



## STAFF REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council  
From the City Manager

**DATE:** October 5, 2020

### **SUBJECT**

Study session on racial equity, City services and policing

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive report and recommendations from the City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Policing.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

Excellence in Government Operations

### **BACKGROUND**

Redwood City is part of an important national conversation about racial equity. Community members have shared opinions, experiences and perspectives in many ways in the last three months, including direct communication to Councilmembers, participation in City Council meetings, participation in a June 10 virtual Town Hall, and participation in dialogue sessions and pop-up events. Residents have identified concerns regarding racial disparities in policing and other City services, as well as concerns regarding racial disparities in the criminal justice system as a whole, in education, and in housing security. Many residents have urged action and new approaches; some residents have expressed appreciation for the City's current approach to policing and concern about significant changes.

This report provides context for recommended next steps, including information about existing City policy and practices, recent community engagement, and actions recommended by the City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Policing (Committee).

On June 22, Mayor Diane Howard appointed the Committee, and serves on the Committee along with Vice Mayor Shelly Masur, and Council Member Alicia Aguirre. The Committee was charged with working with the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) and City staff on community engagement, coordinating with staff on ensuring progress on police-related recommendations included with adoption of the FY 2020/21 budget<sup>1</sup>, providing guidance to staff on other actions to enhance police-related activities in Redwood City, and reporting out regularly to the City Council and the community. City Manager Melissa Stevenson Diaz, City Attorney Veronica Ramirez, Police Chief Dan Mulholland and Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director Michelle Poché Flaherty staffed the Committee.

Over the past three months, members of the Committee and/or the City Manager have met with a variety of stakeholders, including:

- Community members who organized the June 2, 2020 Black Lives Matter protest
- Redwood City Community for Racial Justice and Fair Policing
- Sequoia High School and Sequoia Unified School District
- Mid-Peninsula American Civil Liberties Union Volunteer Chapter
- Redwood City Police Officers Association
- Redwood City Police Supervisor's Association
- Silicon Valley Democratic Socialists

Listening to the community is an ongoing effort, with City Councilmembers regularly speaking with residents to understand their perspectives. Additionally, the City Manager is scheduled to meet in early October with representatives from Latino Focus, Los Bomberos (Latino Firefighters Association), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Black Firefighter Association, and the National Hispanic Firefighters Association.

The Committee has also received a report on alternative policing policies, practices and structures from researcher Joyce Tagal on behalf of The Bill Lane Center of the American West at Stanford University (Attachment A). The City Redwood City and other mid-Peninsula cities requested this report to help guide steps forward. The report included academic and organizational literature review, interviews with Stanford faculty and community experts, and case studies at selected peer cities. The report particularly focused on strategies that could be appropriate for mid-sized suburban cities in three areas: data collection and standards, culture change, and independent oversight. Additionally, Committee members and staff have participated in numerous webinars and other learning opportunities.

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1. Actions approved with the budget include:
    - a. Mayor and City Council to endorse the Obama Foundation Mayor's Pledge
    - b. Modify Police Department policies to categorize carotid restraint as a use of deadly force
    - c. Return military tactical vehicle donated to the City from the federal government
    - d. Increase frequency of racial and cultural diversity training
    - e. Refine use of force policy language to better reflect current law and make additional changes in advance of new laws effective January 2021
    - f. Increase availability of information to the public on police use of force and complaints against officers, and other policies

In an effort to hear more community voices more thoroughly, the City contracted with the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) to conduct a series of six online Community Dialogues on Racial Equity throughout the summer. The sessions were intended to help the City create meaningful change in City policies, service delivery and policing. The Committee also asked PCRC to design the sessions with the objectives of: sharing personal stories and perspectives in order to gain understanding and build trust among participants; deepening everyone's understanding of these complex issues; and seeking ways for policing and all City services to work better for everyone.

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Policing, as well as additional members of the City Council, attended the Community Dialogue sessions to listen directly to input from the community, as did several City staff members including the Police Chief, City Attorney, City Manager and Assistant City Manager. PCRC supplemented this virtual outreach with in-person "pop-up" outreach to under-represented groups in Redwood City. PCRC's report on community perspectives shared through this process is provided as Attachment B, and PCRC representatives will provide a presentation at the Study Session. The outreach process coordinated by PCRC is an important subset of a much larger range of initiatives and events underway in Redwood City related to these issues.

The Redwood City Council has repeatedly declared its commitment to racial equity and inclusion as a matter of public policy. In 2017, the City Council adopted a resolution designating Redwood City as a Welcoming City, noting that Redwood City is *"a diverse multi-ethnic community that celebrates and embraces its many cultures"* and seeks to *"value the contributions of all members of the community including newcomers and immigrants."* Last fall, the City Council issued a proclamation for United Against Hate Week, which stated the City's strong support for *"honoring and protecting every individual regardless of race, creed, color, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, orientation, or identity."*

In January, the City Council adopted its 2020 Strategic Plan with the Mission Statement: *"Building a welcoming Redwood City through collaboration, responsiveness and excellence."* It also featured the City's Vision Statement: *"A community where people of all backgrounds and income levels can thrive."*

On August 10, the City Council adopted [Resolution 15877](#) declaring that Black Lives Matter and reaffirming the City's commitment to racial equity. The resolution stated, *"members of the City Council believe in the values of equity, equal justice and equal opportunity, and are dedicated to diversity, inclusion and equal justice as core parts of who we are and what we stand for, and we recognize that we can always do better."* Among other forward-looking and action-oriented steps, Resolution 15877 commits the City to:

- Improving diversity in its hiring practices, promotions within City departments, and appointments to City boards, committees and commissions, as well as rooting out all forms of bias, discrimination or harassment within City government, wherever that may exist;
- Considering opportunities for increasing community involvement in Police policies and activities;
- Strengthening the City's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion within the City organization and in the provision of City services;
- Conducting ongoing review of City policies to ensure equal treatment of all residents; and
- Listening, learning, and collaborating with our community to seek the change that we need and to identify clear actions going forward.

Most recently, on August 29, the City Council expressed interest in modifying the City’s Strategic Plan to ensure equity is at the core of City policies and activities. The City Council’s Strategic Plan Ad Hoc Committee has met to discuss this and on October 12, will recommend that the City Council amend the Strategic Plan to include the foundational principle, *“Redwood City will put equity first, urging a collective restart so that policies serve the entire community.”*

## **ANALYSIS**

In the last several months, City Councilmembers and staff have focused intently on listening to the community and acting to address concerns regarding racial equity. There are many areas of alignment: shared values regarding equity, equal justice and equal opportunity; shared desires to use data and best practices to shape City services; and shared understanding that government must meet community needs. While current practices and services have many strengths, the Committee and staff also see opportunities for improvement. Importantly, changes need to be grounded in local experiences, data and resources. Feedback from community members and stakeholders provided in recent months may be grouped into eight overarching categories:

1. Desire for the City to consider alternative service models for policing
2. Desire for transparency in public safety data
3. Desire for an organizational culture that supports equity
4. Desire for public accountability/oversight of Police activities
5. Desire for equity in the criminal justice system
6. Desire for equity in housing opportunity including housing affordability and eliminating homelessness
7. Desire for equity in educational outcomes and resources
8. Desire for community awareness of racism

These themes were reflected feedback received in the community dialogue sessions PCRC facilitated; those sessions also identified concerns around cost of living, gentrification, communication and representation. This section of the report provides background information about these themes, recognizing that the City can improve communications regarding police activities and City initiatives. This information is followed by the Committee’s recommended actions.

### **1. Desire for the City to consider alternative service models for policing**

Many residents have urged the City to use best practices in police activities, including partnering with social service organizations to provide services. City leadership shares this value; the Police Department focuses on community policing and works closely with a wide range of service organizations. Several examples are listed below.

Some individuals have also advocated for reducing funding for the Police Department and for reducing interactions with community members, such as eliminating the School Resource Officer at Sequoia High School. These topics are discussed further below.

*Existing Community Policing and Partnerships with Community, Non-Profit and Social Service Organizations*

The Police Department provides public safety services in partnership with the Redwood City community. This partnership is built upon familiarity and trust forged through several decades of very intentional community engagement. The Department's robust community engagement endeavors include:

- A strong social media presence on multiple popular platforms;
- Facebook pages offered in both English and Spanish;
- Spanish and English language citizen police academy programs;
- Participation in the annual Redwood City / San Mateo County holiday toy and book drive;
- Outreach to youth through the Police Activities League, the Police Explorer program and the Redwood City police youth academy;
- Hosting monthly Coffee with the Cops events in both English and Spanish;
- Participating in the annual National Night Out event;
- Partnering with Neighborhood Associations to offer neighborhood watch presentations;
- Utilizing community members in Volunteers in Police Service (VIPs) program to support cultural events and festivals;
- Serving the City's homeless population through the Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team in partnership with other local social service agencies; and
- Providing support to families through programs offered by Juvenile Services Unit, including the parent project program, family interventions, gang awareness presentations, the crossing limits anti-bullying presentations and juvenile diversion.

Several community members expressed concern over police interactions in situations of domestic violence, mental health crisis, and homelessness. As the recent community dialogue sessions focused primarily on listening to community members, staff did not present information about current practices; however, understanding current practices is important as the City Council considers future efforts.

The Police Department proactively works to prevent domestic violence through family supportive education and outreach programs such as the [Parent Project](#) parenting classes, juvenile counseling and support services through our Juvenile Specialist, and the Police Activities League ([PAL](#)). PAL receives limited City funding, and operates as an independent non-profit community organization, with its own governing board and Executive Director. Additionally, the Police Department works closely with social and mental health support service organizations to provide survivors of family violence with needed resources. This begins immediately upon police involvement in a family violence incident by connecting affected individuals with CORA (Communities Overcoming Relationship Abuse) representatives for immediate counseling, housing, and financial support. On-going assistance is offered through the District Attorney's Victim Support Unit, mental health services through County Behavioral and Health Recovery Services, and long-term protective and violence prevention support through the County Adult Threat Assessment Team.

Due to the daily contact the Police Department has with homeless residents, Department leadership recognizes Police employees' unique opportunity to connect homeless individuals with the support services they need to transition off the streets and into long-term, supportive housing. Department employees strive to treat every contact with a homeless resident as an opportunity to help that person get such support, whether it is financial, mental health, substance abuse treatment or job skill development. Each of the Department's six patrol teams has a designated Homeless Outreach officer. Together, these officers make up the Department's Homeless Outreach Team. Each officer receives special training regarding available services and how to assess and connect the individual with the specific services they need. Each designated outreach officer also works closely with the Department's Community Coordinating Activities Officer, who oversees the Homeless Outreach Team and is primarily responsible for coordinating our work with supportive social service organizations such as Street Life Ministries, Life Moves, and the Fair Oaks Community Center. The entire Homeless Outreach Team meets regularly with representatives from these organizations to ensure the individuals and families most in need are able to access the support they require.

#### *Use of Civilians for Some Activities Traditionally Performed by Officers*

Several community members have urged the use of civilians for some activities traditionally performed by police officers, such as parking enforcement and lower-level traffic control activities. This is current practice in Redwood City. Professional support staff in the Police Department provide critical first line and support services such as emergency dispatch, records and information management, property management and evidence collection, parking enforcement, and juvenile support services. The Community Service Officers and Parking Enforcement Officers are the Department's most visible professional staff as they work daily in the community and are readily identifiable by their uniforms. Community Service Officers support patrol operations by providing responses to lower priority calls for service, such as non-injury traffic collisions, minor property crimes, and traffic control. Parking Enforcement Officers are responsible for enforcement of the meters in the downtown area, as well as neighborhood parking restrictions and permit parking zones, and the monitoring and towing of abandoned vehicles.

#### *Police Department Role in Enforcement of Federal Immigration Laws and Coordination with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)*

Many residents urged the Police Department to avoid cooperation with ICE. The Police Department recognizes its obligation to provide police services and protect the safety of all members of the community and that community trust and confidence is crucial to achieving this goal. This goal is undermined when community members are fearful of contacting or cooperating with local police due to their immigration status.

Accordingly, the Redwood City Police Department takes no proactive role in the enforcement of federal immigration laws and does not inquire about immigration status when assisting residents. The Department will provide emergency support to ICE officers working within the City when requested but with the sole purpose of ensuring the safety and well-being of federal personnel and the community.

### *Crisis Intervention Training for Police Employees*

Many community members have expressed concern about whether police officers receive sufficient training to aid those in crisis and whether they should respond to those in crisis. The Redwood City Police Department is committed to providing officers and professional staff with the tools they need to assist individuals in mental health crisis, de-escalate potentially violent situations, and connect troubled individuals with the mental health assistance they need.

The Department requires all sworn officers and dispatch personnel to attend a specialized 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training course taught by local mental health professionals. More than 90 percent of department line level and first line supervisory personnel and dispatchers have completed training that focuses on best practices and techniques to reduce the risk of injury to mentally ill persons and police officers, and to divert individuals to mental health treatment instead of the criminal justice system. This training has created community partnerships between law enforcement, community mental health service providers and community-based organizations, all working together to improve outcomes of police interactions with people in mental health crisis and increased community safety.

### *Use of Facial Recognition Technology*

Some community members have expressed concern about the potential use of facial recognition technology. The Redwood City Police Department does not currently own any facial recognition technology and there are no near term plans to acquire any such in-house capability. Any future acquisition of such technology would only be considered with City Council and community input.

## **2. Desire for Transparency in Public Safety Data**

Several community members have asked for more data on police activities. In an effort to enhance transparency and accountability, City staff have spent the summer of 2020 reviewing currently available data regarding Police Department personnel, use of force, and interactions with the community and improving how we present that information and make it available to the public.

Staff have redesigned the City website to make it easier to find our [Use of Force data online](#), and are developing new reports on police officer interactions. Following Committee review, the reports should to be available to the community by mid-October.

The California Legislature previously passed Assembly Bill 953, the Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015. AB 953 requires law enforcement agencies to report data on all stops to the California Department of Justice, with implementation dates based on the size of the agency. The data required to be collected includes detailed information regarding the stop, information regarding the person stopped and information regarding the officer. Currently, seventeen law enforcement agencies in California are collecting data pursuant to AB 953, with an additional twelve agencies scheduled to begin collecting stop data on January 1, 2021.

The Redwood City Police Department and other agencies in our size category (1 – 333 peace officers) are required to begin collecting stop data by January 1, 2022. The Police Department staff is currently studying the feasibility of collecting data prior to 2022.

### **3. Desire for an Organizational Culture that Supports Equity**

Some community members have expressed a desire for ensuring that the City’s workforce promotes equity and inclusion for all employees.

City leadership strives to support a constructive work environment where all employees can thrive. Last fall, the City launched an internal initiative to promote diversity, equity and inclusion among its employees. Implicit bias training and cultural humility training was presented citywide. This training provided personnel with an understanding of implicit bias and the promotion of bias-reducing strategies to address how unintended biases in decision-making may shape behavior and produce differences in treatment based upon race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or other characteristics.

A consultant has conducted preliminary organizational assessments of each department and customized proposals to enhance workplace in each department are under development. Eleven employee listening sessions were held in September and additional sessions are being scheduled in October. A citywide employee survey will also be issued in October. As part of this initiative, the consultant will make recommendations for additional training and facilitation. Staff will also assess whether any changes are needed to align hiring and promotional practices with best practices.

The City Council reaffirmed the City’s commitment to these efforts on August 10, 2020, with the adoption of a resolution declaring *“the City of Redwood City is committed to improving diversity in its hiring practices, promotions within City departments, and appointments to City boards, committees and commissions, as well as rooting out all forms of bias, discrimination or harassment within City government, wherever that may exist.”*

Some community members also asked for demographic data on employees. Staff are researching strategies for understanding workforce demographics while respecting the limitations of available employee data. Currently, employees voluntarily report their gender and ethnicity, and not everyone provides information. An increasing number of new employees identify themselves as multi-racial or choose not to select an ethnic identity or gender during the recruitment and onboarding processes. Additionally, the City does not collect employee data on religious affiliation, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background. In spite of these limitations, staff are working with available data to monitor and report diversity in hiring and promotions. Staff are similarly examining how best to understand the diversity of our appointees to City boards and commissions given the same data limitations.

The Police Chief and Department leadership are striving to increase diversity within the Redwood City Police Department, recognizing this as a priority for the City Council and the City Manager and as an opportunity to build community trust. Key metrics since 2018 include:

- 86% of promotions to the rank of Sergeant were female, candidates of color and/or members of the LGBTQ community;
- 61% of new Police Officer appointments were female, applicants of color and/or members of the LGBTQ community;
- 100% of professional staff members either hired or promoted to new positions were female or applicants of color.

In addition to citywide training, the Police Department in particular has increased the frequency of racial and cultural diversity training. Racial profiling training is offered to Redwood City police officers in order to provide a better understanding of what racial profiling is, and the negative impact it can have on individuals and the community. Officers learn how racial profiling or bias based policing compromises the public trust, and are presented with real life examples for them to critically analyze their own beliefs and distinguish between when race does and does not play a legitimate role in suspect identification. The State of California requires this training every five years; however, the Redwood City Police Department has taken proactive steps to ensure racial profile and racial bias training is offered every two years.

#### **4. Desire for Public Accountability/Oversight of Police Activities**

Several community members have expressed interest in increased public accountability for Police activities and policies, including advocacy for various forms of citizen oversight.

The City of Redwood City operates under a City Council/City Manager form of government, with the City Council setting City policy and the City Manager serving as chief executive officer for the City. As a result, Police oversight responsibility has generally rested with the City Manager, who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the City Council and is responsible for the activities of all City departments.

In light of increased concerns regarding Police activities, particularly use of force, the City Manager has been involved in the development of critical Police Department policies, including a revision to the use of force policy. Police Department staff currently are completing comprehensive updates to Department policies, including modifications to better reflect recent changes in State law and the conditions under which force can be used. The revised language may also help the public understand the standards regulating police use of force, particularly the potential use of deadly force. In addition, the use of force policy will reflect changes mandated by the provisions of Senate Bill 230 that will become effective on January 1, 2021. Staff intends to present the new use of force policy to the City Council Ad Hoc Committee on Policing for their consideration later this year, as required by the terms of the Obama Foundation Mayor's Pledge.

Additionally staff are in the process of developing reports on the number, type, or disposition of complaints made against City police officers. The reports will be placed on the City's website and will identify whether complaints are sustained, not sustained, exonerated, or unfounded. While State law restricts the City's ability to disclose the underlying complaint and related discipline, this is another step toward increased transparency.

## 5. **Desire for Equity in the Criminal Justice System**

Many community members have expressed concern about inequity in the national criminal justice system, and how interactions with the Redwood City Police Department could ultimately result in incarceration.

The City has several initiatives to support youth, families and adults and avoid the prospect of incarceration. The Redwood City Police Department utilizes a unique combination of law enforcement and clinical social work to provide prevention and early intervention services to youth and their families. Early intervention strategies are critical to the prevention of many negative outcomes that the youth might experience, such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, school failure and dropout, and delinquency. These specialized services are available through the Department's Juvenile Services Unit and include:

- *Parent Project Program*, which is a 12 week nationally recognized training program designed for parents of strong-willed or out-of-control children. The curriculum teaches parents how to stop negative behaviors and open positive two-way communication with the child.
- The *Tattoo Removal Program* was created to assist reformed gang members who wished to remove the signs, markings and stigma of past gang affiliation. The success of this program led to the expanded offering to those who have experienced the trauma of domestic violence or human trafficking. Removing these types of tattoos increases an individual's self-esteem, in addition to creating better opportunities in education and employment.
- *Gang Prevention Classes* are offered as an opportunity for parents to learn about the critical issues and topics of juvenile gang prevention at home and in school. In addition to teaching parents the warning signs of potential gang involvement, the presentations also teach the foundations for understand the diverse nature of gangs, the social, economic and cultural problems they pose, as well as the harm they cause to the community.
- *Family Interventions* are offered to parents who request police assistance to assess and implement alternatives to help children with at-risk behaviors.
- *Crossing Limits* classes are taught to middle school students and provide instruction in the legal consequences of bullying, sexual assaults and the inappropriate use of electronic devices.
- The *Truancy Abatement* program is a collaboration with the school districts to assist with keeping students in school. The program is designed to enforce truancy laws to ensure students attend school and have an opportunity to achieve both academic and social success.
- The *Juvenile Diversion Program* is a model program that works with both parents and juvenile first-time offenders to change destructive behaviors and avoid future negative interactions with the juvenile justice system. The program offers young people the unique opportunity to avoid court records as a result of a minor criminal offense.

In response to changes in state law, and community expectations, the Redwood City Police Department has adjusted its policies regarding vehicle towing. The Department no longer routinely tows the vehicles of drivers cited for being unlicensed, driving on a suspended license or arrested for driving while impaired. Exceptions to this practice would include situations where

a clear public safety risk exists requiring the vehicle be removed from the roadway or when leaving the vehicle unattended would carry a significant risk of it being stolen or vandalized.

The Department has also taken a more compassionate approach towards the towing of recreational vehicles (RVs) which are parked on the street and being used as housing. Though these RVs are often in violation of the City's 72-hour parking limit, the department recognizes that towing the only shelter of individuals who are already suffering financial hardship only serves to compound their situation and serves little public interest. However, this has created some problems within the City as the number of RVs on our streets used for housing has grown and there is a tendency for these vehicles to group in certain areas for long periods, a practice that can negatively affect local businesses and neighborhoods. In response to this concern, the City is currently implementing a Safe Parking Program to allow residents living in RVs to either park their vehicle overnight at a City-sponsored secure lot or, in the event the City lot is full, remain parked on the street but subject to some requirements that will reduce their impact on the local community. All participants in the Safe Parking Program will have access to resources and assistance geared towards helping them transition to permanent, stable housing.

**6. Desire for Equity in Housing Opportunity Including Housing Affordability and Eliminating Homelessness**

Some community members have expressed concerns about inequity in housing opportunity, citing historic patterns of housing segregation nationwide and noting that people of color are less likely to have sufficient housing and are at greater risk for displacement.

The City Council has identified affordable housing and homelessness as top priorities for Redwood City. The City's Housing Division administers affordable housing programs for extremely low, very low, low and moderate income Redwood City households. The City provides funds to produce and preserve affordable housing for residents, including rental and ownership housing. Funds are provided to non-profits to construct and manage affordable rental housing and to provide housing preservation services to lower-income residents to preserve existing affordable housing. Attachment C provides the goals for the City's Housing Division for this year and will be identified with the FY 2020/21 Revised Budget presented on October 26.

Last year, the City, in partnership with Redwood City 2020, the County's Home for All initiative and the Library Foundation, invited the community to a series of community conversations on housing titled *Our Community: Housing and Our Future*. Feedback from these conversations led the City Council to address issues like renter relocation assistance and affordable housing requirements.

In response to the economic challenges of Covid-19, Redwood City has administered an Emergency Rental Assistance Program for families and individuals who have experienced a loss of income due to the pandemic. The City has committed over \$500,000 in City operating funds, and allocated over \$1.7 million in federal, county, and private funds to this program. Fully 40% of all residents in San Mateo County receiving rent assistance received this support due to the City's efforts. As of September 18, 2020, over \$2.2 million has been spent to assist 940 unduplicated

households. Many were assisted multiple months; 141 households who requested assistance for a second time were provided that assistance.

## **7. Desire for Equity in Educational Outcomes and Resources**

Several community members have expressed concern about inequity in educational outcomes and resources and particularly focused on recent Redwood City School District school closures.

California schools operate under State, rather than City, authority. School districts have their own elected governing boards and administration and funding, and operate independently of the City.

The City does have a long history of working collaboratively with the three school districts in Redwood City (Belmont Redwood Shores School District, Redwood City School District, and Sequoia Union High School District) to support children, youth and families. For example, for 20 years, Redwood City has been a core member of Redwood City 2020, a community collaborative to address poverty in Redwood City and the adjacent North Fair Oaks neighborhood in unincorporated San Mateo County. Redwood City 2020 is comprised of eight core members and the collaborative includes numerous community-based organizations. Core members are the City of Redwood City (which also serves as the fiscal agent for Redwood City 2020), Redwood City Elementary School District, Sequoia Union High School District, County of San Mateo (Health and Human Services Agency), Sequoia Healthcare District, the Board of Trustees of Stanford University, Kaiser Permanente, and Cañada College. Redwood City 2020's vision is *"that all people living in Redwood City and North Fair Oaks are healthy, safe and successful. We bring our community residents together with local organizations and public agencies to develop and implement a wide range of projects that are focused on addressing acute needs and building on strengths in our community. Our goals are to reduce the impact of poverty, improve the academic success of students, promote community health and wellness, increase community engagement, and enhance safety."*

The City communicates and coordinates regularly with school districts within Redwood City on after-school programs and shared facility use in order to leverage investment of public funds and meet the needs of children, youth and families. The City has formal joint use agreements with both the Redwood City School District and the Belmont-Redwood Shores School district to ensure open spaces for youth sports leagues, and neighborhood drop-in play. The Districts and the City have also worked together on sports field improvements and support a multi-use community center on the campus of Sandpiper School in Redwood Shores.

For nearly 25 years, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Department has worked closely with the Redwood City School District on providing after school programs ("REACH") between five to seven campuses serving up to 1,000 children each day. These State and Federally grant-funded programs provide tutoring, enrichment, recreation, and health instruction. The PRCS Department also hosts a fee-based after school program at Sandpiper School in Redwood Shores up to 130 children each day during the school year.

## 8. Desire for Community Awareness of Racism

Some community members expressed a desire for increased community awareness of racism.

Redwood City Public Library staff have been immersed in racial equity work with the community since the fall of 2019, when the Library was selected through a competitive application process to be one of the pilot libraries for the California State Library's California Libraries Cultivating Race, Equity and Inclusion (CREI) Initiative. The Library's [Cultivating & Advancing Racial Equity Systemically \(RCPL CARES\) program](#) has curated anti-racism reading lists, hosted programs and events designed by community members from underserved or under-represented populations, featured events to reflect Redwood City's diverse cultures, and promoting learning for all ages through discussions such as the program on "How to Talk to Kids About Race." The Library has also offered Bystander Intervention Training.

Redwood City Parks, Recreation & Community Services preserved the street art associated with the June 2, 2020 Black Lives Matter protest and presented the murals with contextual information as an art exhibit from July 1 through August 14 in the parking lot of the Downtown Library near Courthouse Square, accompanied by Library-curated resources on racism for community learning. On August 10, the City Council directed the Arts Commission to develop a work plan to create a mural or monument to reflect the City's commitment to racial equity and inclusion. The Arts Commission will be considering the elements of the work plan over the next several months and will be seek community input. They will then bring their recommendation back to the City Council for discussion once that process is completed.

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the community input received over the last four months and consideration of the City's resources as well as broad community needs, the Committee recommends that the City Council endorse the concept of developing a multi-year Equity Workplan with three focus areas: equity in public safety, equity in all other City services, and equity in the community as a whole. The Workplan would be developed over the course of the fiscal year, and include both immediate steps, and actions that will require time to develop.

While the City Council will not make a final decision on October 5, as the meeting is a Study Session, the Committee seeks City Council feedback on this concept. If the City Council supports this concept, staff time required to create an Equity Workplan would be included in the Revised Fiscal Year 2020/21 Budget the City Council will consider on October 26. The Committee recommends the following activities in each of the focus areas.

## EQUITY WORKPLAN

### Enhance Equity in Public Safety Services

The Committee recommends three actions related to equity in public safety services.

1. *Participate in a pilot program with San Mateo County to partner mental health clinicians with police officers responding to crisis calls*

Inspired by programs in other communities including Berkeley, Burbank, and San Diego, California and the CAHOOTS program in Eugene, Oregon, City staff have been working to develop a pilot program to partner mental health clinicians with police officers when they respond to mental health crisis calls. Conceptually, the San Mateo County Health Department would provide mental health clinicians to be assigned to the Daly City, Redwood City, San Mateo, and South San Francisco Police Departments; conceptually, one clinician would be assigned on an ongoing basis to each department and one would float among the departments as needed. The clinicians would go on crisis calls and provide guidance on responding to the individual. As a medical professional, they would have access to medical records and could help with follow up care and support after the call for service is over. The offering of additional supportive services would also include assistance to individuals with alcohol and/or chemical dependencies.

Establishing a pilot program would help the City evaluate the value of the approach. The clinicians also could support officers working with individuals who have mental health issues that do not rise to a crisis level, individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and the provision of training to staff. Staff anticipate a 1-2 year pilot program period. The agencies are in discussion with the Gardner Center at Stanford University to establish program effectiveness measures so that clear goals and outcomes established at the start.

Staff expect to bring an agreement to the City Council later in the year.

2. *Improve data collection, analysis and transparency*

Increasing data collection and data sharing would benefit community understanding of current police activities and help City and Police Department management in guiding change. Much of the data requested by community members is either not readily available or not in a format that is easy to comprehend. Staff are currently working on providing this information but carrying through on this effort will require sustained effort and resources.

The Committee recommends that staff increase data collection, data analysis and data sharing related to:

- a. Use of force;
- b. Interactions with members of the public, particularly the breakdown of service calls and employee-initiated activity;
- c. Public safety interactions by geographic areas of service;
- d. Demographic characteristics for employees hired and promoted;
- e. Analysis of Redwood City data compared to other agencies; and

- f. Number, type, and disposition of complaints made against City police officers.
3. *Create a New City Council Public Safety Committee to Guide Public Safety Initiatives*

The Ad Hoc Committee on Policing has met at least at least twice a month with staff since July, and has participated in numerous community engagement and educational activities. Important steps have been taken, and continued progress will take sustained effort. The Committee recommends creation of an ongoing City Council Public Safety Committee to guide staff efforts and make additional recommendations to the City Council. As a standing committee, it would be subject to the Brown Act and meetings would be open to the public.

The Committee would be charged with:

- a. Reviewing use of force policies consistent with the August 10, 2020 City Council resolution to “review police use of force policies, consider changes, and report on our findings to the community”;
- b. Developing recommendations for increased community involvement in Police activities, which could include a board or commission;
- c. Reviewing annual reports regarding the number, type, and disposition of complaints made against City employees; and
- d. Providing feedback to staff on proposals for modifying public safety service delivery models.

### **Enhance Equity in All Other City Services**

The Committee recommends three actions to enhance equity in all other City services:

1. *Amend the Strategic Plan to Make Equity a Foundational Guiding Principle*

The City Council has already expressed interest in modifying the City’s Strategic Plan to ensure equity is at the core of all City policies and activities. As noted above, the City Council’s Strategic Plan Ad Hoc Committee has met to discuss this and on October 12, will recommend that the City Council amend the Strategic Plan to include the statement, “*Redwood City will put equity first, urging a collective restart so that policies serve the entire community.*” Modifying the Strategic Plan is the first step toward applying an equity lens in policymaking, and can be a tool for addressing broader community concerns including housing equity, homelessness and displacement.
2. *Fund Initiatives Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for City Employees*

The City Council has provided policy direction regarding improving diversity in hiring and promotional practices. Through adoption of the annual budget, the City Council can support the City Manager’s recommendations for workforce initiatives to strengthen the City’s organizational culture. This includes internal initiatives to increase the frequency of employee training in unconscious bias, cultural humility, power and privilege; to conduct employee group listening sessions, surveys and department-specific culture assessments; and to develop activities to support a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. Staff will also report statistics on hiring, promotions, and training.

3. *Increase Diversity of Volunteer Leadership, and Support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives for Volunteer Leadership*

The City Council has already provided policy direction regarding improving diversity in appointments to boards, commissions and committee. In addition to supporting workforce efforts, the Committee recommends that members of the City's volunteer leadership, including City Council members and board, commission and committee members also participate in workshops related to diversity, equity and inclusion. The City has contracted with the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center to provide workshops for City leadership on topics such as cultural humility, implicit bias, and power and privilege.

### **Enhance Equity in the Redwood City Community**

Some of the community concerns shared relate to services provided by other organizations, particularly education. The Committee recommends three focus areas related to education as there are existing City initiatives related to broad community concerns such as the high cost of living and gentrification:

1. *Work with Redwood City 2020 to enhance equity in education*

As a collective impact organization, Redwood City 2020 is uniquely positioned to bring together educational, governmental and health institutions to address inequity. Redwood City 2020 includes Canada College, Redwood City School District, and Sequoia Union High School District as core members. Redwood City 2020 is currently developing a new Strategic Plan with specific measures to focus future action for the greatest possible impact. The Committee recommends that the City be actively involved in these efforts and use the Strategic Plan to inform City services.

2. *Work the Belmont Redwood Shores School District to enhance equity in education*

As the Belmont Redwood Shores School District is not part of Redwood City 2020, the Committee recommends that City and District leadership identify opportunities to address issues of equity together.

3. *Clarify the role of the School Resource Officer*

Several community members raised concerns about the role of the School Resource Officer. This position has largely been funded by the City, and has been intended to support quality community relationships between youth and members of the Police Department. City staff and Sequoia High School staff are working to clarify the role of this position, and expect to recommend a new agreement between the City and the Sequoia Union High School District later this year.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Development of the proposed Equity Workplan can be incorporated in the Revised FY 2020/21 Budget that the City Council will consider on October 26. As identified during the FY 2020/21 budget adoption process, the City currently faces significant financial challenges: the City's revenues, particularly sales tax revenues, are declining due to reduced business activity as a result of the COVID19 pandemic. At the same time, community service needs are increasing.

The Revised FY 2020/21 Budget will present short and long-term strategies to reimagine public services in light of these fiscal constraints and evolving community needs. The proposed Equity Workplan would help guide the work to meet current community needs and reimagine services.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This activity is not a project under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as defined in CEQA Guidelines, section 15378, because it has no potential for resulting in either a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The City Council will be asked to provide feedback on the Committee's recommended actions. This feedback will inform development of the Revised FY 2020/21 Budget that the City Council will consider adopting on October 26, 2020.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A – Stanford University research on police reform requested by Mid-Peninsula City Managers

Attachment B – Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center Report

Attachment C – Housing and Homelessness Initiatives

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