

DURHAM COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLNESS TASK FORCE

First Quarterly Report

July 28, 2021



Introduction

The Durham City Council, Durham Board of County Commissioners, and Durham Public Schools Board of Education have jointly appointed the Durham Community Safety & Wellness Task Force (CSWTF) to carry out a specific mission. This mission (as stated in its by-laws) is as follows: "examining the public safety & wellness needs of Durham residents and communities, educating residents on existing safety and wellness resources, and providing recommendations for additional programs to enhance public safety and wellness that rely on community-based prevention, intervention, and re-entry services as alternatives to policing and the criminal legal system."

The Community & Safety & Wellness Task Force (task force) membership is as follows:

Co-chairs - Marcia Owen and Xavier Cason

City appointees - Jennifer Carroll, Issac Villegas, Jesse Huddleston, Shanice Hamilton, Cynthia Fox

County appointees - Manju Rajendran, Tyler Whittenberg, Jatoia Potts, Mike Sstrom, and Andrea Hudson

Durham Public Schools appointees - Alec Greenwald, Nori McDuffie-Williams, Samuel Scarborough, Tonya Williams Leathers, Wanda Boone

Government Liaisons to the task force: City - Council Member Javiera Caballero, County - Commissioner Nimasheena Burns, Board of Education - Board Vice-Chair Jovonia Lewis

The task force convened in a virtual setting for its inaugural meeting on April 28, 2021, and continued to meet on a bi-weekly basis through the 2nd week of June 2021. During these initial bi-weekly sessions, the CSWTF engaged in community-building while reaching a consensus on a methodology for carrying out its work. An additional focus during these initial meetings was to hear reports from organizations deemed essential for informing the task force on matters of context. This quarter, the following agencies/organizations made presentations to the task force: Durham Beyond Policing, Criminal Justice Resource Center, and the Durham Community Safety Department.

The primary data-gathering methods that the task force will utilize include roundtables and listening sessions. The roundtables are sub-committees of the task force that will examine specific community safety concerns. The four roundtables that the task force has formed relate to School Resource Officers, Violence Interruption, Crisis Care Responders, and the Criminal Legal System. Their respective reports are included in this document. In the second quarter of this work, listening sessions may consist of additional presentations to the task force along with supplemental town-hall-style public meetings related to specific community concerns.

For this quarterly report, the chairs asked each roundtable to give a summary of what they have been doing as a subcommittee, and these summaries are reflected in each section for each roundtable. The task force, and each roundtable continues to work carefully and strategically in ensuring that we create pathways for as many community members be included in the listening sessions that each roundtable is planning. With support from Dr. Dwayne Campbell (Fuse Fellow) and James Spiers (Intern) from the Community Safety Department, and with either of the task force Chairs being on each roundtable, the roundtables are comprised of the following members.

**Community Safety & Wellness Taskforce Membership
Roundtable Assignment**

Taskforce members Xavier Cason Marcia Owen	<i>Roundtable Group Co-chairs</i>
Tonya Williams Leathers, Durham Public Schools Appointee Jesse Huddleston, City of Durham Appointee Nori McDuffie-Williams, Durham Public Schools Appointee Alec Greenwald, Durham Public Schools Appointee Tyler Whittenberg, Durham County Appointee Xavier Cason	<i>School Resource Officers</i>
Mike Sistrom, Durham County Appointee Jatoia Potts, Durham County Appointee Andrea “Muffin” Hudson, Durham County Appointee Marcia Owen	<i>Criminal Legal System</i>
Cynthia Fox, City of Durham Appointee*** Samuel Scarborough, Durham Public Schools Appointee Dr. Wanda Boone, Durham Public Schools Appointee Marcia Owen	<i>Violence Interruption/De-escalation</i>
Manju Rajendran, Durham County Appointee Shanise Hamilton, City of Durham Appointee Jennifer Carroll, City of Durham Appointee Isaac Villegas, City of Durham Appointee Xavier Cason	<i>911 Responses/Crisis Intervention</i>

911 Responses/Crisis Intervention

Round table members: Pastor Isaac Villegas, Dr. Jennifer Carroll, Shanise Hamilton, & Manju Rajendran.

The 911/Crisis Responder Round Table (911RT) has met on three occasions in the first 90 days since the Community Safety and Wellness Task Force (CSWTF) was first convened on April 28, 2021. At these meetings, the Round Table has:

- undertaken broad discussion about its aims and principles
- identified major stakeholders whose expertise and insight will be essential for the work of the roundtable
- begun establishing knowledge and data need of the Round Table members
- strategized community and stakeholder engagement to be undertaken in its second 90 day period.

Through discussion amongst its members, the 911RT has established the following, overarching goals to guide its work, which includes several elements in formal mandate given to this RT by the chairs of the CSWTF:

- (1) To explore research on and existing models for alternative crisis response, especially models developed or implemented in the South
- (2) To listen to as many stakeholders as possible, especially those who are directly impacted (positively and negatively) by our current emergency response systems
- (3) To develop and present policy and practice recommendations to Durham City Council, Durham County Commissioners, and the Durham Public School Board
- (4) To present supporting evidence for these recommendations in the form of current research, implementation examples, community input, or some other appropriate source

The 911RT is interested in pursuing data-driven solutions for responding to community needs and values. The data upon which this RT will rely includes not only empirical information about crime, health, and citizen demand upon municipal services as well as the experiential knowledge of those facing and responding to these issues in our current emergency response systems. To this end, the 911RT has requested and received data on all 911-based calls for service responded to by the Durham Police Department, from October 2017 to October 2020. Preliminary analysis of this data is already underway.

The RT has also begun generating a list of additional knowledge and data needs, including inclusive 911 dispatch data (representing all emergency calls, not only those to which police were dispatched), dispatch data for the Durham County Sheriff's Department, insights from and priorities of current emergency first responders, and systems knowledge (including views, insights, and priorities) of supervisors and operators in Durham's 911 Emergency Call Center. The benefits of observing these services in action through observation, shadowing, or ride along (as appropriate) were also discussed.

Moving forward, the 911RT is proactively reaching out to stakeholders in the interest of accessing the data and expertise detailed above. The RT is also considering opportunities to host a learning session with Fulton County's Policing Alternatives and Diversion Initiative, which may offer valuable insight into methods for successful community engagement, stakeholder engagement, interagency cooperation, and intervention design and rollout based on their own experiences in Atlanta. The RT has also begun inviting staff persons working in the Durham Community Safety and Wellness Department to RT meetings to begin coordinating communication and resource management, maximizing the capacities and privileges of working with the support of this department.

Finally, and most important of all, the 911RT has determined that the development of an actionable community engagement strategy will be a top priority in the coming weeks. This strategizing will be guided through discussion and attention to the following questions:

- How should the RT be conceptualizing the community and what is the best design for a welcoming and representative process that could be achieved with the resources and time we have?
- What are the best ways to meaningfully reach Durham residents from a broad array of backgrounds?
- Are there particular voices or perspectives that should be especially considered or deliberately centered in the conversation, and what voices or perspectives are those?
- What does the RT need to learn from the community, and what does the community need the RT to see and understand?

The 911RT maintains optimism that these goals can be accomplished and that cooperation and mutual respect can be fostered across all agencies and stakeholders invested in the need for meaningful and effective emergency response, finding common ground in our mutual concern for community safety and wellness for all Durham residents.

Criminal Legal System

Members: Marcia Owen, Andrea Muffin Hudson, Jatoia Potts, and Mike Sistrom. Marion Bailey has been invited to join our RT.

In our four meetings, we have relied on Muffin and Jatoia to help us map the process of a person's interaction with the criminal legal system from initial arrest, through incarceration in the county jail, trial, and release/re-entry. We have already highlighted points of intervention to reduce the number of arrests, of incarceration, and the length of time in jail.

All along the way, we are also mindful of the needs of crime victims and the family members of incarcerated individuals. The current system seems to pay the least attention to these two groups relative to the accused and incarcerated. We will also "map" how crime victims and family members of incarcerated individuals currently encounter the system from start to finish and how that can be improved.

We have also come up with a few research requests for Dwayne and James. We are also figuring out the questions we want to ask regarding substantial, pragmatic reforms and who to ask for those answers.

Our resource panel will hopefully include one of the current magistrates and someone/s from the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's office, the Office of Pre-Trial, the Criminal Justice Resource Center, mental health providers, relevant county jail staff regarding jail conditions, programs, and services, and especially current and formerly incarcerated individuals and family members, and crime victims and community organizations who advocate for them. We would also want to center those community members in our Listening Sessions. We are exploring ways to get currently incarcerated individuals' perspectives via surveys, questionnaires, and interviews.

We have spent the most time so far discussing the current system when a person is arrested and appears before a magistrate. This is where the bail/bond process begins as a pipeline into the jail for those who cannot afford bond or bail. The magistrate appearance seems the place where initial intervention is key, potential diversion is possible, and more support for the accused is needed. Muffin and Jatoia presented several suggestions along these lines.

The next key step is at first appearance. This is where the current potential diversions to drug court, mental health court occur. It is another place for increased resources, a streamlined process, and more diversion away from jail. It is also a place for crime victims' perspectives to be considered.

We will pick up the process of mapping the current system with first appearance and looking for points of intervention and increased resources at our next meeting on July 28th.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

Members: Alec Greenwald, Jesse Huddleston, Nori McDuffie-Williams, Tonya Williams Leathers, Tyler Whittenberg

Developments:

>> Our RT has held three meetings on a biweekly cadence, Tuesday nights for about 90 minutes. We scheduled our next meeting tentatively for Tuesday, August 3, 2021 @ 7PM.

>> During our first meeting, we established process agreements to shape HOW we would gather and work:

1. We will respect our identities and hold space for each other
2. We will step up and step back accordingly
3. We will offer comprehensive support (loving encouragement AND accountability)
4. We will be okay with difficult conversations, disagreements, and stalemates
5. We will function together cooperatively

>> During our second and third meetings, we discussed how we would begin coordinating our listening sessions:

- We named some of the different populations from which we want to hear, agreeing to start with youth and with principals. Nori and Tyler are taking point on the youth LS, while Alec, Jesse, and Tonya are taking point on the principals LS
- We began to draft guiding questions that would guide ALL of our listening sessions and shape our research engagement with each population with which we connect, recognizing that the format of the listening session may differ but the actual research content ought to be as similar and consistent as possible
- We endeavor to identify youth partners that we would invite to join our RT in order to plan the youth listening session(s). We also endeavor to host the principals LS during the month of August, before the DPS academic year begins.

Violence Intervention

Members: Dr. Wanda Boon and Samuel Scarborough.

We have already begun to establish some conjunct methods of analysis that we deem to be helpful in assessing the condition of violence and its effects on Durham-mites. At the moment, we have agreed that we should contact Lincoln Community Health Center, the Sheriff's Office, DPD, Duke Hospital and even the Department of Public Health to receive access to, and examine contemporary data on, things related to violence in Durham. For instance, Duke Hospital may have data concerning the amount of patients they treat with gunshot wounds, which would allow us to gain some understanding of how many people are being affected by gunshot violence in Durham. Having this information will enable us to gain some needed insight before making recommendations to Durham city officials. It is also important to include the community voice including those with lived experience, youth, young adults and representatives from Partners Against Crime.

Throughout this process, we have thought about GIS mapping <https://communitycrimemap.com/> <https://durhamnc.gov/719/Crime-Statistics> This is a link to the Crime Maps and data sources including dates, times and types of incidents that occur throughout the City. It should be used to track where violence is taking place in Durham, along with the manner and intensity of that violence. In the near future, we hope to build a visual representation of violence in Durham, so that we can directly locate areas where violence is most prevalent. Also we established that we plan to sequentially map out different violence intervention programs, organizations, and services to get a sense of what resources our members of the community have at their use (and how effective those resources are).

In our time so far, we have met with the organization Bull City United (BCU). In speaking with them, we were able to gain a brief understanding of what BCU does for the community, how they provide their services to the community (broadly), and the areas of Durham in which they serve. We will reach out to BCU again, in order to examine concrete data and other useful pieces of information (that will help us understand, i.e. how effective their methods are). Also, we met after the meeting to digest everything. We talked about natural partners in the community for BCU and began to think about how we could measure the success of BCU (and even our own roundtable). At this time, we have sent additional questions to BCU that we plan on receiving answers to, promptly. After receiving answers to these questions, we will have an even greater understanding of how BCU has impacted gun violence in Durham. All of the progress we have made so far will be very beneficial, as we begin to take a deeper look into the data concerning violence and its effects in Durham.

We ascertained that we should look beyond intervention with our sights set on prevention. This includes an examination of the Social Determinants of Health and the prevalence of violent acts across the age spectrum from the youngest to the oldest among us. The question beyond "what did you do" is what happened to you.

Conclusion

The Community Safety and Wellness Task Force continues to work assiduously in fulfilling the mandate from the City of Durham, Durham County, and Durham Public Schools; and the public will be kept abreast of our progress through a report every 90-days. For the first quarter, our team has been engaged with building context for our work, relationship/trust with each other, connections across the county. We anticipate that the subsequent quarter will primarily be about more robust data collection, whether from our resource panel or other stakeholders across the county through the listening sessions that are being coordinated by each roundtable. We invite Durham residents to join our task force meetings remotely, as we strive to create a safe Durham for all residents. The Chairs also want to express their gratefulness to each task force member for their courage, diligence, hard work and time. Doing this work can be very demanding, but task force members have made this sacrifice in an effort to improve their community. We look forward to updating you on our progress for the next quarterly report that will be distributed shortly after October 28, 2021.