate recommendations that enable the vision of community safety.

2. Feedback from Advisory Group

Themes from Feedback

- **Scope:** Members have expressed interest in a range of topics, some of which are included in Council direction and some of which are not.
- **Community Leadership and Autonomy:** Most members agree that Group members should have a strong hand in guiding the group's work, but opinions vary as to whether the group should be fully autonomous from the City.
- **Group Organization:** Members have made various suggestions on how to organize the group to do its work, most notably suggesting that sub-groups be established to focus on specific topic areas.
- **Respect and Common Understanding:** members with diverse perspectives have expressed a desire that the group be able to discuss difficult issues openly and honestly on the basis of respect and common understanding.
- **Communication and Accountability:** Some members have asked how the City Manager and City Council will communicate with the Advisory Group about their thoughts on the Advisory Group's work and recommendations and be accountable for implementing recommendations.

Project Scope

Advisory Group Member Interest Areas	Is It Within the Council-Directed Scope?
Alternatives to Policing: Some members are eager to explore alternative means of addressing calls for service that currently fall to the police.	Yes, this is clearly within the scope as directed by Council.
Neighborhood Safety: Some members are concerned with improving and maintaining the safety of their neighborhoods.	Yes, neighborhood safety is a key goal and policy consideration when considering alternatives to policing.
Police Reform: Some members are interested in focusing on police reform, such as issues of police accountability and oversight	No, issues of police accountability and oversight are not squarely within the Council direction.

Community Leadership and Autonomy

Community Leadership and Autonomy: Many members feel that the Advisory Group membership should have a strong role in guiding the group's work; however, opinions vary as to the degree of autonomy the group needs, as follows:

- **Greater community leadership within current structure:** Some members have recommended that the Advisory Group be given a stronger hand in guiding the Group's work within the current City process, in collaboration with City staff, such as through a steering committee.
- **Fully Autonomous Group:** Others have proposed that the group be fully autonomous from the City. These members have expressed concern that if the process is not fully autonomous, the City Administration or Police Department could serve as a check or filter on the work. Some have also suggested that members of the Police Department should not participate in the process, or should participate in a more limited and structured way.

3. Next Steps

Key Decision Points

- **Scope:** Should the Group's scope be expanded to include issues of police accountability and oversight, or other issues of internal reform within the Police Department?
- **Autonomy:** How autonomous should the Advisory Group be? Specifically:
 - Should the group **continue as a City-established body but with modifications** that give members a stronger hand in guiding the groups work, such as a steering committee?
 - Alternatively, should the group be established as **fully autonomous** from the City? If the group were fully autonomous, the City would need to determine whether and to what degree it would participate in the autonomous process.
- **Police Involvement:** Does participation by the Police Department in this process continue to be a priority for the City, as it has been so far?

Next Steps

- Discuss and receive feedback from the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee.
- Cross Reference to City Council on June 8, 2021 to receive Council direction on the path forward.
- Based on Council direction, staff will work collaboratively to develop a revised project work plan, timeline and budget, as needed.

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