

Dear Oakland RPSTF Steering Committee,

We have come together as Black members of the RPSTF who all live in the flatlands of East and West Oakland - the part of the city most impacted by the loss of life and violence that is plaguing our streets. When we signed up to be part of the taskforce, we did so because we fully support the need to reimagine public safety in Oakland. Public Safety must be improved to better serve Black community members- who are disproportionately experiencing and bearing the brunt of crime and violence in Oakland. Because of our desire for this effort to become successful, we are highlighting a gap that we observe that if not addressed will undermine our success.

We are calling for the Taskforce to vote on a set of guiding principles in the next Taskforce Meeting that will formalize the standards and criteria by which we will finalize our recommendation. These principles should then be shared with the Taskforce's Advisory Boards to further guide their work. We recommend the following guiding principles based on our lived experience, and shared understanding that Black lives are being lost/harmed at an alarming rate in our city. Even more lives will be lost if police are removed without an alternative response being put in place that is guaranteed to work as good as or better than the current system. For us to do our job and stand behind any recommendation that we advance to the City Council, we believe that it is important to adhere to the following principles.

PROPOSED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Police reductions will only be made when a suitable alternative is in place that is proven to offer an equivalent or better impact on Public Safety (equivalence to include both timeliness and effectiveness of the response)
2. If an alternative response is proposed, but has not been demonstrated/proven, then a pilot/transition period is needed, during which the two systems will operate in parallel until effectiveness has been demonstrated/proven
3. Estimated cost savings from a police budget reduction must first be directed toward the suitable alternative response, prior to being invested in an alternative solution that addresses a different need
4. Anticipated cost savings may be directed toward a non-police response/ public safety solution, OR an under-invested police service that will continue undermining public safety if not more appropriately resourced (e.g., investigations, or missing persons)
5. Final recommendations adopted by the Taskforce must include:
 - 1) Description of Recommendation
 - 2) Cost Analysis (start-up and ongoing operating cost)
 - 3) Safety Impact Analysis (immediate impact and longer-term impact)
 - 4) Likely Impact on overall workload per officer (including overtime, fatigue, and attrition)
 - 5) Transition/ Implementation Plan (timeline and steps to move from current state to desired future state - including possible people/ organizations to implement)
 - 6) Evaluation Criteria (how will we measure effectiveness of the proposed recommendation?)

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- 7) Community Feedback (how has the broader community responded to the proposed recommendation? - disaggregated by police beat and by race/ ethnicity)
6. Recommended provider of an alternative response must possess:
 - 1) Relevant technical expertise/ professional knowledge
 - 2) Knowledge of current local context for response types
 - 3) Cultural relevancy

Without a set of guiding principles to guide our individual and collective efforts, we are likely to frustrate our efforts by create unnecessary and redundant work, and also by setting false expectations of each other, advisory board members, and the public due to our lack of initial alignment. This is why we urge you to agendize these guiding principles for Taskforce review, enhancement, and a vote for approval as soon as possible. Feel free to reach out to any of us individually should you wish to discuss in greater detail.

Thank you for your service and leadership of this complex process.

Sincerely,

John Jones III, Co-Chair Appointee
Antoine Towers, District 3 Appointee
Ginale Harris, Police Commission Appointee
Keisha Henderson, District 6 Appointee
Carol Wyatt, CPAB Appointee