



Office of the City Manager

May 28, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: *DWR* Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Re: Update on Re-Imagining Public Safety

On July 14, 2020, City Council adopted an omnibus package to re-imagine public safety and policing in the City of Berkeley. The omnibus package consisted of numerous elements including, but not limited to the following:

- Having the City Auditor perform an analysis of City's emergency 9-1-1 calls-for-service and responses, as well as analysis of the Berkeley Police Department's (BPD) budget.
- Analyzing and developing a pilot program to re-assign non-criminal police service calls to a Specialized Care Unit.
- Creating plans and protocols for calls for service to be routed and assigned to alternative preferred responding entities and consider placing dispatch in the Fire Department or elsewhere outside the Police Department.
- Analyzing litigation outcomes and exposure for city departments in order to guide the creation of City policy to reduce the impact of settlements on the General Fund.
- Engaging a qualified firm(s) or individual(s) to lead a robust, inclusive, and transparent community engagement process with the goal of achieving a new and transformative model of positive, equitable and community-centered safety for Berkeley.
- Pursuing the creation of a Berkeley Department of Transportation ("BerkDoT") to ensure a racial justice lens in traffic enforcement and the development of transportation policy, programs and infrastructure, and identify and implement approaches to reduce and/or eliminate the practice of pretextual stops based on minor traffic violations

Subsequent to the adoption of the omnibus package, the City established a multi-department working group to oversee and implement various components of the package. The working group consists of the following:

- City Manager;
- Deputy City Managers;

- City Attorney;
- Fire Chief;
- Health, Housing and Community Services (HHCS) Director;
- Human Resources Director;
- Police Chief; and
- Public Works Director.

Weekly coordinating meetings have been established, as well as an organizational structure that will enable city staff to advance the various referrals in the omnibus package at the same time.

Our work to advance the omnibus package has been organized in the following manner:

- HHCS Director, Lisa Warhuus, is leading the work to develop a Specialized Care Unit pilot program.
- Interim Fire Chief, Abe Roman, is leading the work to develop a plan for priority dispatching.
- City Attorney, Farimah Brown, is managing the analysis of litigation claims and settlements.
- The Public Safety / Police Re-Imagining and community engagement process will be led by Deputy City Manager David White. Deputy City Manager White will also be supporting the City Manager by providing overall project management support to the team.
- BerkDoT will be led by our Public Works Director, Liam Garland.

Current Updates (*for the May 25, 2021 City Council Meeting*)

The following provides a brief overview of what has been accomplished since the last update to City Council on April 27, 2021.

- Priority Dispatching
 - A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued April 27, 2021, to seek proposals from qualified firms to assist the City in transitioning to a prioritized fire and medical dispatch system. Responses to the RFP are due today, May 25, 2021. Staff will be putting together a team, reviewing proposals, and selecting a firm to assist the Fire Department in moving this item forward.
- Specialized Care Unit (SCU)
 - The SCU Steering Committee is working with the consultant to conduct a deep community outreach and engagement to better understand:

- People's experiences with, and perceptions of, the current mental health and substance use related crisis response options;
 - Challenges and strengths of current mental health and substance use related crisis response options;
 - Ideas for an alternative approach to mental health and substance use related crises;
 - Needs identified by the community for a safe, effective mental health and substance use related crisis response.
- The Steering Committee has completed its initial phases of planning and materials engagement and has embarked upon the Community Experience and Landscape Assessment that includes:
 - Crisis system provider and partner interviews and focus groups;
 - Community based organization and other community advocate focus groups;
 - Community listening sessions;
 - Individual community member interviews and focus groups;
 - Benchmarking and best practice research (nearly complete).

This phase will be complete by July 2021, and all of the information gathered will inform design of a proposed SCU for Berkeley.

- Public safety and Police Re-imagining Community Engagement
 - (Background) On December 15, 2020, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a contract with the [National Institute of Criminal Justice Reform](#) (NICJR) to conduct research, analysis, and use its expertise to develop reports and recommendations for community safety and police reform as well as plan, develop, and lead an inclusive and transparent community engagement process to help the City achieve a new and transformative model of positive, equitable and community-centered safety for Berkeley.
 - City staff from the City Manager's Office continue to coordinate regularly with NICJR and attached is a more thorough update from NICJR regarding their work with the City.
- [Reimagining Public Safety Task Force \(Task Force\)](#)¹
 - (Enabling legislation for background only) On January 19, 2021, the City Council adopted [revisions to the enabling legislation for the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force](#)².
 - Since the last update provided to City Council, the Task Force has met on three occasions (April 29, 2021, May 13, 2021, and May 19, 2021), with each meeting lasting around four (4) hours. To achieve the highest level of transparency, the

¹ <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/RIPST.aspx>.

² https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2021/01_Jan/Documents/2021-01-19_Item_18_Revisions_to_Enabling_Legislation_for_Reimagining.aspx

minutes and full video of Task Force meetings are posted on the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force website. In addition, all of the materials presented to the Task Force are also available on the Task Force website.

- Some highlights from recent Task Force meetings include:
 - The City Auditor's Office presented their report, "[revisions to the enabling legislation for the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force](#)".³
 - NICJR presented a draft report on New and Emerging Models of Community Safety.
 - Interim Police Chief Louis presented to the Task Force on two occasions discussing hiring, training, and implementation of Fair and Impartial Policing Workgroup recommendations
 - Dr. Warhuus provided an update to the Task Force on the process to establish a pilot Specialized Care Unit.
 - Public Works Director Garland provided an overview of BerkDoT and alternative approaches to implementing City Council's referral.
 - NICJR provided an update on the community engagement process and discussed revisions to the community survey.
- Community Survey / Engagement
 - After substantially revising the community survey in response to feedback from the Task Force and subcommittee members focused on community engagement, the survey was made available to the community on May 19, 2021. The survey is available in English and Spanish and is designed to solicit input to help the City design a new model of community safety. The deadline to complete the survey is June 15, 2021.
 - To ensure a robust community response, in addition to posting a community announcement on the City's [website](#)⁴, Task Force members have been asked to assist in the promotion and dissemination of the survey and staff have distributed the survey to 65 community organizations that serve the Berkeley community. The survey is just one form of outreach being performed. There will also be focused listening sessions and a citywide townhall.
- A number of other things are in the works:
 - NICJR is coordinating with their team and Task Force members to arrange for targeted listening sessions throughout the community.
 - City staff is working on revisions to the Task Force meeting schedule and hopes to present a revised document for the Task Force to discuss at their next meeting on June 10, 2021.

³ https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2021/01_Jan/Documents/2021-01-19_Item_18_Revisions_to_Enabling_Legislation_for_Reimagining.aspx

⁴ <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/RIPST.aspx>

- BerkDoT
 - Staff delivered a staff report and presentation on BerkDoT at the May 19, 2021 meeting of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. This report distilled the input received to date, shared a phased approach to BerkDoT-related projects and activities, and solicited the Task Force's input on the approach. Staff are now incorporating the Task Force's input and preparing a plan for community engagement this summer.

Attachments:

1. NICJR Update as of May 25, 2021

cc: Paul Buddenhagen, Deputy City Manager
David White, Deputy City Manager
Jenny Wong, City Auditor
Farimah Brown, City Attorney
Mark Numainville, City Clerk
David Brannigan, Fire Chief
Lisa Warhuus, Director of Health, Housing & Community Services
LaTanya Bellow, Director of Human Resources
Jen Louis, Interim Chief of Police
Liam Garland, Public Works Director
Matthai Chakko, Assistant to the City Manager



Berkeley Reimagining Public Safety Process Update May 25, 2021

In accordance with the terms of its agreement with the City of Berkeley, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) continues efforts toward the Reimagining Public Safety process as well as engaging the Berkeley Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) in developing alternative models to violence reduction and public safety. The productive discussions NICJR and subcontractor Bright Research Group (BRG) have had with the RPSTF and feedback received from the Community Engagement subcommittee have proven extremely helpful in informing the community engagement survey that launched through several platforms on May 19, including an article in the publication [Patch](#) and [Berkeleyside](#). This marks the start of a deep engagement with the broader community of Berkeley to help impact the recommendations to come from the collective work of the Task Force members.

Listening sessions to garner community response and input to policing and other public safety measures in Berkeley are underway.

- NICJR has hosted the first of these sessions with the Berkeley Police Department (BPD) Command Staff, and has two additional sessions planned with BPD officers to ensure that the department is actively involved in the reimagining public safety conversation.
- BRG and Pastor Michael Smith have scheduled a series of Listening Sessions focused on the Black community and the unhoused community.
- BRG is finalizing plans with Berkeley Youth Alternatives to schedule a series of youth Listening Sessions.
- NICJR is hosting a Listening Session with the Berkeley Merchant's Association on June 2, 2021.

Each listening session is designed to solicit the opinions, ideas, and concerns of the participants regarding public safety, police reform, and needed community services/resources. Feedback received will be compiled into a report for the Taskforce and the City Council. NICJR is holding productive discussions with RPSTF members from the Latinx, LGBTQIA, and AAPI communities to ensure that the voices of these residents are heard through additional listening sessions to be facilitated with the assistance of leadership in these communities and aligned with the timeline for recommendations and final deliverables.

The community engagement strategy also includes the development of a public Berkeley Reimagining Public Safety website. NICJR launched the <https://berkeley-rps.org/> website on March 11, 2021. The website contains information on the development of the Task Force and its role and responsibilities, and background material on parallel related efforts underway in the City including establishment of a pilot Specialized Care Unit/s (SCU) and BerkDOT, priority dispatching, and the recommendations from the Mayor's Fair and Impartial Policing Workgroup recently adopted by the City Council. In addition, the website contains a link to the [recently launched community](#) survey and will include opportunities for additional community engagement. Local and national news stories of pertinence and interest, as well as publications that are intended to provide valuable resources and information are posted to the website. The website continues to evolve and is regularly updated by NICJR with support from City staff.

NICJR is finalizing its report on Alternative Responses, which will detail recommendations on what duties of BPD are better suited for other city agencies or community-based organizations. NICJR is also finalizing an analysis of BPD Calls for Service that will augment the recently issued report authored by the City Auditor.