



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

DATE: May 3, 2021

SUBJECT: Reimagining Public Safety Quarterly Report – Q2

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On April 2, 2021 the attached Reimagining Public Safety Quarterly Report was submitted to Mayor and Council.

The City's Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) scope of work continues to be informed by a series of public safety [reform resolutions](#) adopted by City Council in the summer of 2020 as well as several other reform initiatives, underway prior to summer 2020, which are now included in the RPS framework. This report also highlights a assessments and reports, that helped pave the way for the City Manager to develop a [blueprint](#) for a reimagined pilot cadet class.

In an effort to provide a look at RPS progress in full context, this report includes also includes a summary of significant milestones and from spring 2020 through the end of March 2021. The report is organized by RPS priority categories: Reimagining, Decoupling and Reinvestment.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager

CMO Executive Team

Chief Brian Manley, Austin Police Chief

Joya Hayes, Human Resources Director

Farah Muscadin, Police Oversight Director

Brion Oaks, Chief Equity Officer

Kerry O'Connor, Chief Innovation Officer

Kimberly Olivares, Chief Performance Officer

Jessica King, Interim Director Communications & Public Information Office

Ed Van Eenoo, Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Attachment: Reimagining Public Safety Quarterly Report

# Reimagining Public Safety

## QUARTERLY REPORT



### ABOUT THIS REPORT

Since the release of the first Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) comprehensive quarterly progress report in February 2021, the RPS leadership team and City staff have advanced progress on key initiatives throughout February and March. In briefings during the March 2, 2021 City Council work session and the City Council Public Safety Committee meeting on March 10th, the RPS Leadership team outlined milestones achieved to date and updated deadlines on mid-year reporting and project-specific completion.

This report will provide a high-level summary of the progress reported during those briefings, along with additional updates from staff, by RPS priority categories: Decoupling; Reimagining; and Reinvestment. To keep pace with the speed of progress on key activities, the RPS communications team shifted from publishing monthly reports and newsletters to posting more timely updates on the [RPS website](#) as soon as memos and briefings are released.

### REIMAGINING ACTIVITIES

#### **Initial Assessment of the APD Training Academy Completed**

On March 2, 2021, Kroll & Associates, Inc. – a consultant conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the APD Training Academy curriculum, training, culture, and recommendations for improvement – presented the results of their [preliminary analysis](#) to Mayor and Council.

The report included several short-term and long-term recommendations meant to improve training courses, address racial bias, and foster greater equity and inclusion within the academy, including:

#### **Short term recommendations:**

- Transition to a blended civilian/police academy.
- Create an academy curriculum review committee that includes community members.

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- Formalize the process for review of videos shown at the academy.
- Create a model for academy and expert community subject matter experts to teach courses together.

### Long term recommendations:

- Develop strategies to enhance long-term racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of academy staff and faculty.
- Implement two-week community engagement program for cadets.
- Provide continuous de-escalation training for cadets and current officers.

APD accepted the recommendations and provided a [timeline](#) for implementing the short- and long-term measures.

On March 23, 2021, the Office of Police Oversight hosted a virtual presentation and conversation to share the preliminary findings of the Kroll & Associates' assessment. The session included a robust question and answer session with more than 40 attendees, who represented a range of community organizations. A recording of this community dialogue is available on the [Share Input page of the Reimagining Public Safety website](#). The public can also learn more about the Kroll assessment and share feedback on the recommendations on the RPS feedback portal on SpeakUp Austin in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Additionally, in a [memo](#) to Mayor and Council on March 24, Office of Police Oversight Director Farah Muscadin provided an update on the remaining objectives to be accomplished before Kroll releases a final report on the academy evaluation in mid-April.

### **Reimagined APD Training Academy Blueprint Approved**

The preliminary Kroll assessment and series of previous reviews conducted by the [Equity Office](#), [Dr. Michael Ferguson](#), [Dr. Sara Villanueva](#), The Community Video Review Panel [facilitator report](#), and the Community Video Review Panel [report](#) paved the way for the City Manager to develop a [blueprint](#) for a reimagined pilot cadet class.

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The blueprint, approved by City Council on March 25th, is the initial step toward creating the first pilot class of the reimagined cadet academy this summer. The pathway to a new reimagined academy will consist of three parts:

- Increased community involvement
- Establishing a culture of adult learning
- Transformative change

The blueprint outlines a framework for achieving a comprehensive list of benchmarks, including:

- Establishing an Academic Review Committee (ACR) to evaluate and manage all academic efforts, including review of all course revisions made by instructors and establishing a formal course observation process.
- Establishing consistent class observation protocols, which will be determined by the ACR.
- Revising the job descriptions and hiring process for instructors to reflect an emphasis on teaching and learning and to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in instructor ranks. Establishes consistency and formalizes the onboarding process for all instructors.
- Commander and academy leadership will set high expectations around Teaching Excellence (TE) and include TE evaluations as part of an annual performance review.
- Provides teaching resources to include annual TE Workshops and partnership with the Austin Community College Center for Teaching Excellence.
- Instructors will attend the “Transformational Training” course, which will be required for any incoming staff to the Training Academy.
- Reward excellence by offering recognition awards at the end of each academy.
- Recruit outside instructors for specific courses that require dynamic expertise, such as: History of Police and Race; Racial Profiling; Professionalism & Ethics; Multiculturalism and Human Relations; and Services for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired.
- Commander overseeing the academy will set expectations around APD’s culture shift, along with an explicit emphasis on the Training Academy being a teaching/learning institution. The staff will

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attend “ground water analysis” and a strategic planning session with consultant Joyce James to ensure the academy has an effective plan to address the culture shift moving forward.

- Police Chief and the Commander overseeing the Recruitment and Training Academy will set the tone on the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the benefits they bring to the academy and the department. In addition, they will highlight expectations around equitable treatment.
- Establish the value of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- All instructors will review and revise all course materials with specific focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Instructors will attend Teaching Excellence workshop and apply Inclusive Teaching techniques to respective courses.
- Instructors will all attend “Beyond Diversity” training.
- Increase efforts to diversify the Training Academy leadership.
- Incorporate Cultural Competence assessment and Implicit Bias evaluations into recruiting and hiring processes.
- Collaborate with academic partners to identify and apply for education grants.
- Build partnerships with local colleges and universities to obtain Training Academy faculty access to resources pertaining to the Center for Teaching Excellence.
- Identify and procure a new learning management system.

The Kroll evaluation and recommendations, as well as the Blueprint for a reimagined APD Training Academy, are outcomes related to [Council Resolution 20191205-066](#).

### **Selection of Interim Police Chief and Executive Search Firm**

On March 22, 2021, Austin City Manager Spencer Cronk announced that the City of Austin has engaged Ralph Andersen & Associates to lead the selection process for the new police chief. This process starts immediately and will rely heavily on extensive engagement with the community, the City’s leadership, and the employees of the police department. Read more on the search process [here](#).

To ensure the smooth transition to a new chief, the City Manager has chosen and the Austin City Council has confirmed Assistant Chief Joseph Chacon to serve as Interim Police Chief. Assistant Chief Chacon

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began his career with APD in 1998 and has served in various assignments, including Director of the Austin Regional Intelligence Center, Investigations Bureau Chief, and Headquarters Bureau Chief. He currently serves as the Central Bureau Chief, which oversees the Downtown Area Command, Special Events, Parks and Lakes, and Special Operations.

### **Mental Health Services Option Added to 9-1-1 Call Taker Scripts**

As of February 1, 2021, 9-1-1 callers are now asked if they need police, fire, EMS, or mental health services. Implementing this important fourth option to the 9-1-1 call triage process is part of what is now called the Austin CARES initiative. The program is an outcome of a series of [recommendations](#) commissioned by the City from the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute for Texas (MMHPI). City Council approved a contract with Meadows in October 2020 to work with City and community partners to implement those recommendations. Adding the mental health option to 9-1-1 calls is the first step toward achieving the goal of diverting 100% of those callers with a mental health component that do not pose a risk to public safety from law enforcement response.

## DECOUPLING ACTIVITIES

### **Forensic Science Department Approved**

At its February 4, 2021 meeting, City Council approved an [ordinance](#) to create a Forensic Science Department under the control and direction of the City Manager. The restructuring transfers the Austin Police Department (APD) Forensic Science Bureau funding and positions to the new, independent Forensic Science Department. The change provides an opportunity for the City to achieve a higher level of forensic objectivity and operational independence, in alignment with recommendations included in the Quattrone Report's comprehensive review of the Austin Police Department DNA Lab. [Those findings](#) were released in October 2020. The City Manager's Office and APD are working together to ensure a seamless transition of Forensic Science Bureau operations to the Forensic Science Department.



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### REINVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

Several activities and programs funded through the reinvestment of APD funds to meet other public safety, health, and social service needs are currently underway. Significant developments since last quarter include:

#### **APD Officer Naloxone Training**

APD has purchased naloxone for officers to carry with them to assist in treating victims of opioid overdose. The department is working with the Office of the Medical Director on training officers in its use.

#### **Counseling Services**

APD has reinvested \$50,000 to hire three counselors and one counselor supervisor to work with victims of trauma.

#### **Victim Services**

APD reinvested \$15,000 in funds to aid crime victims. The funds will be used for emergency needs, such as clothing.

#### **Job Training Support and Services**

APD has reallocated \$1.37M to the Office of Economic Development for a project with the Austin Metro Area Community Workforce Plan and Workforce Solutions to help approximately 260 jobless residents connect to no-cost, rapid, and safe job training. Enrollees will receive weekly stipends, career counseling, job placement, childcare, transportation, and internet access.

#### **Homeless Outreach Street Team Support**

An investment of \$2.5M was budgeted in the FY 2020-21 in Police, Emergency Medical Services, and Downtown Austin Community Court – including an Integral Care contract – for the Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST). This is a cross-departmental initiative that offers a proactive approach to addressing a person's needs by referring them to appropriate resources before they reach a state of

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crisis. This reduces arrests, emergency room visits, and admissions to emergency psychiatric facilities. HOST is working to identify appropriate cases for referral. Integral Care has hired three team members and is actively recruiting to fill other positions. HOST is helping to train new Integral Care team members and will establish a set schedule to partner with Integral Care team.

### **Resources for Immigrant and Underserved Communities**

In March, funds from APD allowed for contract increases related to immigration services provided by the City of Austin. The services include funding for immigration legal services and deportation defense, and counseling. Funds will also be provided for affordable groceries, health and wellness, and financial literacy resources for underserved communities. Substance misuse services will also be provided to low-income individuals through the reinvestment of these funds.

### **APD Grant Review**

In a [memo](#) to Mayor and Council on March 3, 2021, Assistant City Manager for Public Safety Rey Arellano summarized the results of a review of all state and federal grants managed by APD. The review found the projects and programming supported by the funds are in alignment with City Council's vision for APD policies and practices. The mental health intervention and grant alignment review are outcomes of [Council Resolution 20200611-096](#), along with the decoupling and reinvestment activities summarized in this report.

## **CITY-COMMUNITY RPS TASK FORCE**

At its March 10, 2021 meeting, the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force introduced its new facilitator and heard reports from some of the working groups. The task force also laid out its strategy and timeline related to the work ahead to prepare for the April 20th presentation of recommendations to the City Council.



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The task force has several meetings and community engagement opportunities leading up to its April 20 presentation to Mayor and Council. The following is a list of opportunities to engage and learn about the task force work:

- **Wednesday, April 7:** Full taskforce meeting from 5:30-8:30 p.m. (Facebook Live link to be posted soon).
- **Saturday, April 10:** Community at large listening session from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
Those unable to attend the public input meeting are invited to share their feedback with the Task Force in advance by calling Austin 3-1-1 (512-974-2000) or by posting on the SpeakUp Austin RPS Feedback hub in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- **Thursday, April 15:** Full taskforce meeting from 5:30-8:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, April 20:** RPS task force presentation of proposals to Mayor and Council.

Information on agendas, minutes, and how to attend the virtual meetings is available on the [task force page](#) of the RPS website.