



MEMORANDUM

DATE: 6/22/2020
TO: Members of the Richmond City Council
FROM: Mayor Levar Stoney
CC: Lenora Reid, CAO, and Jody Blackwell, Interim Chief of Police
RE: Local Roadmap for Public Safety Reform

The following reforms outline our local roadmap to improving public safety in the City of Richmond. These are our first steps, informed by community input, that my administration is committed to taking to reimagine public safety and renew Richmond – a path towards a safer, more equitable and just Richmond for *all*.

As we continue to engage the community, work with the members of the Richmond City Council and the Richmond Police Department, and we will release additional roadmaps for what we will advocate for on the state and federal levels as well.

Local Public Safety and Justice Reforms

The City of Richmond is committed to implementing public safety and justice reforms in several core areas: policy, accountability, programing, governance, and community healing and engagement. Reimagining public safety also means taking a human services approach – aligning, strengthening, and creating new partnerships between city and community organizations to help all residents thrive. Below are my administration’s first steps toward reimagining public safety and creating space for community healing. Additional reforms will be informed by the Richmond Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety, which will present a report in 90 days from their first meeting.

Policy

- 1. Updated and strengthened RPD’s Duty to Intervene policy.** Officers should be legally and morally obligated to intervene when they believe an officer or supervisor is about to use excessive or unnecessary force, or when they witness colleagues or supervisors using excessive or unnecessary force, or engaging in other misconduct. This updated policy clearly establishes this as a department-wide policy. The department is also dedicated to training its officers to detect warning signs that another officer might be moving toward excessive or unnecessary force and to intervene before the situation escalates.
- 2. Updated RPD’s policy prohibiting the use of chokeholds.** Whereas RPD has already prohibited the use of chokeholds for many years, this updated policy will provide greater specificity for officers.

Accountability

- 1. Create a Richmond Civilian Review Board.** Working with the Richmond City Council, the Richmond Police Department, and the community, the city will draft an ordinance to establish a Civilian Review Board. This entity will be external to the police department’s



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internal affairs, and consist of residents from outside of the police department, appointed by the mayor and city council. A review board is generally charged with the duty of reviewing complaints and making recommendations to disciplinary action after the police department has completed its own investigation and made a disciplinary recommendation.

I commit my administration to hosting two community input meetings and have requested that Council host two meetings as well. All four meetings should take place *before* any ordinance is introduced.

My goal is this: over the next few months, we will have engaged with the community, evaluated best practices from around the nation, and drafted an ordinance to create the Richmond Civilian Review Board. After the ordinance is introduced, co-patroned by myself and members of City Council, it will go through the regular council proceedings.

Programs

- 1. Establish a Crisis Alert.** The city will establish a formal crisis alert system called the Marcus Alert. The Richmond Behavioral Health Authority and the Richmond Police Department will implement a responsive city-wide alert system that will enable RPD and RBHA to work collaboratively to address calls about mental and behavioral health crises.

Community Healing and Engagement

- 1. Establish the Richmond Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety.** This task force will bring upwards of 20 individuals from the activist, legal, academia, RPD, mental and behavioral health, and other communities together to agree on a set of actionable steps within 90 days of the first meeting. The mission: to make public safety recommendations that build toward equity and justice.

The task force will focus on five priority areas:

- i. Police Policy, Practices, and Culture
- ii. Police Accountability
- iii. Community Healing and Engagement
- iv. Officer Training and Education
- v. Officer and Community Wellness

This will be a community effort that focuses on healing, trust building, and making reforms for a safer and more just Richmond – not only for residents, but the officers that serve the community as well. I will have more to say on the specifics of this task force on this week.

- 2. Obama Mayor's Pledge.** On June 17th, 2020, I signed the Obama Mayor's Pledge, which committed my administration and the community to:
 - a. REVIEW police use of force policies.
 - b. ENGAGE communities by including a diverse range of input, experiences, and stories in your review.
 - c. REPORT the findings of our review to the community and seek feedback.
 - d. REFORM our community's police use of force policies.



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The Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety will help lead this work.

- 3. Commitment to remove Confederate monuments in the city.** Richmond is no longer the Capital of the Confederacy and we must show our community how much love we have by embracing our diversity. It is time that we remove barriers that hinder the dreams of Black children in our community.

All nine members of the Richmond City Council have expressed support in this effort. As such, my administration is currently drafting legislation to remove the Confederate monuments on Monument Avenue. This legislation will be introduced, co-partioned by all nine members, on July 1st.

Governance

- 1. Earlier this year, the city began working on steps to ensure racial equity is a core component of its policies and practices.** My administration, alongside Council President Newbille and Councilwoman Robertson, has proposed a racial equity strategy, which consists of racial equity training for staff, to include departmental equity-focused action plans, and a racial equity study to help provide the necessary roadmap and tools for greater inclusion and equity within city government. We are committed to this work in order to help dismantle racist systems and policies and build more just ones that provide the opportunity for all city residents to succeed and thrive.

As a first step in this work, on June 15th, I asked my Executive Cabinet, which includes all Deputy City Administrative Officers (DCAOs), to work with their teams to present several options in their respective portfolios that would advance racial equity. I have asked all recommendations be returned to me by Friday, June 26th.