

Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force - Background

The Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force is a temporary Committee of City Council that was in place until March 2021. The mandate of the Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force is to initiate an inclusive relationship-based process to create actionable recommendations for City Council regarding the future of community safety and well-being in the city that are anti-racist. (Bylaw 19407)

Through an inclusive, relationship-based approach the Task Force explored how service users and service providers can work together to create actionable funding suggestions and policy changes to achieve better outcomes. The Task Force was comprised of:

- An independent Chair
- 10 community Members
- 2 City Administration Staff
- 2 Edmonton Police Services Staff
- 1 Member of the Edmonton Police Commission

The Task Force worked independently to develop recommendations to address racism, discrimination, excessive use of force, poverty and homelessness based on trends, best practices, and change models from across Canada. Recommendations could also include options to integrate social services to enhance community safety and well-being in the city. The Task Force produced a report on March 30, 2021 called Safer for All¹ which included 14 recommendations. On April 6, 2021, City Council voted in favour of directing City officials and the Edmonton Police Commission to develop a joint strategy to implement 13 of the 14 recommendations. The only recommendation not accepted outright was to freeze the police funding because a policy review will be required before those budget-based decisions are made².

¹ https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/documents/PDF/SaferForAll-CSWBTaskForce-Report-March30_2021.pdf

²

<https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/edmonton-city-council-accepts-task-force-recommendations-on-police-reform-funding-decisions-on-hold-until-policy-review>

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Move to an independent, integrated call evaluation and dispatch model, with representation from EPS, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Edmonton Fire Rescue Services (EFRS), Community Standards and Neighbourhoods, mental health services, crisis diversion and key social service partners.
2. Expand the number and use of crisis diversion and alternative policing teams.
3. Enhance recruitment and training to build diverse, inclusive, anti-racist organizational cultures.
4. Examine and pursue ways of preventing the unnecessary use of force by police, peace and bylaw officers.
5. Identify how collective agreements are contributing to systemic bias and work to address these challenges.
6. Professionalize policing through the creation of a new regulatory college for police and peace officers.
7. Expect and instruct the Edmonton Police Commission to fully exercise its authority to provide strong guidance and oversight to EPS, in order to drive inclusivity and antiracism in policing.
8. Change the composition and recruitment of the Edmonton Police Commission to more comprehensively reflect the community.
9. Establish mechanisms to provide community direction to peace and bylaw officers employed by the City of Edmonton.
10. Bring more transparency and independence to public complaints processes.
11. Implement measurement and reporting to drive change and encourage ongoing improvements.
12. Enact policies and standards that place focus on proactively and effectively providing support to disadvantaged Edmontonians.
13. Invest in urgently needed priorities for community safety.
14. Bring police funding into line with comparable cities and tie a portion of funding to specific performance.