



# City of Edmonds Media Release

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 27, 2021***

To: Media

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## **Mayor's Equity and Social Justice Task Force Releases Report on Public Safety and Policing**

(Edmonds, WA) The Mayor's Equity and Social Justice Task Force has submitted their report on Public Safety and Policing which includes several findings and recommendations. The full report can be found in its entirety online at <http://report.edmondswa.gov>.

The Task Force's findings included:

- The Police Department, while intentionally working to hire a more diverse force, does not currently have, yet should have consistent, on-going training in working with marginalized populations, specifically communities of color.
- The department has not sought out input or insights from the community at large when developing their plans for cultural assessments
- There is a lack of insight into the perspectives and concerns of many in the community that they serve, especially communities of color.
- There is a lack of training in community outreach and community engagement that would help the Police Department in serving the citizens of Edmonds.
- A lack of training in police, dealing with the social services needs of citizens, was evident. Police are being asked to provide social services without adequate training, which makes it challenging for a social worker to follow up after the fact.
- Many residents of color do not feel safe in Edmonds.

- Accountability and transparency are two terms that came up repeatedly throughout the Task Force process and there are differences in how the police and the community understand those terms as they relate to public safety.

The Task Force's recommendations included:

- Community engagement training for the Edmonds Police Department
- Integration of social services, including training in the best use of a social services staff person
- Establishing an implicit bias training program for the Police Department
- Continued use of the Task Force in developing an ongoing equity work plan

The Equity and Social Justice Task Force was formed “for the purpose of providing advisement to the Mayor on issues of equity and justice.” The Task Force began meeting in August of 2020 to study equity-related issues within city government and create an Equity Toolkit, as well as an Equity Work Plan for the City. The first priority was Police Department practices as they relate to Public Safety/Policing. They wish to continue to provide support and evaluate progress made on the recommendations for the Police Department.

The Task Force consists of thirteen members, including a combination of civic and business community members, as well as representatives from regional equity and inclusion organizations.

Over the last six months the Task Force has worked independently under the guidance of a consultant who specializes in equity and justice work, Armstead Consulting. While the consultant assisted the task force in providing information on best practices for this process, the work of the Task Force was entirely driven and completed by the Task Force members.

Mayor Nelson stated, “This report found problems in how we police and gives solutions to do a better job of supporting Black residents and other marginalized populations. I am sharing this report with our police performance audit firm and our Police Chief selection organization to help inform expectations for our next Police Chief moving forward. I want to thank the citizen Task Force members who dedicated themselves to help address equity and social justice issues facing our community. As I am committed to be as transparent as possible with actions to be taken in regards to our Police Department, I am releasing the Equity and Justice Task Force report in its entirety.”

#### Equity Toolkit

The Task Force also created an Equity Toolkit that provides a set of questions to help decision-makers focus on equity in both their processes and outcomes. The questions are designed to create a more inclusive perspective, drawing attention to how a decision may create the potential to affect marginalized groups.

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