



BERKELEY CITY COUNCILMEMBER  
**TERRY TAPLIN**  
 DISTRICT 2

ACTION CALENDAR  
 May 5, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Councilmember Taplin  
 Subject: Response to Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt the City Manager's April 2022 recommendations for Reimagining Public Safety with the following revisions, and;
2. Refer to the City Manager's office establishment of an Office of Racial Equity to aid in the implementation:

**Policy Recommendation amendments**

- "Implement the Specialized Care Unit Pilot using all of the recommendations of the consultant and the SCU Steering Committee as a road map"
  - Add: *with regular review of performance metrics and service evaluations.*
- "Continue to plan for a civilian traffic enforcement unit, both by informing the content of state law changes to enable such a unit, and by developing an implementation plan once state law does change"
  - Revise: *Conduct a feasibility analysis of a non-sworn auxiliary traffic enforcement unit, including comprehensive analysis of any and all traffic violations and dangerous road behavior that may be safely addressed entirely by a civilian unit.*
- "Approve a new Vision Zero staff position in Public Works' Division of Transportation to conduct collision analysis"
  - Add: *and to study extent of feasibility and scope of potential civilian enforcement pilot, implementation of Vision Zero and Berkeley Department of Transportation and Infrastructure department structuring models to advance engineering-first solutions to traffic safety with a racial justice and social equity lens.*
- "Develop additional capabilities to address public safety goals with appropriate response level"
  - Revise: *Develop additional capabilities to address root causes of crime and violence, including reduction of poverty and recidivism through a Guaranteed Income pilot program and City employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals, and locally-based Crisis Stabilization. In addition, the City Manager's Office, and subsequently an Office of Racial Equity as appropriate, shall periodically report on performance metrics, administrative capacity, and fiscal sustainability for partnering CBOs and other NGOs performing violence prevention services, mental health crisis*

*responses, and any other services under the auspices of Reimagining Community Safety.*

### **Budget Recommendation amendments**

- Consulting services - \$650k amended to:
  - *Office of Racial Equity Associate Management Analyst (1) to oversee a Guaranteed basic income pilot, city employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated, and support position (1) to conduct structural assessment and administrative capacity building for CBO partners- \$480k*
  - *Consulting services for Priority Dispatch, Call Data Analysis for Crisis Stabilization - \$170k.*
- Add: *Vision Zero analyst - \$200k*

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Modifications to City Manager's budget recommendations, plus \$200,000 in FY23-24 period for Vision Zero analyst.

### CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Reimagining Public Safety is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goal to create a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared city.

The City of Berkeley's General Fund is facing a projected budget deficit of \$14 million by Fiscal Year 2023.<sup>1</sup> Unfunded pension obligations will impose greater fiscal constraints on the City's ability to spend and borrow.<sup>2</sup> Restructuring public safety services will be a years-long process. Meanwhile, shootings and other serious crimes have increased. The municipal government must focus and prioritize policy proposals that can be quickly and effectively implemented and evaluated while laying the groundwork for robust, long-term sustainability. To achieve positive outcomes both in the near- and long-term, the City Council must synthesize the findings and recommendations of the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR), the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF), and the City Manager's office, with a view toward sustainability and accountability.

### BACKGROUND

On July 14, 2020, the City Council passed Resolution No. 69,501-N.S. authored by Mayor Jesse Arreguín, an omnibus package of items to initiate robust community engagement and expert consultation to reimagine public safety in Berkeley. This process has produced three main documents: NICJR's Final Report and Implementation Plan, the Task Force's Response and New Recommendations to the

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Clerk/Item%204%20presentation%20.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2022/04\\_Apr/Documents/2022-04-26\\_Special\\_Item\\_02\\_Accept\\_the\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_for\\_Long-Term\\_Debt\\_pdf.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2022/04_Apr/Documents/2022-04-26_Special_Item_02_Accept_the_Risk_Analysis_for_Long-Term_Debt_pdf.aspx)

former, and the City Manager's Response with Recommendations & Implementation Plan.

The following goals should be considered in pursuing a new paradigm for public safety:

**Reimagine:**

Redesign public safety from a traditional Police Department to one that is focused on the diverse needs of the community it serves.

- Civilian traffic enforcement has formed a major plank of Berkeley's public safety reform goals. However, California law only permits sworn officers to respond to traffic violations. Because advocacy for state legislative reforms may take years and would inherently be uncertain, the City of Berkeley should otherwise explore ways to improve traffic safety that do not rely on ex post facto police enforcement, including auxiliary civilian traffic monitors, especially in light of low staffing in the Police Department's traffic division. In keeping with the City's Vision Zero goals to eliminate traffic fatalities, strengthening implementation of Complete Streets designs and evaluating engineering-first solutions while pursuing automated enforcement for speeding and red lights can produce significant positive outcomes.
- Community policing is a frequent request from Berkeley residents who wish to see more deeply engaged, integrated and community-interfacing police response to patterns of crime without increasing counter-productive tension with civilians. Various models of Problem-Oriented Policing, which are discussed in NICJR's New and Emerging Models for Community Safety and Policing Report, would help strengthen relationships of trust between the community and police, forming partnerships to address root causes of crime and repair long-standing patterns of criminal behavior with evidence-based solutions. The Berkeley City Council has approved several policies to enable this approach, including funding to initiate a Gun Violence Intervention program commonly known as Ceasefire, and a Flex Team for Problem-Oriented Policing. The City Manager's budget proposals would increase full-time staffing so that these services could be rendered more effectively without increasing reliance on overtime. In addition, increasing staffing for non-sworn Parking Enforcement personnel will improve administrative capacity for redesigning the Police Department's relationships with the community.

**Improve:**

Improve the City of Berkeley's public safety system for residents and communities that have experienced the greatest hardships from the current public safety status quo.

- The City of Berkeley has budgeted \$5.7 million to establish Councilmember Ben Bartlett's Specialized Care Unit (SCU) initiative to respond to mental health service calls without police. The SCU Steering Committee, consultants at RDA,

and the community at large generally agreed that the City should provide a civilian response to mental health crises where law enforcement responses may not be necessary or warranted, while maintaining the option for police to provide backup as the need arises. Because the pilot would be contracted to a Community Based Organization (CBO), the program must have rigorous oversight and accountability with regular staff review of performance metrics, capacity, and financial stability.

- While the City may need to expand its partnership with Alameda County Behavioral Healthcare Services to provide services such as Crisis Stabilization at Amber House, it is imperative to begin long-term planning for more locally-based services, due not only to increased medical transport costs, but also an ongoing US Department of Justice investigation of ACBHS over civil rights violations stemming from inadequate facilities at John George Hospital and Santa Rita Jail. The first step would be to conduct an analysis of call data to determine the full volume of need in the community, and most effective strategies for providing specific responses.
- In November 2020, Berkeley voters approved Measure FF, which included funding for Priority Medical Dispatch along with more resources for fire safety. Improving this service to better allocate medical responses would improve public safety both for severe hazards and low-acuity medical calls. Citygates Associates reported in a recent study of the City's fire/EMS response that "Low-acuity medical incident demand is lengthening travel time and causing high crew workloads."<sup>3</sup> Further analysis and rigorous tracking of performance metrics would help better calibrate civilian responses to medical emergencies, and would likely improve the services of a future SCU pilot.

### **Reinvest:**

Increase equitable investment in vulnerable communities and for those who have been historically marginalized.

In June 2020, the City Council passed a budget referral authored by Councilmember Rashi Keserwani to establish a framework for a new Office of Racial Equity within the Office of the City Manager.<sup>4</sup> This is consistent with best practices in neighboring cities, such as Oakland and San Francisco, which have recently established such an office. The duties of such an office can be manifold, but a primary responsibility should be to provide capacity-building for CBOs providing auxiliary community safety, mental health, and other key services, by monitoring performance metrics and providing technical assistance, as well as a program to provide and employment opportunities for the formerly incarcerated to reduce recidivism (similar to Berkeley YouthWorks). Additionally, this office should monitor and/or assist with two other programs for reducing economic hardships that are already successful in Oakland: Ceasefire, and a

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2022/04\\_Apr/Documents/2022-04-19\\_\(WS\)\\_Supp\\_2\\_Reports\\_Item\\_1\\_Rev\\_Fire\\_pdf.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2022/04_Apr/Documents/2022-04-19_(WS)_Supp_2_Reports_Item_1_Rev_Fire_pdf.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2020/06\\_June/Documents/06-09\\_Annotated\\_Agenda\\_4pm\\_pdf.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2020/06_June/Documents/06-09_Annotated_Agenda_4pm_pdf.aspx)

Guaranteed Basic Income pilot. Oakland's Guaranteed Income pilot provides monthly cash payments to a randomly selected pool of low-income residents, and is funded entirely through private philanthropic donations, with collaborative management by the City and nonprofit agencies.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

None.

CONTACT PERSON

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