



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

DATE: October 1, 2021

SUBJECT: Update regarding Reimagining Public Safety Initiative

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The purpose of this memo is to provide an update regarding the [Reimagining Public Safety Initiative](#) that was launched in 2020.

### Reimagining Public Safety Task Force

In June 2020, City Manager Spencer Cronk created a multidisciplinary team co-led by the Deputy City Manager and Assistant City Managers, and involved several key departments, including the Office of Police Oversight, Equity Office, Austin Police Department, and Law Department. Additionally, City Manager Cronk directed the creation of the Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) City-Community Task Force that brought together City staff and community members most impacted by negative interactions by law enforcement to co-create a framework for public safety to be reimagined. The RPS Task Force convened its first meeting in August 2020.

The Task Force formed the following work groups for focusing on research and in-depth community engagement:

- Reimagining 911 and Non-Police Crisis Response
- Patrol and Criminal Investigations
- Public Health Reinvestment
- Uprooting Punitive and Harm Culture in Intersecting Systems
- Patrol and Surveillance
- Equity Re-Investment in Community
- Meaningful Community Engagement
- Services to Violence Survivors and Violence Prevention
- Business and Economic Development

The RPS Task Force conducted a dozen meetings including a community listening session on April 10, 2021, with more than 150 people participating in the conversation in Arabic, Burmese, English, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

The Task Force developed a [final report](#) that outlined 143 recommendations for policy, cultural and structural changes to improve the quality of the public safety experience for all communities and presented the findings to City Council during a briefing on [April 20, 2021](#).

## City RPS Review Teams

Cross-departmental City RPS Review Teams, led by Office of Police Oversight (OPO) Director Farah Muscadin, were formed to conduct comprehensive analysis of the Task Force recommendations. They were tasked with providing analysis that would take into account equity, fiscal impact, implementation feasibility and possible alternatives of each individual recommendation. This extensive process involved over 80 City staff, with representatives from the following departments/agencies: Equity Office, OPO, Budget Office, Housing and Planning, Center of Excellence and Innovation, Sustainability Office, Austin Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Austin Public Library, Law Department, Austin Police Department, Emergency Medical Services Department, Austin Fire Department, City Clerk's Office, Communications and Public Information Office, Austin 311, Transportation, Communications and Technology Management, Labor Relations, Austin Code, Financial Services, Purchasing Office, Integral Care and the City Manager's Office.

The review process was conducted in two phases: Phase I (completed May 2021) was a preliminary staff analysis of the following Work Group's recommendations: Equity Community Reinvestment, Services to Violence Survivors and Violence Prevention, Public Health Reinvestment, and Reimagining 911 and Non-Crisis Response working groups. Groups in the first phase prioritized those recommendations that could be included in FY22 budget. Phase II (completed late June 2021) included preliminary staff analysis for: Meaningful Community Engagement, Patrol & Surveillance/Patrol & Criminal Investigation, and Uprooting Punitive and Harm Culture.

Each RPS Review Team, which was comprised of approximately 15 staff members, met weekly to bi-weekly to review and analyze each individual recommendation, discuss elements such as equity, long-term processes and programs that the City should define and implement with the community. In addition, the review teams assessed each recommendation for potential inclusion in the City Manager's Proposed FY 2022 Budget. Each review team briefed the City Manager on their assessment to inform the FY 2022 budget process and next steps. The team leads gathered the analysis that was distilled into a public facing dashboard.

The online dashboard provides staff's analysis of each RPS Task Force recommendation. This dashboard is published on the [RPS Task Force](#) page of the Reimagining Public Safety website and is available in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Arabic, Burmese and Urdu. The intent for the dashboard is to provide the public with periodic status updates of the recommendations.

You may view the dashboard [here](#).

## FY 2022 Budget for RPS Initiatives

On August 12, 2021, Austin City Council approved a budget for the upcoming fiscal year that reinforced the City's commitment to continuing progress on Reimagining Public Safety (RPS).

The approved FY 2022 budget includes \$36.5 million dollars directly tied to advancing the RPS initiative. The budget maintains \$27.2 million of funding approved in the FY 2021 budget, while providing an additional \$9.3 million in one-time and ongoing funding for public safety reform recommendations brought forward by the RPS Task Force. The ongoing funding approved in the FY 2021 budget that will continue into FY 2022 is for a variety of initiatives that prioritize a holistic approach to providing public safety services and community-centered crime prevention and intervention strategies. These include the Office of Violence Prevention, mental health first response, a family violence shelter, permanent supportive housing and services, and other alternative public safety strategies. Funding was also allocated mid-year in FY 2021 for the Reimagined Police Academy cadet training that will continue in FY 2022. The additional \$9.3 million in RPS-related funding for FY 2022 includes:

- Increased funding of \$2.8 million to the Housing Trust Fund for anti-displacement initiatives including emergency relocation assistance, the tenant stabilization program, and for projects providing affordable housing.
- Expansion of the current community health worker career ladder initiative, finalizing infrastructure development of the community health worker program, adding 9 new temporary community health workers, and increasing contracts to community organizations in order to build on their community-focused public health work totaling \$1.5 million.
- Matching funding for an ongoing guaranteed income pilot project that is currently being implemented through local organizations and philanthropic partners in the amount of \$1.1 million.
- Enhanced funding for the Office of Violence Prevention in the amount of \$1.0 million to procure the technological infrastructure to assess, monitor, and utilize violence-related data to develop better informed violence intervention policies, to direct funding

toward violence intervention programs. This funding will also be used to develop a Community Safety Grant Program that will provide seed funding for community-led prevention and intervention efforts.

- Increased funding for the Parks and Recreation Department in the amount of \$900,000 to expand after-school programs, provide childcare and serve families across six recreation centers in the city's eastern crescent.
- Increased funding for Victim Services in the amount of \$769,000 to fund two new positions, expand funding for community emergency financial assistance programs, and contract providers for specialized therapeutic and trauma healing along with training for victim services counselors who work with violence survivors.
- Expansion of the Park Ranger program by adding \$615,000 and six full-time positions to enforce park rules, provide information and assistance to park visitors, and connect people experiencing homelessness to services.
- Funding for a "Resilient Communities/Resilient Schools" two-year pilot in the amount of \$520,000 that will fund four community school coordinators who will link community partners, local campuses, parents, and grassroot organizations with family resource centers across the city.
- A multilingual public education campaign to raise awareness regarding appropriate emergency service use in the amount of \$105,000.

## Next Steps

On behalf of the City Manager's Office, I extend the greatest appreciation to the community members' time and efforts who served on the RPS Task Force. Their participation, expertise and lived experience made us think and act differently about the issues. They provided the foundation for the City to continue the reimagining work that will result in cultural and policy changes to effectively address the disproportionate impact of police violence on people of color and other affected communities. I also want to thank City staff for their hard work on the analysis they conducted.

I am tasking our new Police Chief to continue staff analysis of the recommendations provided by the Patrol & Surveillance/Patrol & Criminal Investigation work group, and to collaborate with community stakeholders to implement change in these areas. City staff will continue to explore innovative strategies for implementing additional RPS Task Force recommendations beyond the FY 2022 budget.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager

CMO Executive Team

Farah Muscadin, Office of Police Oversight Director

Brion Oaks, Chief Equity Officer

Chief Joseph Chacon, Austin Police Chief

Jessica King, Communications and Public Information Office Interim Director