

Co-chairs: Kyle Houser and Mary Sommer

**Introduction** The committee explored a wide scope of issues of importance to the safety and quality of life for everyone in the City of Stamford. They include outside data and studies to identify best practices and policies that will meet the changing needs of a diverse and growing city. Although fiscal and other considerations impact the actual implementation of public safety policy initiatives by the administration, the committee recommends that **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** principles guide the city's public safety discussions and be part of all public policies. Equity is critical to the public safety.

**First 100 days /Priorities.** The people of Stamford are eager to hear details of the mayor's bold plans for a dynamic, inclusive and caring community. Based on the committee's discussions, achievable goals for the first 100 days include:

- 1) Community wide communication outreach which includes commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion values in public safety goals; conduct a city wide public safety survey,
- 2) The convening of collaborative issue focused task forces charged with developing measurable action plans as further described below. Charge these task forces with providing short and long-term action plans using SMARTIE goals. The committee suggests convening the Gun Safety and Violence Prevention and Mental Health Task Forces as a 100 day priority of the administration.
- 3) Street Safety- Implement recommendations described in item 6 below; engage public with city partners in safety awareness actions.
- 4) Commencement of data collection and needs assessment that will enable the city to qualify for state and federal funding and lay the ground work for "What Works Cities" Certification.

The committee identified six Public Safety categories: 1) Communication and Best Practices, 2) Police, 3) Fire/Police/EMS First Responders Rescue Services, 4) Mental Health, 5) Gun Safety/Violence Prevention, 6) Street Safety.

**1) Communication and Best Practices A) Equity.** Make a public safety commitment to equity and inclusion for all. Imbed diversity, equity and inclusion values in public safety policies. Define Diversity/Equity/Inclusion to encompass geographic, economic, racial, ethnic, age and ability. Work with DEI officer to include these values in public safety

communication. B) Make a clear statement of the administration's commitment to public safety for all. Conduct a public survey and use the results to engage the public and inform public safety actions. C) Data. Expand data systems to measure what matters and incorporate it in management decisions, systems analysis, performance, resource utilization, etc. Use data to obtain maximum levels of public funding and leverage private support. Share data on a regularly updated, easily navigable Dashboard. (Resource- Use Bloomberg City Lab, What Works City Assessment Guide to develop policies and practices and obtain certification-platinum, gold, silver). Expand existing programs to meet more and evolving safety needs. D) In addition to specific recommendations below, the committee suggested exploring available federal and state funding, where applicable, and conducting a comprehensive study of reallocation of existing resources to meet administration priorities and evolving public safety needs.

**2) Police-** A) Department leadership, line officers and police commission should reflect the community they serve. Although changes to the police commission are a subject for the 2022 charter revision, community wide conversation will raise awareness and understanding. B) Convene a collaborative, community-based task force of leaders and diverse community members of the city population to discuss public safety concerns and develop a time sensitive action plan to improve community and law enforcement relations and build trust. C) Continue to collect data and reach out to the community to identify unmet needs and to promote understanding and support for existing programs and goals, i.e., Guide to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing and CT Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force. Focus on equity, transparency and respect to increase confidence in police and fire department as reform oriented and committed to public safety and to build trust between public safety officers and the community. (See National Initiative for Building Community Trust - Re-Imagining Public Safety-The Justice Collaboratory-Yale Law School). D) Expand support for initiatives to increase community engagement and outreach, especially youth programs and commitment to community policing. E) Provide a clear understanding of the challenges, especially those unique to Stamford.

**3) Rescue Services Fire/Police/EMS** A) Commit to support equity/diversity departmentally and in increased recruitment and training. B) Audit policies and practices to assure best emergency response, i.e., tailored to the specific nature of the emergency call and resource utilization, including private EMS with public response services to assure appropriate citywide response. Improve coordinated response call center communication and deployment to include mental health/social services response. C) Recruitment and training- Develop diversity focused recruitment for police, fire and EMS as career paths for Stamford youth. D) Imbed mental health social workers in response teams, train 911 dispatch to identify nature of calls, insuring issue- focused

response and improved resource utilization. E) Convene community centered Health Services Response Task Force to include police, social workers, probation and shelters. F) Citywide promotion of fire safety education and distribution of smoke detectors. G) Assess disaster evacuation needs in South End and elsewhere. Develop evacuation plan.

**4) Mental Health-** A) Recognize mental health, especially for youth, as a Public Safety issue. Increase internal departmental behavioral health resources. B) Integrate mental health/social services as an element of public safety services. C) Convene a Community Mental Health Task Force to collaborate with schools, community organizations serving youth and others to provide comprehensive, proactive youth focused resources and positive/restorative behavioral responses to problematic behavior.

**5) Gun Safety and Violence Prevention** A) Convene a Gun Safety Resource Roundtable including Stamford youth, mental health professionals, non-profit service providers, schools, hospital, advocacy groups and clergy to develop an action plan to include consistent funding using evidence based metrics and providing youth programs, employment opportunities and trained mentors. B) Coordinate response to obtain funding. C) Publicize suicide, overdose, violence prevention and public safety services such as SPD Crime Stoppers, Tip line, firearm amnesty and biometric gun safes.

**6) Street Safety-** A) Expand existing collaboration w/ city engineering, UCONN security, other public safety partners, B) Population growth has increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic challenging public safety. Implement three-prong approach to pedestrian safety –Education, Enforcement and Engineering.

**Challenges-** 1) Financial: Most of the budget is contractually controlled; however, the budget should reflect the administration’s vision for the city. With strategic planning and collaboration, the city may improve its access to federal and state funds as well as leverage private support. 2) Organizational: The administration’s ability to implement policy changes, especially in the public safety sphere, is limited by labor contract provisions and the city charter, (charter revision commission will convene in 2022). 3- Data collection. There is a need for data necessary to evaluate and prioritize public safety actions and resources. As noted above, improved communication and community relations for the entire city population along with data collection and self-assessment are necessary to providing public safety services that benefit the entire community.