



## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: 11/26/2013

AGENDA OF: 12/3/2013

DEPARTMENT: City Manager

SUBJECT: Public Safety Citizen Task Force Final Report (CM)

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** Motion to accept final report, Research, Findings and Recommendations: Santa Cruz City Public Safety Citizen Task Force, and provide direction as appropriate.

---

**BACKGROUND:** The concept of the Public Safety Citizen Task Force was borne out of a series of public meetings, commencing with the December 2012 City Council Public Safety Committee. At that meeting, the Committee directed City staff to return in January with "recommendations to address the public safety concerns in the City's parks, beaches, open space, neighborhoods, and commercial areas." Staff researched other city models and best practices for community collaboration on public safety issues. This research resulted in a recommendation to assemble a citizen task force. Diversity of residential geography, social networks, professions, gender, and age were noted to be critically important to the composition of the proposed group. A broad citizen demographic would bring unique, unfiltered, and oftentimes unheard perspectives from everyday life in Santa Cruz.

In creating the Task Force on April 9th, the City Council charged the group with "clearly defin[ing] the underlying safety issues facing the City of Santa Cruz and present their findings and recommended solutions to the City Council, utilizing quantitative and qualitative evidence and best practice research to support that work. The Task Force will be tasked with exploring the deep-rooted issues affecting our public safety, including, but not limited to: drug abuse and treatment; drug-related crimes; transients; inappropriate social behaviors; mental illness; gang activity; and the impacts [increased calls for service have on our local justice system]. These complex issues require deep thought and analysis, and most importantly, open minds and plenty of room for disagreement and collaboration."

The Task Force committed to the Council charge by exploring, from a factual basis, pertinent safety issues impacting our community, and developing recommendations to bring to City Council for thoughtful consideration. Despite their different backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences, they worked cohesively as group to learn about the pressing safety issues, engage a wide array of experts in the fields of public safety and health, and listen to community-members. Together they learned that Santa Cruz faces a host of complex public safety challenges, and that our local governments (City and County) and social service providers need to collaborate to address them effectively. Many of the conversations were quite difficult given the sensitive

nature of the topics and the Task Force was not in full agreement on each and every recommendation. However, they remained committed to the process, put their personal opinions to the side, analyzed the issues over four months and worked for the last two months to develop feasible recommendations for City Council review. The attached report, Research, Findings and Recommendations: Santa Cruz City Public Safety Citizen Task Force, serves as the culmination of this six month process.

The recommendations included in the final report reflect a principled compromise of Task Force members, but not a compromise of their principles. It is the belief of the Task Force that Santa Cruz can address these difficult issues; and that now is the opportunity. The Task Force would like the City Council and City staff to thoroughly review the report and determine how best to operationalize the recommendations. Further, they understand that the City will need time to assess each recommendation and work internally and with their partners to make them a reality. Finally, the Task Force asks that the City Council conduct 6-month and 12-month check-ins with the community to measure progress made on these recommendations.

DISCUSSION: None.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

Submitted by:  
Susie O'Hara  
Public Safety Citizen Task  
Force Coordinator

Approved by:  
Martin Bernal  
City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

Task Force Final Report, Research, Findings and Recommendations: Santa Cruz City Public Safety Citizen Task Force