



CITY COUNCIL

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Akron City Council Releases Reimagining Public Safety Report, Outlines Next Steps Around Public Engagement

Today, Akron City Council’s Special Committee on Reimagining Public Safety released a Report of Recommendations, detailing the work of four Council working groups on issues of police accountability and transparency, crime prevention, personnel and culture, and technology and equipment. Across 22 separate meetings over the last several months, all 13 Council representatives participated in this process, formulating ideas and proposals that will guide Council’s continued efforts in 2021.

“We all have a part to play in creating change in our community. As legislators, we wanted to take a dive deep into the fact-finding process, to engage in dialogue with our Akron Police Department, learn more about what works, ask questions about what can be improved, and make recommendations that can contribute to meaningful change,” said Margo Sommerville, President of City Council.

The recommendations herein include strengthening the role of the city police auditor and creating a Pathway to Law Enforcement program for Akron youth, to ensure that our police department reflects the diversity of our community. Akron City Council will work towards implementing the report’s recommendations, in close consultation with Mayor Dan Horrigan, the Akron Police Department, the Mayor’s Racial Equity and Social Justice Task Force, and many other community partners.

“I want to thank Council President Sommerville and the members of Akron City Council for their thoughtfulness and commitment to listening throughout this process, as well as the Akron Police Department for their responsiveness and cooperation,” Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan said. “We know that true leadership requires a deep understanding of the complex challenges and realities of modern policing. I believe the work of the Reimagining Public Safety committee can serve as the foundation for further reflection, accountability, and improvement as we build toward safer, more stable neighborhoods for all residents. And I look forward to working

together to develop these opportunities for growth and to better communicate the important work already underway.”

“The Akron Police Department constantly strives for institutional improvement and is open to any process that may provide insight to positive change,” said Akron Deputy Mayor for Public Safety Charles Brown. “I want to thank all of the participants who invested their time to this effort. Through honest cooperation, I believe the department and City Council can work together to recognize the distinct strengths of APD and explore changes that both improve the organization and serve the community.”

Over the next several months, City Council will also embark on a new partnership with the University of Akron. Students and faculty will work alongside Council representatives to create a public engagement process, including a survey and virtual town hall meetings. As part of that process, we will share the information in this report with the community and solicit feedback about policing and public safety. “The University of Akron is honored to be involved in this project, working with members of the Akron City Council to develop and implement a process to gather this valuable information,” said President Gary L. Miller. “It is exciting when our faculty and students have the opportunity to work with our elected officials to improve our community.”

As the Reimagining Public Safety initiative continues, Akron City Council will seek to directly address our residents’ calls for more equitable systems of policing, strengthen bonds of trust between community and law enforcement, and ultimately help create safer neighborhoods and a safer Akron.