



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021**

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### **Public Safety Commission** (Official Name of Board or Commission)

**The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:**

To serve as an advisory body to the city council on all budgetary and policy matters concerning public safety, including matters related to the Austin Police Department, the Austin Fire Department, and the Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services Department. Make recommendations on matters related to long-range comprehensive planning initiatives, access to and expenditure of state and federal grant funds, and other related public safety matters.

- 1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

The Public Safety Commission of the City of Austin meets the first Monday of each month. The mission of the Commission is to review the needs of the City vis-à-vis public safety through presentations, documents, and data provided by the three public safety departments of the City of Austin: Police, Fire, and Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services and from advocates and citizens. During the previous year, the Public Safety Commission heard concerns from citizens and requested presentations from experts. The Commission made recommendations to City Council on public safety department budget requests, future planning, and other relevant issues.

The specific recommendations included:

- Sept. 2020 - Recommendation: The Public Safety Commission recommends that the City Council authorize negotiation and execution of an interlocal agreement with the Shady Hollow Municipal Utility District

(MUD) for the provision of fire protection services by the Austin Fire Department to Shady Hollow in exchange for payment by the Shady Hollow MUD to the City. Related to Items #20-3034, #20-3083, #20-3085.

- December 2020: Recommendation: Given the particular intersection of vulnerabilities among the trans community including disproportional interactions with Austin police, the Public Safety Commission recommends that the City Council direct the City Manager to appoint a trans Austinite to the Re-imagining Public Safety Task Force.
- January 2021: Recommendation: We recommend that the City Council direct the City Manager ensure that all front-line public safety personnel obtain the full measure of workers' compensation benefits to which they are entitled. The following policies should be enacted as soon as possible:
  1. All three public safety departments should adopt a presumption that a COVID+ employee was injured at work [note that APD has already adopted this policy].
  2. All three departments (but especially EMS) should be given additional HR resources to assist employees with the complicated process of obtaining workers compensation benefits. All public safety employees interacting with the public on the job should be made aware by HR that they CAN and SHOULD apply for workers' compensation benefits as soon as they become COVID+. After that, all employees who choose to apply should be supported throughout the process.
  3. The Human Resources Department should immediately undertake oversight of this process to ensure that all of Austin's front-line public safety personnel are treated fairly and equitably as they continue to risk COVID exposure every day on the job.
- February 2021: Recommendation: We recommend that the City Council direct the City Manager ensure that any high discretion searches resulting in the discovery of drug or controlled substance contraband that would normally result in arrest not be referred to the district or county attorney's offices for prosecution. The following policies should be enacted as soon as possible:
  1. The definition of high discretion search includes both consent searches and searches conducted because the officer "smelled marijuana" or "smelled something suspicious."
  2. Officers cease conducting high discretion searches at vehicle stops
- April 2021: Recommendation: The Public Safety Commission recommends that the City Council take action to support the findings of the report outlining the gaps and opportunities for improvement of mental health services for Austin's first responders.

Recommendation: The Public Safety Commission recommends that the City Council take action to support the following budget items:

APD • Sworn Overtime - \$2.8M • Terminal Pay Increase - \$3.4M • 2.5 Civilian FTEs for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; and the Training Academy - \$1.6M • Total \$7.8M  
Fire • Del Valle Ladder - \$1.6M • Civilian conversions temp to permanent (4FTEs) - \$303K • Mental Health Support (2FTEs) - \$187K • Mental Health training (contracted) - \$50K • Total \$2.1M  
EMS • Program Leadership Enhancement - \$962K • Phasing in FTEs to standardize staffing levels at all stations (12FTEs) - \$3.6M • Community Relations and Injury Prevention Investment - \$232K • Total \$4.794

**2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

All Public Safety Commission actions were in full compliance with its mission statement

**3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.**

- a. Discuss and analyze existing and emerging public safety issues in Austin.
- b. Examine the functioning, long-range planning, budget requests, and needs of the City's public safety departments within an evidence-based context.
- c. Seek the input of citizens and hear presentations from experts.
- d. Respond to requests from City Council related to public safety matters.
- e. Collaborate with and support the Public Safety Council Committee.