



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

DATE: August 5, 2021

SUBJECT: Reimagining Public Safety Quarterly Report – Q3

On July 27, 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 several key milestones, including the start of a reimagined police training academy, the delivery of a comprehensive set of reform recommendations by the RPS City-Community Task Force to City Council, approval of the City Manager's RPS FY21 mid-year budget amendments, and the approval and foundational steps toward the creation of a new domestic violence shelter with on-site support services. This also includes the presentation of the City Manager's proposed FY22 budget that outlines the City's continuing commitment to RPS through the continuation of \$27.2 million in investments for key initiatives, along with an additional \$1.9 million in one-time funding for public safety reforms that were recommended by the City-Community RPS Task Force.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
CMO Executive Team
Interim Chief Joseph Chacon, Austin Police Chief
Brie Franco, Intergovernmental Relations Officer
Joya Hayes, Human Resources Director
Farah Muscadin, Police Oversight Director
Brion Oaks, Chief Equity Officer
Kimberly Olivares, Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Jessica King, Communications & Public Information Office Interim Director

Attachment: Reimagining Public Safety Quarterly Report

Reimagining Public Safety

PROGRESS REPORT



About This Report

Several key milestones were achieved within the Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) framework since the last RPS progress report was published in early April 2021.

Those milestones include the start of a reimagined police training academy, the delivery of a comprehensive set of reform recommendations by the RPS City-Community Task Force to City Council, approval of the City Manager's RPS FY21 mid-year budget amendments, and the approval and foundational steps toward the creation of a new domestic violence shelter with on-site support services. This also includes the presentation of the City Manager's proposed FY22 budget that outlines the City's continuing commitment to RPS through the continuation of \$27.2 million in investments for key initiatives, along with an additional \$1.9 million in one-time funding for public safety reforms that were recommended by the City-Community RPS Task Force.

RPS work is guided by a series of public safety [reform resolutions](#) adopted by City Council in the summer of 2020, as well as several other reform initiatives included in the RPS framework. This report provides a high-level summary of progress to date with links to supporting documents for deep-dive information on specific projects. RPS updates are also regularly posted in the [What's New](#) section of the RPS website homepage.

Reimagining Milestones

Reimagined APD Cadet Class Now Underway

The 144th Austin Police Academy Cadet Class kicked off on June 7 with the most diverse group of cadets in Austin's history. Of the 100 cadets in this reimagined Academy, 38% are Hispanic, 17% are African American, 57% identify as non-white, and 18% are women.

The 144th cadet class is a pilot class, the first that will complete training with the Academy's new curriculum, which emphasizes servant leadership, a culture of adult learning, and teaching methods infused with diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Academy also includes expanded [community engagement](#) programming in alignment with the City Manager's [blueprint](#) for transforming the academy that was approved by City Council in March.

Cadets who complete the 34 weeks of training will graduate from the Academy on January 28, 2022.

Reimagining Public Safety

PROGRESS REPORT



The start of the pilot class followed an [update](#) from Interim Chief of Police Joseph Chacon in June on the department's progress toward achieving the academy blueprint milestones and tasks, and the City Manager's delivery of a [final report](#) detailing an in-depth assessment of the APD Training Academy. On May 6, Council moved forward with the Pilot class after reviewing the report and presentation authored by Kroll & Associates, an independent consultant that will continue to evaluate implementation of the pilot class.

The reimagined Academy is an outcome of [City Council Resolution 20191205-066](#), focused on eliminating racial bias, bigotry, and discrimination in APD policies, practices, and behaviors.

City-Community RPS Task Force Recommendations

The City-Community RPS Task Force presented a comprehensive set of [reform recommendations](#) to City Council on April 20, 2021. At the direction of the City Manager, cross-departmental RPS [Review Teams](#) were formed to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Task Force Recommendations to determine feasibility, fiscal impact, and any potential policy or ordinance changes that may be required. Each team includes representatives from the Equity and Budget offices and the Law Department.

The teams, organized by RPS Task Force work group topic, conducted analysis in two phases:

PHASE I- Preliminary Staff Analysis

- Equity Community Reinvestment
- Services to Violence Survivors and Violence Prevention
- Public Health Reinvestment
- Reimagining 911 and Non-Crisis Response

PHASE II- Preliminary Staff Analysis

- Meaningful Community Engagement
- (Combined) Patrol & Surveillance/Patrol & Criminal Investigation
- Uprooting Punitive and Harm Culture

Redefining Resistance Review and Recommendations

The Office of Police Oversight (OPO) released the "Redefining Resistance and Considering Alternatives" [report](#) on April 15, 2021. The report outlines research findings and recommendations for amendments to APD General Orders to better define what constitutes "resistance" and alternative tactics and tools that can be used by officers to prevent the need for lethal or less lethal munitions.

Reimagining Public Safety

PROGRESS REPORT



Use of Force Policy Community Engagement

In April, OPO launched a series of virtual community meetings and a survey to gather feedback on its preliminary [findings and recommendations](#) on six APD use of force policies:

- Restricting shooting at moving vehicles
- Exhausting all alternatives before shooting
- De-escalation
- Duty to intervene in cases of improper or excessive use of force
- Banning chokeholds and strangleholds
- Warning before shooting

The outreach, which concluded May 31, is part of OPO's multi-phase approach to its responsibility to review and produce recommendations – grounded with community input – on APD General Orders. The feedback received is currently being reviewed and will be incorporated into final policy recommendations expected to be delivered to City leadership and APD in August.

The redefining resistance report and use of force policy review, recommendations and re-write process are outcomes related to [City Council Resolution 20200611-095](#) and [City Council Resolution 20200611-096](#).

Renewed Commitment and Collaboration between Austin Police Department and Office of Police Oversight

On April 23, the Austin Police Department and the Office of Police Oversight outlined a [renewed commitment](#) to improving the working relationship between the two departments and the steps each will take to facilitate a comprehensive and impartial review of complaints and policy recommendations.

RPS Community Feedback Report and Dashboard Released

In May 2021, the RPS Strategic Communications team released a [summary of feedback](#) collected during RPS community outreach and engagement activities. From September 2020 through the end of January 2021, nearly 1,000 people provided input on Reimagining Public Safety in a variety of ways. Community Conversations were hosted for each Council District, in addition to three City-wide sessions (including one fully facilitated in Spanish) and dozens of sessions hosted by a diverse range of community organizations and neighborhood associations across the city.

Some of the community partners that hosted and/or participated in these conversations include Austin Justice Coalition, Austin Voices, Caritas, Integral Care, Maternal Health Equity Collaborative, the South Asians' International Volunteer Association, and YWCA Greater Austin. The public was also able to share their thoughts by calling 3-1-1 and via email, SpeakUp Austin, and the RPS website in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Reimagining Public Safety

PROGRESS REPORT



An in-depth "Listening Session" survey tool was at the core of the engagement process. The tool, developed by Innovation Officer Kerry O'Connor and the City's Chief Research & Strategic Initiatives Officer Alba Sereno, was designed to promote thought and discussion around several scenarios, which may involve a law enforcement response.

More than 30,000 pieces of data were collected from the listening session survey responses. The Innovation Office conducted an analysis of the data to identify key themes and patterns in the responses and developed an interactive [RPS Feedback Dashboard](#). The tool allows users to sift through summaries and analysis of participants' feedback on each of the example scenarios.

Community Input Centered in Police Chief Recruiting Process

A series of virtual meetings were held in May to gather input from the community on the values and characteristics they'd like to see embodied in the next Chief of the Austin Police Department. The sessions are part of a search and hiring process, led by Ralph Andersen & Associates, which prioritizes extensive engagement with the community.

Those who were unable to attend were able to share feedback via [SpeakUp Austin: Your Next Chief of Police Recruitment Process](#) or by sending an email to community@austintexas.gov.

On July 27, 2021 the City Manager [announced](#) the top seven candidates for the position selected out of a field of 46 applicants.

The finalists are:

- Joseph Chacon
- Anne Kirkpatrick
- Avery L. Moore
- Celeste Murphy
- Mirtha V. Ramos
- Gordon Ramsay
- Emada E. Tingirides

The City Manager set a target for introducing the finalists to the Austin community and completing the [hiring process](#) for the new APD Chief and in August.

Mental Health Diversion Initiative Implementation Update

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) has published an interim [report](#) outlining progress on implementation of the Austin CARES program which provides an alternative response to behavioral

Reimagining Public Safety

PROGRESS REPORT



health emergency calls. The program was created to help the City achieve a goal of safely diverting 100 percent of mental health emergency calls to 911 that do not pose a risk to public safety from a law enforcement response into appropriate care.

Austin CARES centers on six recommendations from MMHPI's May 2019 report "[Recommendations for First Responder Mental Health Calls for Service](#)":

- APD Chief's Mental Health Program and Response Advisory Function Developed within the Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Advisory Committee
- Mental Health training for call takers and dispatchers
- Mental Health Integrated Dispatch
- Sustainability of EMCOT, including Telehealth Expansion.
- Collaboration with APD Crisis Intervention Team and Community Health Paramedic Program.
- Community Outreach in Collaboration with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Central Texas

The report provides details on the completion date and next steps for each recommendation.

Decoupling Milestones

RPS FY21 Mid-Year Budget Amendments

In April, City Council approved a series of mid-year budget amendments, focused on realigning City services and resources to allow the Austin Police Department to focus on its core mission of law enforcement. The amendments included the following transfers:

- Transfer positions and funding for the APD Alarm Administration Unit to the Development Services Department
- Transfer APD Human Resources to the City's general Human Resources Department
- Transfer APD Public Information Office to the Communication and Public Information Office
- Transfer APD Facility Maintenance to the Building Services Department
- Transfer APD Finance to the Financial Services Department

Reimagining Public Safety

PROGRESS REPORT



Reinvestment Milestones

APH Names Office of Violence Prevention Manager

In June, Adrienne Sturup, Interim Director of Austin Public Health provided an [update](#) on the department's efforts towards the development and implementation of community violence prevention and intervention programming. The update included the announcement of the hiring of Michelle Myles, who will serve as the Manager for the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP). In this role, Myles will lead violence reduction and community safety programs and strategies to meet the specific needs of Austin and Travis County.

City Council Authorizes Domestic Violence Shelter Service Agreement

City Council authorized an agreement in May with the nonprofit SAFE (Stop Abuse for Everyone) Alliance to manage a City-owned domestic violence shelter and provide supportive services, housing assistance, and direct client assistance. This agreement will provide up to \$8.1 million to SAFE for management of the shelter and other service operations through 2025.

RPS Commitments Outlined in FY22 Proposed Budget

The City Manager's proposed FY22 budget includes \$29.1 million to advance progress within the transformative RPS framework, which prioritizes a holistic approach to providing public safety services and community-centered crime prevention and intervention.

The proposal maintains the \$27.2 million of funding approved in last year's budget for key initiatives, including: the reimagined APD training academy with a curriculum centered in diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and in building stronger community relationships; mental health first response resources; and the new domestic violence shelter. The proposed budget outlines an additional \$1.9 million in one-time funding for public safety reform recommendations brought forward by the City-Community RPS Task Force including:

- Expanding the current community health worker career ladder initiative and finalizing infrastructure development of the community health worker program (\$500,000)
- Funding for the Office of Violence Prevention to procure the technological infrastructure to assess, monitor, and utilize violence-related data to develop better informed violence intervention policies and to develop a Community Safety Grant Program to provide seed funding for community-led prevention and intervention efforts (\$825,000)

Reimagining Public Safety

PROGRESS REPORT



- Funding for specialized therapeutic and trauma healing training for victims' services counselors who work with violence survivors (\$250,000)
- Multilingual public education campaign to raise awareness regarding appropriate emergency service use (\$105,000)
- Funding for an Equity Office led study of a guaranteed income project (\$250,000)

The proposed budget also includes funding for:

- 44 victim services counselors for crisis response to victims and their families
- 14 new positions to create the Municipal Court's new Marshal Program, replacing Austin Police Officers who previously provided these services

The City Manager has acknowledged the impact of the implementation of [Texas HB1900](#), a new state law that levies significant fiscal penalties for municipalities that cut police funding year-over-year. As a result, the Emergency Communications and Forensic Science Departments, Decouple Fund, and the Reimagine Safety Fund are within the Austin Police Department in the proposed budget to fully comply with the legislation.

The proposed creation of Forensic Science as a separate entity will be evaluated during the development of the FY2022-23 proposed budget. Dr. Dana Kadavy, Executive Director of the Forensic Science Division (which is a civilian position), has accomplished a number of steps that position the Division to be transitioned to a separate organization if that can be accomplished within the legal framework established by State law. In the meantime, in order to increase the Division's objective forensic analysis independent from the law enforcement function, Dr. Kadavy will report to the Assistant City Manager over Public Safety for operational and administrative matters; and report to the Police Chief for matters related to maintaining Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) certification.

The proposed transition of the Emergency Communications Division will also be evaluated during this period. This transition would be a more complicated and lengthier process due to the number of interlocal and management control agreements with local, state, and federal law enforcement partners and the technical changes that would be needed.