

EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Report to Mayor Nelson On Public Safety/Policing

January 2021



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Introduction and Summary of Task Force Activities

This report is the work of the Equity and Social Justice Task Force formed by Mayor Mike Nelson for the purpose of providing advisement to the Mayor on issues of equity and justice. The Task Force was given a mandate to create an Equity Toolkit and advise on an Equity Workplan for the City. The first priority was Police Department practices as they relate to Public Safety/Policing. The key question being “How do we make Edmonds a better, safer place for everyone?” It should be noted that this report provides a “snapshot” of the current status of Public Safety/Policing and provides recommendations; it is not a full audit. The Task Force members are community volunteers who did the work; the consultants facilitated the processes but the Task Force members met as work groups, formulated questions, conducted interviews and determined the priorities included in the report.

The Task Force has met since August, 2020 with the Consultants to accomplish the following work:

- Established bi-monthly Task Force meetings with scheduled agendas
- Reviewed Equity and Social Justice Reports from Northwest cities and national foundations
- Established definition of Equity best suited for Edmonds; with agreement to use the definition as an Equity Lens or toolkit
- Formed two work groups focused on Public Safety/Policing and Community Engagement with differing areas of focus:
 - 1) Organizational Transformation; and
 - 2) Social Services and Community Policing from a Social Services Lens
- Created an overview of the goals of each group and determined who should be interviewed within the City of Edmonds
- Compiled a list of representative stakeholders across the community
- Determined the data to be requested of the Police Department; received and reviewed the data responses
- Drafted interview questions for each interviewee
- Provided copies of the interview questions in advance to the interviewees. Scheduled and conducted the interviews and prepared interview summaries that were read and approved by the interviewees for inclusion in this report
- Participated in individual Task Force interviews with the consultants as part of a 360 assessment; reviewed the anonymous interview summary provided by the consultants
- Completed a SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (or challenges) for the police department
- Participated in Task Force Gap Analysis
- Selected key priorities to be included in a recommended work plan for the police department
- Reviewed the draft report and provided comments and/or edits

Equity Toolkit- Equity Lens

The Task Force members read and reviewed representative examples of Equity toolkits including some used by Northwest cities, associations, and foundations. They looked at and discussed the work of Annie E. Casey Foundation, which is recognized as the foremost foundation in issues of equity. The Casey toolkit was an example for the City of Seattle when the city began to develop its own toolkit over ten years ago. These sample toolkits provide a process for each department of the City or organization to assess its operating decisions under an equity lens. They offer models for a city-wide toolkit. The City of Beaverton, Oregon was viewed by the Task Force as the most representative of the movement towards multiculturalism that is taking place in Edmonds. One member of the Task Force did additional research on equity toolkits and offered an example of an equity lens used in California's Santa Cruz County Youth Action Network. The task force decided that this more direct checklist type of format was preferred and is recommended. They made one modification which is included in the equity lens questions below.

The narrative below is taken from

http://www.sccyvpt.org/uploads/6/4/4/7/64475291/sc_what_is_an_equity_lens.pdf

What is an Equity Lens?

The purpose of an equity lens is to be deliberately inclusive as an organization makes decisions. It introduces a set of questions into the decision that help the decision makers focus on equity in both their processes and outcomes.

It is explicit in drawing attention to the inclusion of marginalized populations, typically communities of color, and can be adapted to focus on other communities.

The lens questions are designed to create a more inclusive perspective, drawing attention to how the decision holds potential to affect marginalized groups. An equity lens will not tell you what action to take. Rather, the lens helps you discuss and reflect on the equitableness of the action and decision-making process.

Equity lenses can be customized for different organizations and decisions. The standard elements, however, ask for the decision makers to consider equity dimensions of involvement, process, values and assumptions, and outcomes, from a perspective that highlights how practices hold potential to shift power towards inclusion and equity.

What are the questions typically included in an Equity Lens?

1. What decision is being made?
 - a. What beliefs, values and assumptions (some of which will be cultural) guide how the topic is being considered?

2. Who is at the table? (**Note: the Task Force said that this question should be “who is NOT at the table”**)
 - a. Who or what informs their thinking on this issue?
 - b. Who is most affected by these decisions, and thus should be at the table?
 - c. How can they be included?
3. How is the decision being made?
 - a. What participatory structures can be added to hear from more voices, to equalize participation, and elements of consensus to be used?
4. What assumptions are at the foundation of the issue? Be explicit in naming these and the values and cultural bases for them.
5. What is the likely impact?
 - a. Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities: Does it result in a systemic change that addresses institutional inequality?
 - b. Does the policy, program, or decision produce any intentional benefits or unintended consequences for the affected group?
 - c. What is the real impact likely to be for different groups who are important to the organization?
6. What is your decision?
 - a. Based on the above responses, what are the possible revisions to the policy, program, or decision under review that could address inequity/promote equity?

Task Force Comments on Interviews

Members of the Task Force were interviewed to provide their own individual assessments (and those with community members) of the Edmonds Police Department. A summary of the interviews is provided in the Appendices. In addition, the two work teams met, determined what information they wanted to include in this report, developed interview questions and conducted interviews with the Police Department, Judge Coburn of the Community Court, and Mindy Wood, Human Services Coordinator. Summaries of those interviews are also included in the Appendices. In addition to the interview summaries, each interview team prepared comments on their interviews; reflecting what they heard, learned and see as critical information to share in this report. These comments are included with each interview summary and are also provided here as part of the report.

1. Comments on the Interview with the Police Department

On Tuesday, December 1st members of the Task Force conducted an interview with Acting Chief Lawless, Detective Govantes, Sargent McClure and Sargent Greenmun from the Edmonds Police Department (EPD). Interview questions were provided in advance to Chief Lawless and the duration of the meeting was about two hours. Acting Chief Lawless responded to the majority of the questions; we have done our best to note when one of the other officers responded. Prior to the interview a request for information was sent to Acting Chief Lawless in which he provided a document in return with the data.

Overall the interview provided the Task Force with insight into the Edmonds Police Department diversity training program, understanding of social justice, community knowledge and engagement, and relationship with ownership and accountability.

After completing this analysis, it is our opinion that there is a deficit in each of these areas in order to comprehensively serve all members of the Edmonds community, especially our communities of color. The police displayed a position of [denial](#) (refusal to acknowledge the hierarchal system or privileges based on ethnicity, race, gender, and more), [implicit bias](#) (negative associations, attitudes, or stereotypes that affect actions), lack of [multicultural competency](#) (a process of learning about and becoming allies with people from other cultures, broadening understanding of others, respecting the ways that others live and organize), and lack of [accountability](#) (the ways that individuals/groups hold themselves to their goals and actions, and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible). The recommendations in this report are steps towards addressing this deficit. Below is a more detailed analysis for each of these areas.

Bias and Diversity Training Program

- Summary
 - The data and officers identified that there currently is not an ongoing, comprehensive diversity training program. There are links to two training videos embedded within files on their public website; it is unclear how the videos are used. During the interview they said they used an individual for bias training and quoted his credentials. The data they returned did not indicate a budget line item, tracking of participation, or visibility of any form of diversity training.
- Analysis
 - It is clear that bias and diversity training is not a priority of the department or seen as a relevant need. There was resistance in the interview to taking ownership of the existing (lack of) program (e.g. two optional videos) with: 1) statements that budget constraints did not provide the opportunity for this training; 2) deflection in that it is the state's training program that is responsible for determining what curriculum should be included; and 3) that the task force was welcome to do the research and provide options. The lack of awareness, understanding, and ownership is disappointing and is a clear barrier to moving the department forward with comprehensive, effective diversity training.
- Examples
 - When asked "What training has been provided that is specifically tailored to working with communities of color, immigrant populations and youth in Edmonds" the answer was scripted and stated who they use for bias training, Dr. Bryant T Marks. They outlined the credentials of the trainer but not how, when, how often, or impact of the training was described. We (the Task Force) were "invited" to find someone with equal qualifications. We were frustrated by this reaction. It is not the Task Force's job to research and supply training options to the department, it is their job and responsibility to do that.

- Their answer also described crisis intervention training, de-escalation training, professional development, and the youth Police Explorer Program. These trainings were listed but no description was given as to how these answer the question and are tailored to the specific community populations referenced in our question. There was a clear disconnect between the question and the answers.
- They referred to their core value of “Stewardship” and stated that they have a fiscal responsibility aligned with that value, such as in the area of training. This excuse was used as a reasoning as to why they currently do not have comprehensive bias and diversity training and why it was not financially responsible to do so. Budget and money show values and they indirectly said in this statement that bias and diversity training is not a value.
- They stated that they do not know of any trainings or strategies that would equip them to engage with diverse communities and want people to get to know them. They added that real life interactions and getting to know each other are better than classroom training. They invited the community to come to them to get to know them but did not indicate how the community might be invited or what might be involved in these interactions.

Understanding of Social Justice

- Summary
 - On multiple instances throughout the interview and within the return of the data the chief, officers, and department had the opportunity to speak to their understanding, engagement, and incorporation of social justice, multicultural competency, and use of an equity lens. Throughout the entirety of the interview, but in particular within this topical area, the task force members felt it was comparable to two different cultures trying to communicate with one another. The officers were unable and unwilling to define [tokenism](#) (the practice of making a symbolic effort, especially by recruiting an individual or group of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of equality), marginalized communities, and other social justice terminology and concepts. Gaslighting (when a questions is not answered, provides unrelated information, and ignores the question all together), deflection, denial, discounting, and other strategies were used to talk around, or not at all, about the topics and avoid directly answering the questions.
- Analysis
 - There is a lack of understanding of social justice terminology and concepts, multicultural competency, white privilege, structural racism, restorative justice (and more), and applying an equity lens ([Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)). We understand that there is a continuum within each individual, department, and community’s development within these areas and we believe the department to collectively be within a place of [denial to minimization](#). This is greatly concerning

for one of the most community-facing departments of our city and has multiple negative impacts and implications for the City.

- Examples
 - In the interview, the police gathered four people including a person of color, whose role seemed to be strictly to represent and speak to the supposed diversity of the agency. This person was not an equal within the conversation, and spoke only on her lack of experience of tokenism. The dynamics in the interview created a sense of tokenizing her and putting her in a spokesperson's role to blunt criticism or help address questions on diversity when speaking to an equity and social justice panel. What would have felt and been authentic would be that a police officer in an appropriate job description like community outreach officer or supervisor could give an equal and complementary experience to the many questions rather than one or two questions on tokenism. She was only called upon for the one or two questions which shows she was tokenized. Her body language was uncomfortable and we felt bad for her knowing she was obviously very uncomfortable.
 - In both the interview and data, the police were unwilling and unable to define "marginalized communities" and stated that they did not want to put people in boxes or groups because it is limiting but rather focus on behavior. This is a form of colorblindness and denial of recognizing identities. They did, however, use descriptive terms, such as homeless, transient, chemical dependency, and domestic violence to describe groups of people within the community. This was an excuse as to why they were not familiar with the demographics of the community they served, let alone the needs and relationship with police of the community. They stated that their biggest strength in engaging with underrepresented and marginalized communities is their problem solving skills.
 - During the interview the officers were asked to describe how they address an "old boy" system and responded by tokenizing the female, Black officer in the room, describing how she has been offered promotions on multiple occasions and how they communicate to every new hire that there is opportunity for advancement. Acting Chief Lawless described the "Bubba" culture he experienced in Florida and that he worked to create a different culture in Edmonds; he was unable to provide descriptions or examples as to how that is being accomplished. They also deflected, referring to their core values posted on their office walls and never actually answered the question. It was clear that this was not a priority issue that had or was considered or addressed and that caring for one another is enough.

Community Knowledge and Engagement

- Summary
 - Throughout the interview and within the data report there was an opportunity to describe how the EPD is aware of who their community is and how they engage with their community. Included within this conversation was a discussion about the use of partner social services, such as the temporary social worker. Also included within this topic is engagement with the community regarding recruitment and hiring. They stated that they relied on their same avenues and resources for this. The officers described areas of the community as transient, spoke to their relationship with those that run specific hotels, and their desire to employ “coffee with a cop” prior to the pandemic shut down. They were unable to describe the demographics of the community, stated that they did not have access to that information, and were unwilling to define community groups, such as marginalized and at-risk communities.
- Analysis
 - The officers interviewed and department overall do not have a clear understanding of the community they serve. Demographic information is publicly accessible and they made it clear that they have not made efforts to access that information. They are willing to define transient, domestic violence, and homeless groups but unwilling to define and understand communities of color, marginalized, underrepresented, and immigrant communities within their area of service. Recruiting efforts are limited to what they do and know, and do not comprehensively include the needs and demographics of the community they serve. There is not only a resistance to, but a disposing of, partnership with social services when presented with opportunities. Our impression is they mean well but do not understand the terminology and concepts of Trauma Informed Care and Restorative Practices, which are integral to how social workers and first responders work with people experiencing homelessness, as well as how Restorative Practices are a key method in justice work exemplified by Judge Coburn’s Restorative Justice program with youth. They are stuck in a law and justice mindset rather than expanding it beyond to what other jurisdictions like Lynnwood may be doing and trying. The department is operating within systems that are not informed by or include a deep knowledge of the community (e.g. demographics, needs, opportunities, etc.).
- Examples
 - Their language was very passive and implicit that a social worker is not a priority. Words like “they would welcome a social worker” and “run a lean operation” implicitly mean it is a nice to have. Words like “within the police budget, there is minimal funding for such as person” is explicit about it not being top priority despite their description of their 2019 part-time use of a social worker as a “success”. If it is so successful, why are they not trying harder to get a position?

- The police shared factual, yet unhelpful, information regarding the use of the Social Worker program. They seemed to suggest it was successful without giving examples of why and without any context of the social worker's use. They blamed budget cuts and the Lynnwood police department for its cancellation. If you read between the lines, the sense was they were not interested in spending resources or advocating to prioritize it in the budget. They also did not explain that the social worker almost exclusively was used in Lynnwood and sparingly in Edmonds; so it was a very superficial use of a program and resource that the City and Police could have really used in a crisis. It felt like the program was "virtue signaling" that they had a social worker on staff nominally without actually utilizing her or the program to its best effect.
- A task member described, "In my place of work, I had to be the go between with the police, a person experiencing homelessness and Mindy Woods (Human Services Coordinator) after many neighbors complained about a person who was sleeping in the library parking lot. The person experiencing homelessness was upset with how the police treated him and obviously the police did not utilize the City social services person to intervene. It felt like it was handled like a policing issue when in other places it would have started with a social worker."
- In regards to recruiting and community engagement they tokenized their current diversity through providing statistics of the diversity numbers of their staff, attended a diversity commission meeting, continue to advertise around the county (e.g. military bases, community colleges, high schools), started social media accounts, and said that they welcome the community to speak with them. They were unable to provide examples as to how they engage with the community, specifically communities of color, and have formed diverse relationships and partnerships as part of their strategy.
- They stated that they had planned to begin "Coffee with a Cop" at the 220th Starbucks but due to the pandemic they cancelled their plans. In addition, they described their community engagement as one-on-one relationships with hotels and businesses along Highway 99 so that those property owners will allow police access to provide services. They said there is room for improvement in this area and they welcome input. The afore mentioned is their best attempt at a community engagement initiative, the latter insinuates a different goal and agenda related to policing, not community engagement.

Accountability, Ownership, & Transparency

- Summary
 - Throughout the interview the officers were presented with direct questions about accountability and opportunities to describe actions of accountability within all answers. The answers given within this topic were scripted and/or nonexistent. Accountability was not defined, especially in conversations regarding communities of color and marginalized communities. What was

expressed was contradicted in action, by both their descriptions here, and by experiences shared by the community and Task Force.

- Analysis
 - There is a clear lack of understanding of accountability, transparency, ownership, and responsibility. Patterns of gaslighting were used throughout the interview, putting onus on the Task Force members and community instead of speaking directly to their own responsibility and accountability. The overall tone from the officers is that it is the responsibility of the community to do the work (e.g. getting to know the officers, stating issues of concern, and understanding and implementing social justice, etc.). The officers had plenty of time to sit with the interview questions prior to the interview but were still unable to provide answers; we are greatly disheartened by this. Accountability, ownership, and transparency are key qualities for building trusted relationships and partnerships with the community. Denial and deflection of these are detrimental and prohibit positive change, which is what we found as the officers position. They took no responsibility for their budget, training, multicultural competency, understanding and engagement of the community they serve, and for their inability to provide answers. What is extremely concerning is that this was the tone and message from the top leaders of the department and that the message was complacency, apathy, denial, and deflection.
- Examples
 - Acting Chief Lawless stated on multiple instances that the department addresses behaviors, not race, and that there is uniformity in how they approach people. In the interview, a Task Force member described instances of ongoing racial profiling experienced by her family and community members by Edmonds officers. Acting Chief Lawless disapproved of the officers' actions in those moments but was unable to describe consequences and how the department is addressing situations like this.
 - When asked about the accountability of the use of their budget in areas of training and social service partnerships, they referred to their core value of "Stewardship" and that they want to be stewards of their money. They stated that "community policing" is part of everything the department does so the social services funding was reabsorbed into the City's budget. Again, this was a deflection of addressing the question about accountability and continued with the pattern of excuses as to why something cannot be done instead of taking accountability and finding creative, problem solving solutions.
 - There was a continued pattern of deflection where they stated that they invite the community to come and get to know them, and reach out to them. They were unable to explain the ways in which they reach out and get to know the community.
 - When asked about their understanding of what communities of color need to see and feel for accountability and for building trust with the police, they stated that they have received no complaints from the community and have had no internal investigations since 2018. They stated they have had no discussion

about what the communities might define as accountability. They did not answer the question and showed that they do not have an answer to the question or understanding of the issue being addressed.

- They provided an example when a person of color was jailed due to an instance with the Edmonds Police Department and an officer went to the jail to speak with the man. They described that after this investigation was completed, the man dropped accusations of the officers. Although specific details were not disclosed this appears to be an example of gaslighting and it is concerning that the officers were proud to have the accusations dropped against them due to their investigatory tactics. There was no indication that the man was then released from jail and accusations on him dropped too.

2. Task Force Comments on the Interview with Judge Coburn, Community Court

Judge Coburn's knowledge and depth of understanding of the justice system is admirable and her enthusiasm for Community Court as a way to humanize the justice system in Edmonds is at the core of restorative justice. She spoke with clarity and conviction. We walked away from our interview with Judge Coburn wanting more: more conversation, more information, more of her infectious passion.

Our recommendation for community engagement training and training of how to coordinate with a social worker came from a recognition of the GREAT need for resources to be made available to the people who most need them in the moment in which they need them.

We found out that the Edmonds Police Department used the social worker as an afterthought and we were outraged to discover that the City of Edmonds could access federal funds **IF** a social worker is embedded in the police department. This feels as if the EPD is actively turning away help for our citizens, victims and perpetrators alike.

Funding for personnel and programs is always on the minds of conscientious legislators; however, Community Court provides a place for non-profit and social welfare organizations at no cost to the City.

After our interview, we were made aware of an instance in Judge Coburn's courtroom when the arresting officers refused a request to appear in civilian clothing. The Judge dismissed the charges. This speaks volumes to the need for training in the police department on how to engage the community of Edmonds.

3. Task Force Comments on the Interview with Mindy Woods, Human Services Coordinator

We had an hour interview with Mindy Woods. It was personal, deeply moving and filled with hope and optimism. We exchanged personal stories and aligned in a future opportunity to help our most marginalized population. The majority of the interview was spent on the role of social services in our policing; specifically, the need to have social workers and social services

available to our community, particularly in the marginalized community and as part of policing activities. Mindy strongly advocated for social workers to work directly with our citizens to better utilize her in her role as the human services coordinator.

Mindy knows firsthand the struggles many of those she is passionate about assisting are going through. She has studied the use of social workers in several cities and understands the effective value they can bring. One of the stories she shared was her and her son's journey of being homeless and the challenges that came with it: mental and physical stress, fear, and lack of access to basic needs.

People who call her range from those seeking shelter and food assistance to those needing transportation to an appointment or work.

She is convinced and strongly advocates that in a majority of situations where police are called a social worker with knowledge of programs and proper training may be able to assist in a more positive way than the use of physical force or jail time. She gave examples such as people with behavior issues due to mental illness and circumstances of marginalized people.

We also discussed the fact that steps should be taken to make certain that there is widespread information about existing programs that are available for the community, with emphasis that those outside of “the bowl” have the same opportunities. This might be done through the use of flyers, media, internet and community meetings which would in effect bring the community closer and help establish a feeling of well-being among citizens and the feeling that their city cares about them and their needs.

Mindy believes, and the Task Force concurs, that if we can assist people upfront rather than afterwards, when a situation may grow out of control, we can, through the equitable use of city government resources, make Edmonds an inclusive and resident supported community.

Task Force Findings

The Task Force is using the Findings to call attention to important issues that were made apparent during the assessment activities.

1. The police department, while intentionally working to hire a more diverse force, does not have and should have consistent, on-going training in working with marginalized populations, specifically communities of color.
2. The police department does not have a clear plan to incorporate culture assessment findings into a community facing plan. While the department spent a year in doing a department-wide reassessment of their culture, including developing mission, vision and values statements and principles, the focus was internal. The department did its own assessment and does not appear to have sought or incorporated any assessments from the larger community that they serve.

3. There is a lack of insight into the perspectives and concerns of many in the community that they serve, especially communities of color.
4. The department encourages all staff to be trained and certified for one position above what they currently have. There is no designated training program in community outreach or community engagement that will assist them in serving citizens of Edmonds.
5. For many people in the community, police in uniform are threatening. There appears to be an issue related to police wearing uniforms for some interactions with citizens. It was noted in the Gap Activity that the police would be better received (less threatening) in some public events if they wore plain clothes with some identification. Examples might be logoed polo shirts or wearing their badges on a lanyard with plain clothes. Subsequently, we were made aware of the audio recording of the December 3 Community Court session. According to the audio, the Judge requested that the police officers scheduled to testify appear in plain clothes. They declined to do so and the Judge dismissed the charges.
6. Effective and meaningful public safety is dependent on engagement with the community, where people can trust that the police are there to help protect them. Community engagement strategies from the police department and the city should be developed to promote public safety. An example included in the Task Force interviews and in the Gap Analysis is the concern of immigrant populations about emergency safety procedures. They want and need to understand (often a language barrier) what to do in case of emergencies.
7. Accountability and transparency for the community are lacking in important ways that promote engagement and a sense of shared responsibility in public safety. Accountability and transparency are terms that emerged repeatedly. There are differences in understanding between the police and the community (as represented by the Task Force) in what is meant by both of these terms.
8. The police lack training in dealing with social service needs of people; they are being asked to provide services without training. While there was a part-time social services person working with the police in 2019, there is none now. This is a large gap in public safety. A social worker is needed to be the lead person in situations involving marginalized citizens and those needing social services to resolve their situations. Currently it appears that the police provide referrals for social services after they are first responders. It is less effective and challenging for a social worker to follow up after the initial situation.
9. Many residents of color do not feel safe in Edmonds. Task Force members have heard directly from residents and have also experienced the situations themselves. They described racial profiling in shops in downtown Edmonds, the need to wait in their cars for friends to join coffee meetups at places like Starbucks, and in some instances, reluctance to walk in their own neighborhoods due to the racist attitudes and behaviors of Edmonds residents. They described specific incidences of racial profiling by police for relatives and friends that resulted in arrests, being taken into custody and/or lack of response by police due to the nature of the 911 call.

Recommendations

Recommendations were solicited in each of the assessment and interview activities. The Task Force was specifically asked to reach consensus during the Gap activity about the key recommendations to be provided in this report. They are listed here. These are NOT in order of priority as they are regarded as equally important.

Recommendation #1 Hiring and Training of Police Force

Why is it important? Enhancements to police hiring and training will be the basis for change in the department

What needs to occur? Assessments prior to hiring and ongoing training at all levels throughout the Police Department. More assessments/psychological profiles to determine bias and openness to training prior to hiring. More training for existing officers; and more expectations from the Mayor and Council of senior leadership. Implicit bias is often subtle and not recognized. Training and leadership expectations together bring change.

How will you know it has been implemented? An annual audit with reporting to the Mayor, Council and the community on recruiting, interviews, training and training completion rates; will also see more diverse police out in the communities; the officers able to better interact with marginalized groups and senior leadership better able to answer questions like those posed in the interview.

Recommendation #2 Integration of Social Services

Why is it important? Integration of a social worker(s) into community policing; social services will remove current pressure on the police to work in an area where they are untrained and need assistance.

What needs to occur? More social service support and use of community policing will help remove the current sense that the police are primarily trained in militaristic skills.

How will you know it has been implemented? A social services worker will be hired and community policing activities will be taking place; police will be trained in both working with the social worker and in public safety activities for everyone. The results will be part of annual reporting to the Mayor, Council and community.

Recommendation #3 Community Engagement and Accountability

Why is it important? Community engagement and accountability to the community will build trust and will better equip the police to serve all residents.

What needs to occur? Community members need to be engaged; to feel that they matter and have a part in decisions that are made. Accountability is critical for community members who want to know what has happened and will happen.

How will you know it has been implemented? Accountability to the community is different from recording and tracking data. Specific, verifiable accountability measures should be included within all three of these top three recommendations. Community members should have a role in designing them, the measures should be known to the community and the

community should have a role in ensuring accountability. The results should be part of the annual reporting to the Mayor, Council and community.

Recommendation #4 Continuation of Equity and Social Justice Task Force

In addition to the priority recommendations identified during the Gap exercise, the Task Force recommends that their work be continued and expanded to include City policies and procedures. There is work for the City to do in community engagement in addition to and alongside the police. There is added value in having a comprehensive, city-wide Equity and Social Justice Toolkit and Work Plan. As has been stated, the Task Force also desires to represent the community in assisting with police accountability and transparency through auditing the Work Plan. The Task Force would also want to be part of the annual work plan audit for the City.

Priority #5 Hardwiring Sustainability

The Best Practices literature is insistent on the requirement for “hard-wiring” or “operationalizing” sustainability to ensure that changes implemented through the Equity and Social Justice Work Plan do not die off after a short time of focus and implementation. Essential elements for this to occur include: 1) creation of an Equity Team, 2) commitment from the executive team (Mayor, City and senior police leaders), 3) establishment of annual goals, and 4) annual audit of the goals and publishing audit results. For the police department, this would mean a designated equity team within the department, in addition to having community representation through the Task Force. Equity teams are created in agencies/organizations with representation from the departments and programs (at varying staff levels) as well as representation by gender, race, ethnicity, LGBTQIA and generational differences. Equity Teams are the watchdogs for Equity as well as taking the lead in creating multi-cultural awareness. Generally the Equity Teams meet on a quarterly basis to assist the agency/organization’s Diversity Manager and senior leadership. They provide insight on training needs and successes, on developing employee surveys and other organizational messaging, and they are most frequently the first point of contact by other employees with equity concerns.

Commitment from the executive team (Mayor, City and senior police leadership) should include consistent expectations about equity. Departmental leaders are expected to include equity in their performance evaluations and demonstrate on-going commitment in all programs and activities. The department would be expected to develop and report on annual goals which would include an annually updated Work Plan with auditing and reporting. Annual audits are commonly published online to provide widespread access to the audits and reporting. In addition to ensuring sustainability, these “hardwiring” measures also address community accountability and transparency concerns.

Other Recommendations

There is a significant list of other recommendations made by Task Force members in their interviews. These recommendations (in the Task Force Interview Summary) offer ideas about how to address barriers and achieve goals. These recommendations were made specifically for the Mayor as ways to work with changing expectations about the importance of public safety in addition to policing. Importantly, the Task Force members are recommending that their work be continued. They want to assist the Mayor, the City and Police Department in designing implementation measures for the proposed work plan below. They want to be available to help with implementation if possible and also to be involved in the program audits which should occur.

Recommended Work Plan

The Task Force is especially concerned that the Work Plan that is developed must have outcomes or goals that can be measured. The Work Plan should be the basis of an established audit process that is reviewed by a community audit team (the Task Force) in addition to the Mayor and City Council. The Work Plan should be developed and implementation begun as soon as possible but no later than within the next six months. The Task Force recognizes value in sequentially implementing some of the recommendations. However, the Work Plan should include a timeline for implementation of each element. It should also identify how measurement will occur.

1. Community engagement training for the police should be developed, using members of the community to provide perspectives on increasing dialogue and reducing barriers. The training will be provided to all members of the department, not just designated community outreach staff. The plan should include training on understanding cultural and experiential barriers to engagement; practice in communication strategies for listening and creating dialogue, and planning and executing small events where the community has the lead role in identifying what should take place, who will attend and what desired expectations are of the police who are involved. The training and plan will result in a schedule of on-going community events with assigned police for each event and all members of the department participating on the established schedule. Follow-up must be monitored as lack of follow-up will signal the community that they and the events are not a priority. The annual audit report should include narrative about the training provided and a brief description of each community event, including who planned the event, which community members were invited, which police officers were involved and any outcomes or insights for future events.
2. An established implicit bias training program should be developed for all members of the department who are trained on an on-going basis. The plan should include topics such as perception, cultural expectations, the impact of white privilege, and communication strategies to promote dialogue and defuse tension. Best practice includes having implicit bias checklists created and used for all recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion activities. This takes forms such as having a designated person

review an implicit bias/equity checklist with the interview team prior to all hiring interviews and use of an implicit bias/equity checklist for all retention and promotion activities. The department should develop or obtain assistance in developing appropriate checklists for use in all these events. Use of the checklists should be mandatory. The annual audit report should include descriptions of the training provided and lessons learned, copies of the checklists and narrative about how the checklists have been used. If the checklists are modified, there should be a brief narrative about the modifications and how they address gaps to provide more effective usage.

3. Training in best use of a social services person should be developed for the police. Once the social worker is hired, he or she should participate in the training to help the police understand how to best use the expertise of this person. It should be noted that in Judge Coburn's interview, question #6 (included in this report), she stated that the Edmonds Police did not proactively use the social services person to initiate contact with potential clients. The police department was specifically asked to respond to questions about how they used the social services person. Their responses are included at the end of their interview summary in this report. It appears that they attempted to use the social services person but their effectiveness is viewed differently by the Judge from their perception and response. This situation warrants assessment and training developed to better equip the police to involve the social services person. This training should be mandatory for all department staff so they can support the social services interaction process from their own roles, whether in direct contact with potential clients or in providing backup support and advice to those police in direct contact. The social services staff person should have regular scheduled interactions and follow-ups with those police directly contacting the potential clients and should also be asked to provide recommendations to senior leadership for on-going training as needed. Results of this training and recommendations process should be included in the annual program audit report. There should also be investigation into the potential federal funding that Judge Coburn referenced in her interview.
4. Utilize the Task Force to assist the police in developing the Work Plan and audit process. The Task Force wants to see the police department and City become a model of Equity and Social Justice. They have invested considerable volunteer time in learning about Best Practices, in thoughtfully considering ways that the Police Department can address existing gaps and in selecting key priorities to assist the police in becoming more engaged with the community, in stressing the need for providing the accountability and transparency needed for the larger community, and in bringing their own life experiences and professional skills to the assessment process. They represent the citizenry that Edmonds needs as the City grapples with the question that the Task Force articulated at the beginning of their work- "How do we make Edmonds a better, safer place for everyone?"
5. Develop a plan for implementation of the "hardwiring sustainability" activities identified in the recommendations above. The City's Human Resources Director will need to be involved in some of the processes that will affect other City departments in order to be fully implemented. The Police Equity Team may need assistance in determining their own mission and goals. They should ultimately be part of a City-wide Equity team that

should be formed in the future. Before this happens, an Equity Team can function within the Police Department; assistance can be provided as necessary for them to determine their own activities and plan. Human Resources will need to be involved also in determination of how equity will be included in all supervisory and management performance evaluations. These should also be implemented City-wide. These activities should be identified in the Work Plan with implementation to be started within the six month timeline. The Police Department audit report should identify the Equity team members and have a report on their activities, outcomes and any lessons learned.

APPENDICES

Key Summaries of Task Force Work

These summaries provide robust opinions and insights from the perspectives of the Task Force, the Police department, Judge Coburn of Community Court and Mindy Wood, the City of Edmonds Human Services Coordinator. Prior to the interviews, the Task Force provided copies of the interview questions to the interviewees. Each interview summary was submitted for review and any comments back to the interviewee prior to inclusion in this report. The SWOT and Gap Analyses were used as tools to assist the Task Force in making recommendations in this report.

Appendices Contents:

- Task Force Interview Questions and Responses- the 360 Assessment
- SWOT Summary
- Gap Analysis Summary with Priorities
- Police Data Requested by the Task Force **note, the data is attached as a .pdf file along with the submittal email as it is 287 pages in length
- Summary of Interview with the Police Department with Task Force Commentary
- Summary of Interview with Judge Coburn, Community Court with Task Force Commentary
- Summary of Interview with Mindy Woods, Human Services Coordinator with Task Force Commentary

Task Force Interview Questions and Responses

1. How long have you lived in Edmonds?

28 years, 14 years, 40 years, 9 years, 19 years, 23 years, 20 years, 8 years, live in Snohomish County

2. What motivated you to participate in this task force?

- Reaction to George Floyd situation, appreciated the Mayor's reaction and wanted to bring perspectives as a person of color in the community
- Was involved in high school so know the importance of involvement
- Have tried to increase accessibility for minorities because I want them to know how to have their voices heard
- Excited about being able to make recommendations directly to the Mayor.
- Experience on Diversity Commission
- On NAACP executive team; Mayor asked for participation and I volunteered
- Interaction of self and oldest son with police; he was profiled
- Drawn to name of the task force
- On the Diversity Commission – liaison
- George Floyd murder and national unrest
- During my adult life I tried to fit in with the white majority, now feel the need to do something. This task force is my way of doing something.
- George Floyd murder, was on diversity committee at my former job and wanted to do something to be involved in my own community.
- Want to be part of policy changes that will bring systemic change
- Looking for ways to promote engagement for all people in the city
- This Task Force work has been needed for a while, a long time coming and I wanted to be part of it.

3. How do you define community engagement?

- Formal engagement and informal engagement both important; some civic organizations are formally engaged, others are good citizens just looking for ways to participate.
- Civic action, peaceful civic disobedience, variety of voices at the table, people speaking up
- Community capability to be involved, to do what they want to do and impact legislation that involves them
- Figuring out how to strengthen community partnerships, get diverse parts of the community to be involved in issues of public safety.
- Involvement and participation of an organization for the welfare of the community it serves
- Working collaboratively within and through groups of people with geographic proximity addressing issues related to well-being
- Library is a community hub where we see a spectrum of people; many good citizens looking to participate
- Teaching children to participate and become engaged

- Knowing who the groups are around the city who share similar values/goals.
- Just knowing how to get engaged, understanding how government works
- Getting as many people involved as possible from different backgrounds and making sure they know what is happening (awareness)
- Need to reach diverse people with information and outreach, appeal currently not broad enough
- Awareness, participation- know who is in the city and city government

4. What do you consider to be the barriers to stronger community engagement?

- Isolation of the pandemic
- Kids looking for ways to help and their parents want them to learn to help but often their bandwidth is just too full with work, parenting and activities of the kids.
- Need to find ways to help parents and kids to be engaged.
- People's politics, intractable camps, people suspicious of each other; see as subtracting rather than adding. Need to figure out where to start talking
- Bureaucracy, artificial barriers when people might not know how to reach out
- Understanding how the system works. Right now inside groups make the rules.
- Need welcoming ways for all to become involved; open processes, clearly defined so people feel comfortable
- Not accessible to people- don't know how to become involved.
- Lack of positive outreach and interaction by police as a whole. We only see police during an emergency.
- Can be physical barriers like learning abilities or physical disabilities
- Limited or no internet access
- Health issues
- Can be language limitations. Need to figure out how to work with these.
- Cultural differences, time constraints, power dynamics, lack of resources. Some socio-economic groups feel politically powerless.
- Same group of people (mostly white) are engaged, need to have diverse groups represented
- "White" mentality in the bowl. Edmonds has divisions based on where people live. Demographics are changing, causing tension.
- Lack of knowledge on both parts. Police don't know what is expected, same for the community.
- Community feel they are invisible.

5. How has the police force addressed these barriers? How has the city government addressed these barriers?

Police:

- Police have made efforts to diversify hires. Chief open to taking suggestions. Some police have attended activities and forums.
- Police uphold what the city says; need to increase community engagement
- Don't think the police have addressed the barriers; police reinforce the barriers.
- Same sentiments seen nationally are present in Edmonds- police protect the white and rich people.

- Schools public affairs officer showing students police officers are not to be afraid of.
- Events in parks
- They haven't done much.
- Use of social media for those who have the internet and use social media
- Don't think police have addressed the barriers; haven't seen police doing anything except policing
- No communication about what they do with communities of color
- Not aware that they have
- Police try traditional stuff like National Night Out; tried to use social worker, police chief does ride alongs.
- Police are preoccupied, not visible at community cultural events, aren't in the 99 corridor except to do policing
- Police and City are bowl-centric.
- Meetings in the park good but not enough. Katie, Public Information Police Officer goes to the schools.

City:

- City started diversity commission, did some youth outreach
- Mayor has started this Equity and Social Justice task force
- City started the diversity commission, issues of community engagement and diversity in forefront of people's minds
- The diversity commission and launch of this task force show City's efforts
- Not aware that they have
- City still can't get "outside" the bowl.
- City trying to do more internally. Need more diverse hiring in Human Resources Department
- City has done some. Mayor's support for Black Lives Matter helped but more needs to be done.
- New Mayor has taken steps to diversify community activities. ESJ Task Force one of the first steps
- City has started to address diversity; Mayor's leadership is important
- City directors will need to use the "equity lens" in decision-making

6. What strategies, solutions or interventions might reduce these barriers?

- Mandatory training.
- Find ways to hold more one-on-one interactions, coffee sessions and such
- Reaching out specifically outside of "the bowl"
- Officers need more support for diversity work
- Address lack of trust from residents like undocumented people
- Need activities to involve diverse citizens
- Need forums with the community
- Awareness, education and training
- Open and transparent policies and hiring processes
- Focus on "Leveling the Playing Field" People need to feel like they matter

- Making sure that the city website is user friendly for diverse communities; keep the website updated
- Equity training, police don't understand why people don't trust them
- Address cultural barriers, allow diverse people to be and feel included
- Outreach in the community; show up to community events, participate on 99 corridor
- Need more opportunities for police and community to get together; visibility of officers of color trying to connect with people of color across the city
- Foot patrols
- Figure out how to start having conversations with people- understand and acknowledge where people are. Conversations lead to solutions
- Need diversity in programs planned for public events (like July 4); don't reflect what or who in our community
- Need to look at police policies and procedures, learn what is done and why
- Better communications, let the community know what is happening
- Make plans and intentional statements and then follow-through

7. Who do you consider to be most adversely affected by inadequacies in Policing/Public Safety engagement?

- African American males. LGBTQ community, people with mental issues
- In Edmonds, people who live outside the bowl, undocumented people
- People of color
- People of color- those with socio-economic differences from the norm
- Location matters, also treated differently if lower income
- Immigrants, people who speak English as a second language
- Homeless/unhoused
- Communities of color, socio-economic/low income who are not represented. Some effort to just push low income people out of the city
- Youth impacted
- People of color, marginalized communities, African Americans primarily
- African American community
- People with mental or behavioral issues. Police try to force change rather than trying to help.
- African American community
- Unhoused population

8. What do you consider to be key causes or factors that contribute to inadequacies in policing/public safety engagement with marginalized populations? What steps do you recommend in addressing these causes/factors?

Key Factors or Causes:

- Lack of awareness, not purposeful behavior by police but shows lack of training, need to engage in popular ways
- Classism-judge people by their income and if they live in the bowl
- Conscious and unconscious racism and bias

- Not enough training or requirements to become a police officer; no training in working with people
- Lack of affordable housing
- Expect adjacent cities to do the work, people pretend there are no issues here; no pro-active solutions or budget to offer services
- How society defines policing, absent of public safety components; focus only on law and order.
- Police are given the problems of the failed safety net. Have no training except militaristic style.
- Lack of positive interactions between police and marginalized populations
- People of color don't see themselves represented in the police force

Recommended Steps:

- Edmonds needs to consider how to increase equity in society; consider resources needed to decrease crime so less policing needed; longer term goal should be repurposing of some of police funds to support other ways to secure public safety.
- Rethink how policing works, increase awareness through training of those handling 911 calls so they don't send all calls to the police
- Police need more training in community interaction, not just militarized training
- Language issues; don't have emergency readiness due to language—concerning to those who aren't prepared
- Lack of tools for safety officers; not set up to provide services; not trained
- Police need more focus on public safety activities
- Need to break down expectations of policing, clarify expectations of all regarding policing
- Increase education and training- need more rigor in training in all phases (training topics, assessments about impact)
- City and police department need to address mindsets, behaviors and make change a collaborative effort; set standards and monitor
- Police need de-escalation training
- City needs social services budget and staff
- Mayor is open and people feel valued, need his continued support
- Community outreach to people of color, marginalized populations
- Continue Mayor's direction and leadership
- Hold town halls, forums, events where people are invited and feel invited
- Start street fairs, events that involve ethnic cultures
- Have one-on-one meetings with community leaders
- Training, police don't know how to deal with people. Can stop situations but don't know how to do anything beyond force.
- Police can't assess situations and select what to do; need training to know when to ask for help when needed.
- Need someone available to help police with their own mental health issues.
- People don't believe what the police say, lack of trust so need to have trust-building activities
- Hiring and retention- engrained attitudes need to be assessed; police need to weed out those with bias and be accountable to the communities
- Find empathetic officers who understand community service in communities of color
- Police currently use centralized facility. Need facility presence outside the bowl.

9. How can diverse community citizens and leaders be better encouraged to participate in shaping the solutions and strategies?

- Interviews with business leaders outside of the downtown business association.
- Forums with students & police plus value in one-on-one personal asks of people to be more engaged
- Diverse groups have to see that they are getting support and results. They know they are disrespected as human beings by some Edmonds residents
- Need to have tangible change and believe that results will happen. Otherwise they are just tokens asked to show up without any benefits for themselves and their communities
- Need to have clear “what’s in it for me” messages and see results, not just talk and clear lack of interest in changing the status quo. Need results/outcomes that are different
- Outreach to churches, address language skills and do outreach in their languages
- Need agencies and library open more hours beyond the standard work day
- Pick engagement causes meaningful to diverse groups
- City officials have to be responsible and reach out to diverse voices
- Recognize the 99 international corridor and connect there
- Develop strategic plan and commitment to accomplish the plan
- If no one looks like you, you feel less inclined to participate unless you feel equally invited and treated
- People need to have a face they recognize and believe the person is telling the truth. Need to work with community leaders.
- Outreach to show citizens are valued
- Reach out directly to members of communities of color; ask for their involvement; ask them to sit on boards and commissions to help make decisions; City needs to reach out first
- Need to know how to reach out for inclusion; don’t have relationships; need to create a way to educate and encourage inclusion

10. Are there key community partnerships you would recommend?

- Religious communities, businesses, downtown business core, students- engage with students on civic work/justice
- The Edmonds I grew up in was very different from the Edmonds of some of my white counterparts
- Youth involvement, even though youth organizations weaker now due to Covid 19
- Businesses; Chamber of Commerce, churches and ethnic associations
- People rely on their church communities; these are easily identifiable. Trust their own church communities
- Use existing programs- no need to invent more
- Edmonds Community College Diversity Council
- Edmonds School District
- Don’t know of any that I can recommend
- Need partnerships between police chief and persons of color
- Youth Achievers at YMCA

- Youth partnerships, Latino outreach. Treehouse for kids
- County level partnerships to expand human services
- Churches, homeowner associations, schools – meeting people where they're at

11. What community strengths exist that can be utilized in expanding community engagement?

- Diversity commission
- People are willing to work towards solutions and want change but don't know how to make it happen
- Need to re-allocate efforts and reach out
- People who really want to understand the needs of marginalized people
- Pockets of community strength can be used by working with existing groups
- For diverse people, Edmonds is an address but not their community. They have to go elsewhere. Need to be engaged and feel belonging
- Engage the active parents; people want to do something but it is the same people on all of the committees. Others don't know how to connect and become engaged; need to harness the desire of parents to create diverse, stronger communities
- Diversity activities already happening; can connect people who are passionate about inclusion
- Chamber can help fund conferences
- Library has location and staffing
- Need strategic plan and then implement
- More police events, one-on-ones post pandemic
- Places where people can go for their events; police can and make connections
- There are people working to make opportunities for engagement. Alesha Crank created and hosted a webinar series to educate the community. She is an example of someone who could offer more webinars with police, the Mayor or city council members.
- Open houses at police department; get people to come and see
- Growing population waking up, realizing that they need to feel a sense of ownership of what is happening rather than letting others be in charge

12. What strengths in the police department exist that can be utilized in expanding community engagement?

- Chief open to engagement, police ride along, attend diversity commission meetings.
- Does the chief attend youth commission meetings?
- Working on diversity hiring
- Willingness of police to change
- Police officers who want to police the community without bias; want to stand up for what is right
- Lack of public spaces further out of the bowl limits police ability to have events
- Willingness hopefully to listen to ESJ Task Force recommendations
- Police departments are viewed as authority figures; both good and bad. Need to figure out how to use authority in welcoming and building trust. Then leverage the trust
- People generally believe that the police want to do right but the police need tools

- I have no idea about police strengths; disappointed to see gaps in what they do. Need training
- Police chief amenable; does ride alongs
- Social worker was a good beginning for non-law enforcement
- Community Court does good restorative justice work
- Current events programs need to be more inclusive-showcase diversity in Edmonds
- Strengths need to be developed so visible and useful
- Want to address negativity, trying to build trust but not sure how to do it. Trying to respond to expectations.
- Change has not happened internally. It has been as a result of external pressure.
- Police are well-funded, have resources available.
- Have started to diversify force but questions about retention and promotion
- Have responded positively to external pressure

13. Are there any other service areas in the City that you feel may be inequitable to the citizens?

- Incidences where city employees are not aware and respectful of gender. Need training in customer service/diversity consciousness/perception
- Public spaces needed further out; currently there is not equity in public areas
- More affordable housing in the bowl
- More small businesses needed outside the bowl. City should assist with resources/support so not all located in the bowl area
- Need more human and social services; if people don't speak the language they can't access the services
- Services now are more readily available only in one part of the city
- Businesses located in the bowl- need more small businesses along 99.
- Housing
- The "Bowl" gets the services, areas outside the bowl have to go to the bowl for events that need to be more inclusive. Also need events outside the bowl.
- Big inequities based on where people live in quality of education/schools
- Lack of crisis services
- Some believe city is intentional in NOT providing services
- No social services, marginal at best.
- Need more parks
- City hiring needs to be more diverse—have been working on it.
- People of color need to open more businesses. Need more assistance with tough permit laws and getting started.
- City prioritizes downtown bowl with arts, beautification. City resources need to be used for the benefit of all citizens
- Haven't offered human/social services until recently.

14. What would you suggest as the next item on the Equity Work Plan after policing/public safety?

- Ways to incorporate/engage people outside the bowl.

- Look at the resources and activities needed – need to increase the influence of those outside the bowl in Edmonds
- Focus on opportunities for youth to be involved
- Need economic empowerment in Edmonds
- Community engagement to have dialogue with the community who need to express their differing opinions without being judged
- Homelessness- a complex topic but very present in Edmonds
- Need a more representative/reflective city workforce. Currently don't look like the people they serve.
- City policies and procedures to address inequities listed in question 13
- Everything. Housing, shelter and food issues, employment/economic opportunities
- Diversity community currently marginalized, find opportunities for them to have more say
- Need a place where people can have positive interactions, can hear what people are saying. Place where people can tell their stories and share
- Human/social services need to be figured out
- Make sure people of color have a seat at the table; need opportunities to engage; issues related to policing are the tip of the iceberg on lack of engagement.
- Need to be sure diversity, equity and inclusion efforts continue

15. What recommendations do you want to see included in the report for the Mayor?

- Focus on outside of the bowl, continuation of diversity commission
- Diversify Mayor's team when positions open
- Reach out to young people.
- Focus on accountability in plan, training.
- Continue to support diverse points of view and respect for diverse cultures.
- Increase awareness of need for ways police can respond without force; training in how to de-escalate
- Make an on-going investment in the task force work; will need to work more on equity, accountability and reporting
- Ensure human services training and support embedded in police training
- Need First Responders with adequate training in behavioral health
- Police need new ways of data collection, education and training
- Police policies and procedures need review done not exclusively internally; need third party
- Police need accountability to ensure work continues.
- Mayor appears to be supporting efforts to set new expectations
- Social services team funded by the city
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion ombudsman (or some watch dog function)
- More teeth for Diversity Commission
- Community policing- can act as a liaison between community and police, offer input into existing work practices. Need to be consistently engaged with community and in policing
- Clear expectations for police and the community, like a policing mission statement posted online and where people can read.
- Police need to be visible in public safety roles, not just policing patrols

- Community concern about readiness for emergencies. Opportunity for engagement in communities, outreach in own languages, know who to contact and what to do
- Officers need training, confidence in their roles and support so they feel like they can do their job. There is a morale issue among the police.
- Need overall process to provide transparency and accountability for policing
- Analyze where police are providing services that should be social service related
- Making sure that staff, boards, commissions all have anti-bias training and the implications of the training.
- Police need to develop and use systems to track response time geographically in areas of the city
- Police need to develop and use systems to track retention of hires of color; also need more accountability to the communities of color
- Task force work should be continued; use the task force as part of accountability system. Will need to have reporting on recommendations as part of accountability.
- Follow the recommendations in this interview summary
- Police need to be audited by third party, not police or the city

SWOT Summary

SWOT- most likely you have done the SWOT exercise in your community and professional work. It is a simple exercise designed at Stanford Business School in the 1970s to assist with strategic assessments and planning. SWOT means: S- strengths, W-weaknesses, O- opportunities and T-threats (or challenges).

SWOT- for Public Safety/Policing in Edmonds

Strengths -List what you consider to be the strengths of public safety/policing in Edmonds

- Did three well-received community outreach/engagement events prior to the pandemic shutdown
- Low rate of violent crime
- Less use of lethal force
- Many in the community have viewed things based on the past; have an outdated view of the role of policing and they are satisfied
- Police are visible- reassuring to some and less so to other segments of the community
- Sincere interest in creating a more diverse police agency
- Community outreach: offer ride-along with officers; forums with officers and police chief
- Open door policy of police chief
- Internal task force looking at diversity and equity issues

Weaknesses- List what you consider to be the weaknesses of public safety/policing in Edmonds

- Many in the community have an outdated view of the role of policing
- Police visibility not reassuring to some segments of the community
- Little understanding of how to create a culture of respect for diversity and equity in the police department
- Lack of consistent, regular diversity and equity training
- Focus on use of force training without focus on diversity and equity training
- No community policing; have called them and they didn't show up
- Lack of de-escalation training
- Relationship weakness- many people of color and marginalized people don't feel like they are part of the community
- Are "in the bowl" not integrating other parts of Edmonds
- Friends who don't live in Edmonds have asked me if I am afraid of the police because they are known outside the community for harassing people of color

Opportunities- List what you consider to be opportunities for public safety/policing in Edmonds?

- Face of leadership needs to be more diverse
- Enhance partnerships with communities of color outside of the bowl

- Police force works for the majority white population—expand access to others to participate
- Diversity policing- become a role model city
- Need to work with the community to define public safety for citizens in Edmonds
- Use strategic communications from the city and the police to show what they are doing
- Hire officers of color
- Meet more with citizens
- Attend Diversity Commission meetings
- Ask the public what they think needs to be part of the training process

Threats (or challenges) - List what you consider to be threats/challenges for public safety/policing in Edmonds?

- Lack of diversity training
- Police seen as an enemy
- De-escalation training needed
- Misunderstanding about “defund the police” terminology and what it means; volatile term that triggers reactions in people
- White privilege factors – don’t see the issues with the police, resistance to change; don’t understand that they are “part of the system” and know how to use it for their own benefit
- Need to help all communities feel like they have access and trust in the police
- Tensions high with some people- don’t believe that there is desire for a safer society for everyone

Gap Analysis

The Gap Analysis exercise is a tool to help you identify gaps in an organization or set of operating procedures. The activity is designed to articulate the difference between what is happening and what should be happening. The gaps are identified by describing what **IS** happening and what **OUGHT** to be happening. In order to use the Gap Analysis as a tool, select what you consider to be priorities to be implemented in order to create what **OUGHT** to be in place. The priorities will become part of our task force recommendations.

Gap Analysis – Public Safety/Policing in Edmonds

In looking at public safety/policing in Edmonds what do you see as gaps to be included in this exercise?

Gap #1:

What is or is not happening: Police not trained to handle human services and need additional support; not fair to expect police to do this

What ought to be happening: Social service support needed and also training for police to know how best to utilize social services; training provided needs to be more comprehensive to provide adequate tools for police to work with increasing needs of people in these current times

Gap #2:

What is or is not happening: Police trying to do outreach but traditional outreach hasn't worked

What ought to be happening: More outreach to youth, coffee houses, showing up in the community to connect; need to do more to reach out to diverse communities and find ways to connect; need to reach out to people where they are- outside of the bowl; consider ways to reach out in less uniform (logo shirts?) because uniforms are a trigger to many in the community- need to see the police as members of the community. Outreach only reaching people in the "bowl." Need to work with specific people and groups to reach more community people

Gap #3:

What is or is not happening: Need more police transparency; people in the community need to be able to follow-up and know there is accountability to them

What ought to be happening: Online tool to track using case numbers; better data collection for transparency showing what and why; find ways for the community to feel like they can get information on what is happening in general and in specific incidents.

Gap #4:

What is or is not happening: Hiring some people of color but need more diversity

What ought to be happening: Need more training in how to interact with marginalized populations; need to know the percentages of diverse hires; need to see more police of color in the communities on patrol in communities and in leadership

Gap #5:

What is or is not happening: Many instances where people of color are uncomfortable in Edmonds, walking outside in neighborhoods, going into shops; concerned that people are vocal about their racism

What ought to be happening: Need to see police interacting informally with members of the community; need consistent city and police messaging about welcoming diversity- possibly stickers in shop windows and other visible actions and messages

Gap #6:

What is or is not happening: Public safety concerns are not being addressed. An example is immigrants with English as Second Language need to know about emergency safety options; communities have other concerns that need and can be addressed

What ought to be happening: Police need to find opportunities to be intentional about public safety; need a pro-active environment of public safety for all of the residents in Edmonds

Select the three most important priorities that you want to see recommended/implemented for the police department

NOTE: These priorities are NOT in order of importance. They are equally important recommendations.

Priority #1

Describe the priority; why is it important? Police hiring and training; will be the basis for change in the department

What needs to occur? More assessments/psychological profiles to determine bias and openness to training prior to hiring. More training for existing officers; more expectations from the Mayor and Council of senior leadership. Implicit bias is sometime subtle and not recognized. Training and leadership expectations together bring change.

How will you know it has been implemented? An annual audit with reporting on recruiting, interviews, training and When learning about training through program audits and reporting; will also see more diverse police out in the communities; and the officers able to better interact with marginalized groups and senior leadership better able to answer questions like those posed in the interview.

Priority #2

Describe the priority; why is it important? Integration of a social worker (s) into community policing and social services will remove current pressure on the police to work in an area where they are untrained and need assistance.

What needs to occur? More social service support and use of community policing will remove the current sense that the police are primarily trained in militaristic skills

How will you know it has been implemented? A social services worker will be hired and community policing activities will be taking place; police will be trained in both working with the social worker and in public safety activities for everyone. The results should be part of the annual reporting to the Mayor, Council and community.

Priority #3

Describe the priority; why is it important? Community Engagement and Accountability to the Community; will build trust and will better equip the police to serve all residents

What needs to occur? Community members need to be engaged; to feel that they matter and have a part in decisions that are made. Accountability is critical for community members who want to know what has happened and will happen

How will you know it has been implemented? Accountability to the community is different from recording and tracking data. Specific, “measureable” accountability measures need to be included within all three priorities, the community members should have a role in designing them, the measures should be known to the community and the community has a role in ensuring accountability. . The results should be part of the annual reporting to the Mayor, Council and community.

Task Force Comments on the Interview with the Police Department

On Tuesday, December 1st members of the Task Force conducted an interview with Acting Chief Lawless, Detective Govantes, Sargent McClure and Sargent Greenmun from the Edmonds Police Department (EPD). Interview questions were provided in advance to Chief Lawless and the duration of the meeting was about two hours. Acting Chief Lawless responded to the majority of the questions; we have done our best to note when one of the other officers responded. Prior to the interview a request for information was sent to Acting Chief Lawless in which he provided a document in return with the data.

Overall the interview provided the Task Force with insight into the Edmonds Police Department diversity training program, understanding of social justice, community knowledge and engagement, and relationship with ownership and accountability.

After completing this analysis, it is our opinion that there is a deficit in each of these areas in order to comprehensively serve all members of the Edmonds community, especially our communities of color. The police displayed a position of [denial](#) (refusal to acknowledge the hierarchal system or privileges based on ethnicity, race, gender, and more), [implicit bias](#) (negative associations, attitudes, or stereotypes that affect actions), lack of [multicultural competency](#) (a process of learning about and becoming allies with people from other cultures, broadening understanding of others, respecting the ways that others live and organize), and lack of [accountability](#) (the ways that individuals/groups hold themselves to their goals and actions, and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible). The recommendations in this report are steps towards addressing this deficit. Below is a more detailed analysis for each of these areas.

Bias and Diversity Training Program

- Summary
 - The data and officers identified that there currently is not an ongoing, comprehensive diversity training program. There are links to two training videos embedded within files on their public website; it is unclear how the videos are used. During the interview they said they used an individual for bias training and quoted his credentials. The data they returned did not indicate a budget line item, tracking of participation, or visibility of any form of diversity training.
- Analysis
 - It is clear that bias and diversity training is not a priority of the department or seen as a relevant need. There was resistance in the interview to taking ownership of the existing (lack of) program (e.g. two optional videos) with: 1) statements that budget constraints did not provide the opportunity for this training; 2) deflection in that it is the state's training program that is responsible for determining what curriculum should be included; and 3) that the task force

was welcome to do the research and provide options. The lack of awareness, understanding, and ownership is disappointing and is a clear barrier to moving the department forward with comprehensive, effective diversity training.

- Examples
 - When asked “What training has been provided that is specifically tailored to working with communities of color, immigrant populations and youth in Edmonds” the answer was scripted and stated who they use for bias training, Dr. Bryant T Marks. They outlined the credentials of the trainer but not how, when, how often, or impact of the training was described. We (the Task Force) were “invited” to find someone with equal qualifications. We were frustrated by this reaction. It is not the Task Force’s job to research and supply training options to the department, it is their job and responsibility to do that.
 - Their answer also described crisis intervention training, de-escalation training, professional development, and the youth Police Explorer Program. These trainings were listed but no description was given as to how these answer the question and are tailored to the specific community populations referenced in our question. There was a clear disconnect between the question and the answers.
 - They referred to their core value of “Stewardship” and stated that they have a fiscal responsibility aligned with that value, such as in the area of training. This excuse was used as a reasoning as to why they currently do not have comprehensive bias and diversity training and why it was not financially responsible to do so. Budget and money show values and they indirectly said in this statement that bias and diversity training is not a value.
 - They stated that they do not know of any trainings or strategies that would equip them to engage with diverse communities and want people to get to know them. They added that real life interactions and getting to know each other are better than classroom training. They invited the community to come to them to get to know them but did not indicate how the community might be invited or what might be involved in these interactions.

Understanding of Social Justice

- Summary
 - On multiple instances throughout the interview and within the return of the data the chief, officers, and department had the opportunity to speak to their understanding, engagement, and incorporation of social justice, multicultural competency, and use of an equity lens. Throughout the entirety of the interview, but in particular within this topical area, the task force members felt it was comparable to two different cultures trying to communicate with one another. The officers were unable and unwilling to define [tokenism](#) (the practice of making a symbolic effort, especially by recruiting an individual or group of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of

equality), marginalized communities, and other social justice terminology and concepts. Gaslighting (when a question is not answered, provides unrelated information, and ignores the question all together), deflection, denial, discounting, and other strategies were used to talk around, or not at all, about the topics and avoid directly answering the questions.

- Analysis
 - There is a lack of understanding of social justice terminology and concepts, multicultural competency, white privilege, structural racism, restorative justice (and more), and applying an equity lens ([Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)). We understand that there is a continuum within each individual, department, and community's development within these areas and we believe the department to collectively be within a place of [denial to minimization](#). This is greatly concerning for one of the most community-facing departments of our city and has multiple negative impacts and implications for the City.
- Examples
 - In the interview, the police gathered four people including a person of color, whose role seemed to be strictly to represent and speak to the supposed diversity of the agency. This person was not an equal within the conversation, and spoke only on her lack of experience of tokenism. The dynamics in the interview created a sense of tokenizing her and putting her in a spokesperson's role to blunt criticism or help address questions on diversity when speaking to an equity and social justice panel. What would have felt and been authentic would be that a police officer in an appropriate job description like community outreach officer or supervisor could give an equal and complementary experience to the many questions rather than one or two questions on tokenism. She was only called upon for the one or two questions which shows she was tokenized. Her body language was uncomfortable and we felt bad for her knowing she was obviously very uncomfortable.
 - In both the interview and data, the police were unwilling and unable to define "marginalized communities" and stated that they did not want to put people in boxes or groups because it is limiting but rather focus on behavior. This is a form of colorblindness and denial of recognizing identities. They did, however, use descriptive terms, such as homeless, transient, chemical dependency, and domestic violence to describe groups of people within the community. This was an excuse as to why they were not familiar with the demographics of the community they served, let alone the needs and relationship with police of the community. They stated that their biggest strength in engaging with underrepresented and marginalized communities is their problem solving skills.
 - During the interview the officers were asked to describe how they address an "old boy" system and responded by tokenizing the female, Black officer in the room, describing how she has been offered promotions on multiple occasions and how they communicate to every new hire that there is opportunity for advancement. Acting Chief Lawless described the "Bubba" culture he experienced in Florida and that he worked to create a different culture in

Edmonds; he was unable to provide descriptions or examples as to how that is being accomplished. They also deflected, referring to their core values posted on their office walls and never actually answered the question. It was clear that this was not a priority issue that had or was considered or addressed and that caring for one another is enough.

Community Knowledge and Engagement

- Summary
 - Throughout the interview and within the data report there was an opportunity to describe how the EPD is aware of who their community is and how they engage with their community. Included within this conversation was a discussion about the use of partner social services, such as the temporary social worker. Also included within this topic is engagement with the community regarding recruitment and hiring. They stated that they relied on their same avenues and resources for this. The officers described areas of the community as transient, spoke to their relationship with those that run specific hotels, and their desire to employ “coffee with a cop” prior to the pandemic shut down. They were unable to describe the demographics of the community, stated that they did not have access to that information, and were unwilling to define community groups, such as marginalized and at-risk communities.
- Analysis
 - The officers interviewed and department overall do not have a clear understanding of the community they serve. Demographic information is publicly accessible and they made it clear that they have not made efforts to access that information. They are willing to define transient, domestic violence, and homeless groups but unwilling to define and understand communities of color, marginalized, underrepresented, and immigrant communities within their area of service. Recruiting efforts are limited to what they do and know, and do not comprehensively include the needs and demographics of the community they serve. There is not only a resistance to, but a disposing of, partnership with social services when presented with opportunities. Our impression is they mean well but do not understand the terminology and concepts of Trauma Informed Care and Restorative Practices, which are integral to how social workers and first responders work with people experiencing homelessness, as well as how Restorative Practices are a key method in justice work exemplified by Judge Coburn’s Restorative Justice program with youth. They are stuck in a law and justice mindset rather than expanding it beyond to what other jurisdictions like Lynnwood may be doing and trying. The department is operating within systems that are not informed by or include a deep knowledge of the community (e.g. demographics, needs, opportunities, etc.).

- Examples
 - Their language was very passive and implicit that a social worker is not a priority. Words like “they would welcome a social worker” and “run a lean operation” implicitly mean it is a nice to have. Words like “within the police budget, there is minimal funding for such as person” is explicit about it not being top priority despite their description of their 2019 part-time use of a social worker as a “success”. If it is so successful, why are they not trying harder to get a position?
 - The police shared factual, yet unhelpful, information regarding the use of the Social Worker program. They seemed to suggest it was successful without giving examples of why and without any context of the social worker’s use. They blamed budget cuts and the Lynnwood police department for its cancellation. If you read between the lines, the sense was they were not interested in spending resources or advocating to prioritize it in the budget. They also did not explain that the social worker almost exclusively was used in Lynnwood and sparingly in Edmonds; so it was a very superficial use of a program and resource that the City and Police could have really used in a crisis. It felt like the program was “virtue signaling” that they had a social worker on staff nominally without actually utilizing her or the program to its best effect.
 - A task member described, “In my place of work, I had to be the go between with the police, a person experiencing homelessness and Mindy Woods (Human Services Coordinator) after many neighbors complained about a person who was sleeping in the library parking lot. The person experiencing homelessness was upset with how the police treated him and obviously the police did not utilize the City social services person to intervene. It felt like it was handled like a policing issue when in other places it would have started with a social worker.”
 - In regards to recruiting and community engagement they tokenized their current diversity through providing statistics of the diversity numbers of their staff , attended a diversity commission meeting, continue to advertise around the county (e.g. military bases, community colleges, high schools), started social media accounts, and said that they welcome the community to speak with them. They were unable to provide examples as to how they engage with the community, specifically communities of color, and have formed diverse relationships and partnerships as part of their strategy.
 - They stated that they had plan to begin “Coffee with a Cop” at the 220th Starbucks but due to the pandemic they cancelled their plans. In addition, they described their community engagement as one-on-one relationships with hotels and businesses along Highway 99 so that those property owners will allow police access to provide services. They said there is room for improvement in this area and they welcome input. The afore mentioned is their best attempt at a community engagement initiative, the latter insinuates a different goal and agenda related to policing, not community engagement.

Accountability, Ownership, & Transparency

- Summary
 - Throughout the interview the officers were presented with direct questions about accountability and opportunities to describe actions of accountability within all answers. The answers given within this topic were scripted and/or nonexistent. Accountability was not defined, especially in conversations regarding communities of color and marginalized communities. What was expressed was contradicted in action, by both their descriptions here, and by experiences shared by the community and Task Force.
- Analysis
 - There is a clear lack of understanding of accountability, transparency, ownership, and responsibility. Patterns of gaslighting were used throughout the interview, putting onus on the Task Force members and community instead of speaking directly to their own responsibility and accountability. The overall tone from the officers is that it is the responsibility of the community to do the work (e.g. getting to know the officers, stating issues of concern, and understanding and implementing social justice, etc.). The officers had plenty of time to sit with the interview questions prior to the interview but were still unable to provide answers; we are greatly disheartened by this. Accountability, ownership, and transparency are key qualities for building trusted relationships and partnerships with the community. Denial and deflection of these are detrimental and prohibit positive change, which is what we found as the officers position. They took no responsibility for their budget, training, multicultural competency, understanding and engagement of the community they serve, and for their inability to provide answers. What is extremely concerning is that this was the tone and message from the top leaders of the department and that the message was complacency, apathy, denial, and deflection.
- Examples
 - Acting Chief Lawless stated on multiple instances that the department addresses behaviors, not race, and that there is uniformity in how they approach people. In the interview, a Task Force member described instances of ongoing racial profiling experienced by her family and community members by Edmonds officers. Acting Chief Lawless disapproved of the officers' actions in those moments but was unable to describe consequences and how the department is addressing situations like this.
 - When asked about the accountability of the use of their budget in areas of training and social service partnerships, they referred to their core value of "Stewardship" and that they want to be stewards of their money. They stated that "community policing" is part of everything the department does so the social services funding was reabsorbed into the City's budget. Again, this was a deflection of addressing the question about accountability and continued with the patter of excuses as to why something cannot be done instead of taking accountability and finding creative, problem solving solutions.

- There was a continued pattern of deflection where they stated that they invite the community to come and get to know them, and reach out to them. They were unable to explain the ways in which they reach out and get to know the community.
- When asked about their understanding of what communities of color need to see and feel for accountability and for building trust with the police, they stated that they have received no complaints from the community and have had no internal investigations since 2018. They stated they have had no discussion about what the communities might define as accountability. They did not answer the question and showed that they do not have an answer to the question or understanding of the issue being addressed.
- They provided an example when a person of color was jailed due to an instance with the Edmonds Police Department and an officer went to the jail to speak with the man. They described that after this investigation was completed, the man dropped accusations of the officers. Although specific details were not disclosed this appears to be an example of gaslighting and it is concerning that the officers were proud to have the accusations dropped against them due to their investigatory tactics. There was no indication that the man was then released from jail and accusations on him dropped too.

Summary of Interview with Police Department- Acting Chief Lawless responded to the majority of the interview questions with some commentary by three members of his staff

Mayor Nelson convened the Equity and Social Justice Task Force with the specific charge to create an Equity and Social Justice Work Plan and Equity Tool for the City of Edmonds. He also directed that this Work Plan first focus on Policing/Public Safety.

The Equity and Social Justice Task Force has initially reviewed the data and information provided by the Police. It has been provided in a professional and thorough format. This transparency assists the Task Force in asking questions in support of its mission as mandated by Mayor Nelson. These are questions and comments about what the data reflects and about choices made in how the data was initially recorded.

We understand that some of these questions may seem confrontational. In order to complete a thorough analysis we must ask sometimes difficult questions. Please know our intent is to have a thorough analysis that helps support Edmonds police in their goal of policing in a way that equitably supports all Edmonds citizens.

Questions and comments based on the Police Responses Document: Task Force questions are underlined in the narrative below.

Training

The Task Force has a multicultural lens: it is composed of a diverse group of volunteers who want to see equitable use of public safety resources. The police department in the Budget Section of their responses states *“The Police Department serves all members of our community equally and justly with the funds and resources available to us.”* (Page 4) Based on their life experiences and community connections, members of the Task Force would say that this statement is idealized; not realistic. This is the key message of all anti-bias training. The statement also does not specifically address the needs for communities of color, immigrants and other groups in Edmonds.

The training of Edmonds Police Department is mandated for their certifications and provided as required. Additional anti-bias training from a third party vendor was indicated.

What kind of training has been provided that is specifically tailored to working with communities of color, immigrant populations and youth in Edmonds?

- **Dr. Bryant T. Marks is who is used for their Bias training**
- **Invited us to find someone with equal caliber to assist in further training**
- **100% of officers have completed CIT (Crisis Intervention Team training) * the training appears to take a total of 40 hours to complete* NAMI.org**
- **Some officers have completed Advanced CIT training**
- **All officers do diversity training and on-going Professional Development Training-have done de-escalation and mental health training**
- **Many of their officers are individuals in the community we described, minus youth**
- **Black, Brown, People Of Color, and women have been hired recently**
- **For youth, there is a Police Explorer Program**
- **No specifically tailored training described for this question; later in the discussion acknowledged that there may be value in such training**
- **They have a core value of “Stewardship” and spoke to having fiscal responsibility aligned with that value, such as in the area of training**

Follow-on question: What do you see as the impact of training, especially with engagement with community members?

- **Greater understanding of the community we serve; broadened perspectives**

Mental Health

On page 6 the mental health data shows that out of 140 mental health responses in 2019 only 1 resulted in an arrest. It appears that public safety or non-traditional policing methods might have been effectively utilized for many of these situations.

How would using a social worker or other than traditional policing for some of these situations provide you with more options for the community as well as the police department?

- Partnered with Lynnwood Police Department until a few months ago, the numbers came from that relationship.
- Officers in the field are not always equipped to handle mental health issues, they are just the first to respond.
- There is a shortage of people in the mental health and substance abuse fields.
- Budget issues. The mental health resources have taken a hit due to COVID, as well as the budget.
- The shutdown of the shelters is having an impact. They have to use 211 like the public does. Although the response from 211 can be too slow.
- Having a social worker embedded with law enforcement would be helpful. They may not feel comfortable going into the field alone, trying to track down someone at 1am.
- This is something Edmonds Police department would welcome, as well as additional resources to refer.

Follow-on question: Has the Edmonds Police Department during the budget process looked at alternatives?

- City is looking at human services funds dedicated to a Social worker using funds parsed out and from funds from an unfilled position
- The Edmonds Police, compared to other departments run lean with officers. Within the police budget, there is minimal funding to allocate for such a person. It would need to come from the overall city budget via the Mayor.
- Partnership with Lynnwood Police Department has been closed. Are now partnered with South Snohomish Chart Program, as well as Verdant and Swedish. Open to exploring more options.
- On Shoreline CC, social worker partnership program, it wasn't clear if it was to obtain social workers that would be able to assist Police departments.
- They run a lean operations budget, the budget is being looked at now.

Policing and Diversity

The Police Department tracks Use of Force by ethnicity of both the subject and the police officer. Edmonds is a city with predominately White middle class residents. The city staff including the police department are reflective of the population. All of the leadership and nearly all of the hires are White and male. Recent diversity hiring is commendable. However the "faces" of the officers encountered in the more diverse parts of the city will not be representative of those who live there.

The Use of Force data on page 267 shows that the arrests are about 70% White, with the remainder as Non-White. The US Census data as of July 2019 shows the Edmonds population to be 81% White and 1.2 percent Black or African American. This percentage of Non-White arrests- specifically African American, is significantly higher than the resident population.

What has the Edmonds Police Department done to address this disparity between the percentage of African American residents and the Use of Force? What training for the police and community engagement strategies might be employed to address this disparity?

- **Use of force and arrests are not synchronous. Example: In a mental health situation where a person was restrained. It would be reported as a Use of Force but not an arrest.**
- **In 2019 out of 1,388 arrests, 1,088 were white or 78%. Of those, 466 were Edmonds residents. Of those residents 378 or 88% were white. Out of the total arrests 180 or 13% were Black. Of those 38 or 2.7% identified as Black(Edmonds residents)**
- **All services, PD, FIRE, EMT go through the same dispatcher in Snohomish County. There is a program currently being developed for better tracking.**
- **They (911) are training their people in screening calls further.**
- **Getting the details of the behavior by calling the person who made the initial call to determine whether it's an actionable thing and advising dispatch whether or not they are going to respond.**
- **Call back as needed to get more details before responding; tell when decision is not to respond**

Follow-on question: Is there a way to track interactions? How do you follow-up?

- **Getting that understanding on how they affect the community, Black, Brown, People of Color disseminated throughout the department.**
- **Making sure that supervisors are out in the field, are monitoring calls, reading the calls**
- **Data not tracked until specific things happen, then officer puts comments into the call log**
- **One task force member stated that the response they described does not match her own personal experience where one of her sons was racially profiled when walking home from school.**
- **It is a cultural thing within the organization to stay on top of, have regular conversations, and regular interaction between officers and their supervisors.**
- **Both Chief Lawless and Sgt. Greenmun expressed that they want to be made aware of any police misconduct individual's experience. That they can't address what they are not made aware of.**
- **Sgt. Josh Mclure stated: The #1 thing officers are told when they arrive at Edmonds Police Department is to be a professional representation of the police department.**

Follow-on question: Is there a formal or informal process where citizens of Edmonds can make inquiries without fear or intimidation:

- **The response was that there is no tolerance for any kind of fear or intimidation from anyone in the Edmonds Police Department. That there are several ways to let them**

know if that occurs-formal complaints online or come into the station and register the complaint; police also follow social media to see if there are discussions of complaints

- **Social contacts are equal across the board (focusing on behavior, not individuals)**
- **Filing complaints about officers – they have more filed internally from officer-to-officer than received from the community**
- **It is the responsibility of the citizen to report issues of concern**

Follow-on commentary about the heightened concerns of immigrant people who fear intimidation

- **Do not ask about immigrant status – some discussion of lack of trust as cultural based on former experiences with police either in this country or country of origin for immigrants; they recognize the barrier**
- **Know there is concern within the Korean-American community**

The data on pursuits (page 279) in 2019 show pursuits are predominately taking place in area 2.

What are the geographic locations of each area within the city?

- **Area one is from the county line (205th by Costco) north to Meadowdale Beach Park (15600 Block of 75th). From the water to the middle of Lake Ballinger (on the south side), up to 212th and then it kicks over into Perrinville. Area 2 is from Mid LK Ballinger, over to 84th and down to the county Line 212th. All of Hwy 99 is in area 2. Everything north of 196th is area 3**

Does one of the areas have a higher rate of diverse residents? If so, which one?

- **They do not have a way to track those demographics, other than their daily encounters with people.**
- **More Korean-owned businesses near 99, one officer has tried to drop in and work with their concerns**

Are more of the social service calls taking place in one of the geographic areas? If so, which one?

- **Area two has more of those kinds of calls up and around Hwy 99. Some in area 1.**
- **This area's calls consist of shoplifting, pursuits, and hotels; the area has more transient populations near the bus station, groceries, etc. Can be in every area but more near encampments near Highway 99**
- **Many other needs for social services throughout the city- such as domestic violence**

Pages 16-42 list the arrests by charge. This is an area of deep distrust in communities of color where many have experienced arrests on charges that were ignored when committed by Whites or the charges might be unsubstantiated.

How or in what ways can the Edmonds Police Department work to dispel this deeply held belief in communities of color? What kind of trust can be created as one key step?

- **The culture we've established within the department, we hope to dispel some of that.**
- **We are addressing the behavior, not race, not skin tone, not sexual orientation, its behavior. Our best response is to be open, transparent, and consistent with how our officers operate with the public. No matter if they are a victim, suspect, or just stopping by to say hello. That there is uniformity to how we approach people.**
- **Being transparent with all of our actions, walking the walk.**
- **Being accessible.**
- **Being visible out in the community.**
- **No to the substation idea. Believe that there might be benefit if staffed to support community questions and walk-ins but believe officers need to be out in the field.**
- **The Edmonds Police Department posts data, policies, and procedures; not all residents have access to the internet or this information**

Recruitment and Retention

The recruitment efforts have been the same traditional methods utilized by other police forces, cities and corporations all in the same location and competing for the same potential applicants. Diversity recruitment also requires going where the diverse potential candidates live and work.

Have you ever placed ads in local diverse media? Have you contacted diverse community leaders who might give referrals or serve as references for the police department if a potential hire inquires with one of them as to the work place conditions for a person of color with the EPD?

Answered by Sgt. Josh McClure:

- **From the year he started in 2014 hiring practices have evolved. He immediately looked at ways to change things.**
- **\$250 was the annual recruiting advertising budget when he took over.**
- **2014/2015 the department adopted social media (Twitter, Facebook) as a way to expand the audience they could reach.**
- **Job Fairs all over Snohomish county e.g.: Military bases, Community Colleges, High Schools, going into Seattle to do a job fair at T-Mobile Park**
- **The expanding efforts have paid off.**
- **Starting a relationship with the diversity commission-attended a meeting**
- **Welcome the opportunity to speak with any member of the community.**
- **Encourage anyone to speak with officers of color; proud of police department culture**
- **On the road 50% of staff (5 people) are white males, 50% (4-5 people) are diverse individuals**

- **My Edmonds News February 28 article by an officer of color about the culture of the department**

As organizations attempt to diversify, they face challenges in retention. Simply put, the diverse hires do not work with anyone who has had their life experiences. Retention of women and minority hires in male dominated organizations depends on the extent to which they feel valued and are mentored. The unconscious “old boy” systems in place in nearly all organizations are frequently not recognized by the White males but are obvious to women and minority hires. They feel like and often are treated like tokens. And, quite often they decide to take work elsewhere for professional development and a stronger sense of belonging. The organizations may have invested resources in recruitment only to lose these diverse hires within a few years.

How has or would the Edmonds Police Department deal with this reality?

Answered by Detective Devontes and Chief Lawless:

- **Detective Devontes- In her experience, not the reality of the Edmonds Police Department**
- **She has been treated fairly on all levels; she does not feel like a token.**
- **She has been supported in the opportunity to obtain promotions.**
- **Chief Lawless- It is communicated with every new hire. They are asked for feedback on the hiring process and their experiences.**
- **He wants each officer to feel like a member of the family**
- **No recruitment or retention issues or concerns**
- **They are the future of the organization, not hired to fill a vacancy.(Sgt. Josh McClure)**

Follow-on question: Are there specific examples of how you foster the culture you described?

- **Chief Lawless described the “Bubba” culture in Florida where he worked prior to Edmonds; people were hired, retained and promoted based on who they knew rather than their own behavior. Detested it and worked to create the culture in Edmonds that focuses on behavior**
- **Described the Washington State required certification for supervisors; encourage all staff to be certified to a level above their current level of certification**

Community engagement is increasingly recognized as the clearest method for moving closer to achieving a more “level playing field” in public safety.

What kind of participation in events, meet and greets, one-on-ones or other outreach activities have been held outside the downtown Edmonds area?

- **June 2020 Edmonds Police Department enacted a community engagement team in response to the recognition of needing to reach out to the community, by a diverse group of officers.**
- **Meet and greets in Ballinger Park, Seaview Park, Hickman Park, and two parks in the bowl. Said they got “an earful” about what is going on.**
- **High School job fair.**
- **Interaction with the Edmonds Diversity Commission.**
- **Community meeting with the Mayor, and other members of the community.**
- **Pre-Covid started 220th St Starbucks Coffee with a Cop**

Has there been any planning or effort to engage with business owners and other community leaders outside the downtown Edmonds area?

- **220th St Starbucks Coffee with a Cop on a daily basis.**
- **One on One situations, whether it be from a situation that is happening or just checking in with hotels and businesses on Highway 99 where there are issues.**
- **Referred to work with property owners in the Highway 99 area to build relationships so owners would allow police to access to provide services**
- **Room for improvement, welcomes input.**

Why have you not defined both marginalized and high risk communities? How might defining these enable you to tailor your responses to their needs?

- **Law enforcement in general deal with situations as they arise. They focus on the situation, not the individual in terms of being marginalized or high risk whether homelessness, chemical dependency, domestic violence and others**
- **Chief Lawless doesn’t want to be the one to make that determination. His concern is if putting people into those types of boxes makes it more limiting.**

What do you see as the strengths of the department in engaging with underrepresented and marginalized communities?

- **They are problem solvers- can recognize problems and work proactively to address solutions; can work outside police boundaries; want to serve the Community**
- **Discussion by Chief Lawless about the one year internal effort to redefine the department in terms of mission, vision and values**

What do you see as the challenges of the department in engaging with underrepresented and marginalized communities?

- **Communication from and connections to the officers to build trust with those communities.**
- **Trust and support the community critical to success**

- Chief Lawless stated that people hear stories, expectations are created based on external factors, not experience with Edmonds police. When the officers are working with people they develop trust and actually see their tension lowered.
- Service before Self motto (Chief Lawless)

What kind of training and resources would better equip your officers to engage with diverse community members?

- Don't know of any; want people to get to know us
- Have two way communications, strategize, exchanging ideas that would be the resource.
- Real life interactions, getting to know each other- better than classroom training
- Gave examples of how they have identified marginalized people as they work with them; done informally, not formally
- Do see the benefit of being able to provide better service
- Increase the training budget
- Police do want to learn from the Equity and Social Justice Task Force about ways to improve

Community policing, social services and mental health activities are being utilized by cities to assist the police with public safety in addition to traditional forms of policing. For example, the Seattle Police Department will re-allocate 18% of its 2021 budget for public safety options.

How might the Edmonds Police Department benefit from utilizing some of its budget to incorporate elements of community policing?

- More money would help, would be able to get more and better training – but they have a core value of “Stewardship” and they want to be stewards of their money
- Community policing part of everything Edmonds Police Department does; social services funding reabsorbed into the City's social services budget along with funds for their community outreach person; won't be able to fill that position
- Non-traditional resources are valuable to assist Edmonds Police Department

Accountability

Communities of color need to see and feel accountability and transparency from the police as a part of building trust.

Have you considered what these communities might define as accountability?

- They haven't received any complaints; since 2018 no internal investigations due to complaints
- No discussion about what the communities might define as accountability

What is the department currently doing to address this?

- **They stated they are transparent about investigations**
- **Example of investigating a situation where a person of color was in King County jail due to an alleged incident with an Edmonds Police officer, an investigation of the incident was conducted**
- **They indicated that they have a policy for communicating status reports**

In what ways do you envision the department creating opportunities for further accountability?

- **The dispatch center is updating their system and processes to be more real-time; allow more direct communication via cell phones**
- **This new model will have a customer service satisfaction survey**
- **The department isn't being blown up with complaints**

Follow-on question: Has the Department in anyway tried to determine activities, events that the community would like to see established for accountability?

- **Formally no, do see actions and interactions as part of a higher bar for accreditation**

The Task Force will be providing the Mayor with a report at the end of December, which you will be able to review prior to its submittal. Do you have any recommendations for us that you would like to see included in the report?

- **Chief Lawless stated that the data they provided don't show full contexts but they can put it into a format for the general public if needed**
- **Expressed appreciation for the work of the Task Force and invited further communication and interaction**

Questions answered via email by Acting Chief Lawless

We would like to have some additional information related to your shared use with Lynnwood of the social worker:

1. **Describe how you worked with the social worker. How was she embedded with you in terms of joining you in your response to 911 calls? Did she go with you on the first response and/or follow-up?**

The embedded social worker was an employee of the Lynnwood Police Department and we were provided 33% of her time. That time was spent conducting outreach to and work with members of the Edmonds' community. This took many forms in both process and function. As officers would come into contact with individuals in need, they would contact the social worker directly if she were on duty (regardless of whether for Lynnwood or Edmonds) for immediate assistance, or if not on duty, a referral would be done and contact would be made as soon as possible. The social worker would also go out into the field with the officers to seek out and make contact with individuals in

need. The social worker would also make contact with individuals on her own and follow-up as much as needed in order to get the individual aligned with whatever services may be needed. Unfortunately, some individuals are service resistant and in these cases the social worker would need to make numerous contacts over time in order to align them with those resources. There were several examples where over a period of weeks and months of making these contacts the individuals were ultimately accepting of services and were admitted into substance abuse programs and ultimately housed long-term.

2. How would you describe the effectiveness of your method of working with the social worker? Do you have any recommendations about ways to make better use of the social worker in responding to 911 calls?

Having an embedded social worker was quite successful. As the system(s) are currently set up, 911 is often the default course of action and officers are the first to make contact with many individuals in need. In addition, officers often make contact based upon their own observations prior to a 911 call being made. My recommendation would be that a full-time social worker be budgeted to increase access and the ability to manage the clients and case load and provide for even more follow-up and outreach.

Task Force Comments on the Interview with Judge Coburn, Community Court

Judge Coburn's knowledge and depth of understanding of the justice system is admirable and her enthusiasm for Community Court as a way to humanize the justice system in Edmonds is at the core of restorative justice. She spoke with clarity and conviction. We walked away from our interview with Judge Coburn wanting more: more conversation, more information, more of her infectious passion.

Our recommendation for community engagement training and training of how to coordinate with a social worker came from a recognition of the GREAT need for resources to be made available to the people who most need them in the moment in which they need them.

We found out that the Edmonds Police Department used the social worker as an afterthought and we were outraged to discover that the City of Edmonds could access federal funds **IF** a social worker is embedded in the police department. This feels as if the EPD is actively turning away help for our citizens, victims and perpetrators alike.

Funding for personnel and programs is always on the minds of conscientious legislators; however, Community Court provides a place for non-profit and social welfare organizations at no cost to the City.

After our interview, we were made aware of an instance in Judge Coburn's courtroom when the arresting officers refused a request to appear in civilian clothing. The Judge dismissed the

charges. This speaks volumes to the need for training in the police department on how to engage the community of Edmonds.

Summary of Interview with Judge Coburn, Municipal Court

1. What was the impetus for the Community Court Pilot project?

Cases coming to the district and municipal courts have increased significantly for two main reasons. First, opioid addiction is on the rise and Snohomish County is an epicenter of this crisis. Second, the Snohomish County prosecutor's office is no longer charging low level drug cases. Instead, those cases are now moved to municipal and district courts.

Many with addiction issues are also indigent or become indigent because of their addiction. The courthouse, located in downtown Edmonds, is not easily accessible for the indigent. Failing to appear for court leads to bench warrants and increased jail time, which does not really address the underlying issue of addiction.

The need for services is undisputed and the lack of access to services, combined with logistics of the system create barriers that result in people being stuck in a cycle of recidivism. Lack of resources can create barriers that lead to an inability to meet court-imposed requirements. The Community Court Pilot project has coordinated a variety of wrap-around services to provide one-stop-shopping for defendants to better navigate the justice system.

2. To date, what do you see as the successes of the program?

Community Court helps to humanize the legal justice system for people who need services the most. Because many individuals seen by the court lack basic resources or are experiencing other barriers, the process is more difficult to manage. Community Court helps to reduce those obstacles (no transportation, homeless, unemployed, etc.) with the coordinated nature of this program, and services available on the spot, including appointments for services that can help avoid jail time and prevent people from falling through the cracks. Non-profit organizations and social welfare programs are on-site to help people avoid potential barriers to social services. For example, insurance services may not travel across county lines, so a person receiving medical care in one county cannot receive care in another. Some people arrive in court hungry or they have walked in the rain to get there. The services available at the Community Court gave access to food, dry clothes, and other basic physical needs. Other obstacles may include need for HIV testing, hygiene issues, homelessness, access to reliable transportation and more.

The benefits of this type of program are felt city wide. Many of the underlying issues behind crimes are mental-health challenges and/or addiction. These issues impact the whole community- businesses and homeowners alike. In short, this program is a way of humanizing and creating equity within the justice system.

3. Besides the COVID-19 restrictions, what have been the challenges of the program and, with modifications, are they avoidable?

Initially, some City officials and police were skeptical and concerned about costs. However, the court-proposed model never required a special funding request. The proposed model was simply working with others, mostly non-profit organizations, to better coordinate all of their work that is serving the same demographic.

Working at an off-site location, means having to transport several files, but now that we are using paperless communications, much of this challenge has been alleviated.

Swedish Edmonds Hospital was kind enough to provide the location for Community Court prior to the pandemic, however that was on a temporary basis. The location still required attendees to walk a couple of blocks from the Highway 99 bus routes and navigate the hospital campus to the meeting space on the upper floors of one of the hospital buildings. It required the posting/removal of signage at all the entrances/elevators/hallways every time we held Community Court. The initial pilot project at Swedish Edmonds was supposed to be for six months. There still needs to be a more long-term plan. The court has started conversations with Community Health Center (CHC) about the possibility of hosting Community Court after the pilot project at Swedish Edmonds. CHC is located on Highway 99, and was in the process of adding another building to its campus. It is too early to say if the logistics of space will work but the court hopes to explore this again after the pandemic. The location of Community Court is a key component to its success. People have to be able to easily get there.

4. Do you feel that the program improves and/or reduces police and community interaction?

Reducing recidivism, by its nature works to reduce police interaction.

5. Is there any training that might assist the police in being involved in Community Court?

Not training specifically, however having a social worker embedded with the police department gives access to federal programs, like in-patient treatment programs.

6. Do you think that the format of the program is applicable to other areas of Law and Justice or Human and Social Service needs?

Yes, an example is the embedded social worker. In other jurisdictions, officers go out and proactively seek people who need services- this is preventative- trying to see someone living outside and offering to coordinate services. This is a different way of viewing law enforcement's role in the community. Lynnwood and Edmonds police took very different approaches of how to use the shared social worker with Lynnwood taking a more proactive approach.

7. What has been learned through the Covid-19 limitations that would be helpful to continue after restrictions are lifted?

The court had to suspend the Community Court pilot project because of COVID – 19, but if in-person restrictions continue we will need to be creative in our approach to Community Court

and possibly consider additional court calendars to allow for service providers to appear remotely and meet with defendants in virtual break out rooms.

8. Are there plans in place to continue the program after you leave Edmonds Municipal Court?

The next judge will receive Judge Coburn's encouragement to continue the program, as well as assistance, should he/she request it.

Task Force Comments on the Interview with Mindy Woods, Human Services Coordinator

We had an hour interview with Mindy Woods. It was personal, deeply moving and filled with hope and optimism. We exchanged personal stories and aligned in a future opportunity to help our most marginalized population. The majority of the interview was spent on the role of social services in our policing; specifically, the need to have social workers and social services available to our community, particularly in the marginalized community and as part of policing activities. Mindy strongly advocated for social workers to work directly with our citizens to better utilize her in her role as the human services coordinator.

Mindy knows firsthand the struggles many of those she is passionate about assisting are going through. She has studied the use of social workers in several cities and understands the effective value they can bring. One of the stories she shared was her and her son's journey of being homeless and the challenges that came with it: mental and physical stress, fear, and lack of access to basic needs.

People who call her range from those seeking shelter and food assistance to those needing transportation to an appointment or work.

She is convinced and strongly advocates that in a majority of situations where police are called a social worker with knowledge of programs and proper training may be able to assist in a more positive way than the use of physical force or jail time. She gave examples such as people with behavior issues due to mental illness and circumstances of marginalized people.

We also discussed the fact that steps should be taken to make certain that there is widespread information about existing programs that are available for the community, with emphasis that those outside of "the bowl" have the same opportunities. This might be done through the use of flyers, media, internet and community meetings which would in effect bring the community closer and help establish a feeling of well-being among citizens and the feeling that their city cares about them and their needs.

Mindy believes, and the Task Force concurs, that if we can assist people upfront rather than afterwards, when a situation may grow out of control, we can, through the equitable use of city government resources, make Edmonds an inclusive and resident supported community.

Summary of Interview with Mindy Wood, City of Edmonds Human Services Coordinator

Summary of Interview with Mindy Woods

List the questions you asked and the responses given to you:

1. Briefly, describe your position, why was your position created and what does it entail?

- Mindy serves on the Diversity Commission – she got involved because she recognized economic diversity and other types of diversity there were not being acknowledged/addressed
- Mental Health, social and economic diversity
- Has experienced homelessness 2x as single mom
- Homeless advocate (as private citizen)– domestic violence, mental health, Substance Use Disorder, juvenile court, tenant laws/protections
- 1.5 years ago, knew city council would be reviewing the budget; saw the need for human services for Edmonds city of 42K; testified 2x with others; council agreed; created position in Jan 2019
- 20 hours a week; Human Services Program Manager
- Required a 4 year degree at first, but Mindy doesn't have that, then changed to "or equivalent"
- Mindy was being encouraged to apply; applied, interviewed twice and was offered the job
- Job: manages the program; not individual people (social worker would be necessary)
- 15 people initially; rent, mortgage, utility, food assistance, child care assistance
- Primary doing: oversee federal CARES program; even prior to CARES, \$100K fund approved by city council
- New division; first task was to find other organizations to help allocate the money; Mindy's goal is to raise awareness, identify gaps and connect people to resources
- CARES: \$480K for total of \$580K to support more than 200 households (rent/mortgage, motel vouchers, child care, utility, food, gas, medical bills)

2. What population do you typically serve? What are their struggles and challenges? Are their struggles and challenges unique to that population?

- Originally, lower income; because of COVID, new population who need assistance,
- CARES funds 0-60% area median income level for the county; Edmonds = \$102K
- Struggles money and jobs; mental health due to financial stress; also manifests in physical stress

- 3. How do Human Services interact with police? How often are police consulted with or called on during the course of your job? How do police get consulted or called upon?**
- I've only involved the police once, most situations require a social worker or other resource, not law enforcement
 - Police can call social worker, not law enforcement
 - Not mental health or abuse experts
 - Can we help people upfront, rather than afterward
 - Mindy connects to Verdant social workers for chronic users of 911 (intense); no resource that is more appropriate level social services within the city; takes too long, level of service may be too intense
- 4. Who do you think is most adversely affected by inadequacies in Policing/Public Safety engagement? What are key causes or contributing factors?**
- Stress affects in many ways – mental, physical; when we get to max out point, it triggers people to handle in different ways; esp. without good coping skills
 - COVID has prevented face to face
 - Many don't have electronic access; relied on library for connectivity and social service/interaction
 - Increase in domestic violence, increase in child abuse (previously school was first identification) – putting more at risk, young and old
 - Increase in substance abuse – AA, other groups have not been able to meet in person or in full groups
 - These people are then turning to violence and potential danger
 - Social/Case – to help cope and find solutions
 - Police needs: de-escalating training, mental health, Substance Use Disorder; anti-racism, bias training (not a box to check off, active work all year long)
 - To take burden off law enforcement to bring on social services/mental health expert
- 5. How could human and social service needs be better served in our area? Are there best practices? What cities have a model that you would suggest looking at?**
- \$500K in human services in Edmonds to hire full time social worker
 - Social worker – is licensed and can do 1:1 case management; team to be able to identify but move to assessment and connection to proper resources; deeper connections with mental health community and SUD treatment; more efficiency and can help more people
 - Allows Mindy to focus on development and management of programs: examples – seniors: waterfront community and food bank for delivery of food to seniors to reduce Covid risk ; have a 211 fixed resource navigator at food bank on Mondays and Tuesdays and one also two days a week at the library and senior center to drive better engagement with people in need

- Cities: human services division – Issaquah (no social worker), but set aside a budget to contract with nonprofits in the area – ex: food and mental health
- Edmonds used to have social worker 2 days a week within police; make calls with police and could start to help connect people to resources – in the moment
- Mindy believes we need social workers, but not embedded in the police department (have social worker be city employed or contracted)

6. Do you think there are the alternatives to engaging the police in these situations? How would you recommend that these be accomplished?

- Training
- Social workers coming out on calls; Snohomish county/fire house example with multiple 911 calls, social worker goes out on calls with law enforcement
- LEAD (law enforcement assistance to diversion); rather than being arrested, be able to divert people
- Need help – these behaviors are a result of trauma or other injury; how can we be proactive to help get help prior to a call or incident
- Example: driving with suspended license – impacts colored people; low income (failure to appear in court)

Other notes:

Mindy – personal story about her black son; 3 police cars pulled up as he was smoking in a parking lot; didn't fit the description but female officer said "good enough for me".

How to engage the community: various community centers, groups: created flyer to provide to landlords; housing authority; 211; Verdant; Mindy's perspective based on her experience; diversity commission – Edmonds version 211 flyers to spread the word; outreach via neighborhood zoom meetings; modified language for Edmonds; 5 languages; immediate resources until waiting for 211; ongoing outreach