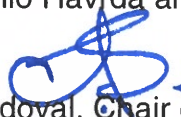




**Council District 7**  
Ana E. Sandoval

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairwoman Melissa Cabello Havrda and members of the  
Public Safety Committee

FROM: Councilwoman Ana E. Sandoval,  Chair of the  
Community Health & Equity Committee

SUBJECT: Police Recommendations from Community Health &  
Equity Committee

DATE: May 28, 2021

CC: Members of Community Health & Equity Committee;  
María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; David McCary,  
Assistant City Manager

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Please find attached the recommendations of the Community Health & Equity Committee regarding “race and gender equity in our community and... mental health de-escalation measures,” for consideration by the Public Safety Committee in the review of policing services.

These recommendations were developed in response to Mayor Nirenberg’s memo dated June 11, 2020 regarding “Public Safety Priorities.” The committee developed these recommendations through conversations held at three public meetings with community stakeholders and public safety experts, and background interviews with stakeholders. The Community Health & Equity Committee may forward additional recommendations following their June 11, 2021 meeting when they will hear the draft Meadows Foundation report addressing mental health services.

I look forward to collaborating with you on the Public Safety Committee as we finalize recommendations for the full council.



## Community Health and Equity Committee Council Member Recommendations Topics: Mental Health, Racial Equity, Gender Equity

### Objective

Evaluate policing practices exercised and services offered by COSA SAPD when responding to an incident that involves a mental health crisis. Assess if practices and services promote equity and appropriately serve community members who require them.

### Recommendations – Mental Health

- a. Work with SAPD officers to map how SAPD connects residents with resources; evaluate opportunities to enhance this process.
- b. Review available aggregate data on mental health conditions in the San Antonio population and evaluate how it may inform how SAPD allocates resources.
- c. Assess the need for more sobering beds available to SAPD.
- d. Support veterans suffering with mental health by forming a coalition that includes the City of San Antonio's Veteran's Affairs, county, and non-profits for veterans.
- e. Revisit the current Mental Health Unit (MHU) staffing and operation model. Specifically:
  1. Ensure the MHU has clear mission, goals, and metrics for evaluating performance of the MHU;
  2. Explore a specialty-hiring model for hiring MHU officers, consider if some responding personnel do not require weapons;
  3. Explore integrating outreach specialists, *promotoras*, or other professionals as an alternative response or for follow-up for persons with mental health issues.
  4. Consider increasing MHU staffing to ensure MHU officers can respond to crisis calls 24/7;
  5. Consider providing MHU officers with access to less lethal tools when responding to crisis calls;
  6. Recommend that the Chief and City Staff revisit the current de-escalation protocol to see if COSA can send crisis professionals to respond to calls where their support is appropriate; and
  7. Report on accomplishments on a quarterly basis.

## Recommendations – Racial Equity

- a. Examine the benefits of SAPD engaging with residents versus patrolling and monitoring and implement where possible.
- b. Review policies for protecting sensitive information regarding a death in an officer-involved shooting and how news of an individual's passing is communicated to next of kin.
- c. Review current training for communicating with victims and their families; identify opportunities for improvement, like empathy-based policing.
- d. In coordination with the Office of Equity, evaluate best practices for promoting restorative justice as a way of keeping people out of the criminal justice system; develop policies and programs to expand restorative justice in the work of SAPD.
- e. In coordination with the Office of Equity, evaluate SAPD's budget through an equity lens and propose recommendations to City Council through the budget process.
- f. Revisit recommendations from Mayor Ivy Taylor's Council on police-community relations, including the following:
  1. Expanding the San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) program to include more officers and additional shifts; and
  2. Tracking the number of students in the San Antonio Police Explorer Program who become SAPD officers; provide preference points on application and offer incentives for Explorer Program alums; create a tracking or outreach program to address the gap between when the Explorer Program ends and when students can apply to SAPD.
- g. Create a long-range plan to facilitate more face-to-face discussions and dialogue with the public throughout the community; develop an advisory committee that meets periodically to monitor relations between the public and police and to provide feedback to SAPD and the Public Safety Committee or Council.
- h. Evaluate how SAPD recruits people from the areas they serve; develop long-term local recruitment plan; establish a task force for long-term local recruitment; evaluate novel recruitment strategies, such as a summer or after-school training program for local high school and college students.
- i. Increase funding to agencies benefitting young people of color at risk of interaction with law enforcement, such as My Brother's Keeper San Antonio.
- j. Invite police officers to play a role in establishing means and metrics for improving the department's racial equity outcomes.
- k. Accelerate the Office of Equity's Equity Trainer work in the police department.

## Recommendations – Gender Equity

- a. Better understand how crimes against women and LGBTQ community are handled, followed up on, and number solved by SAPD.
- b. Assess barriers to services that prevent residents from accessing resources. For example, not having a valid form of identification may delay or deter access to services.
- c. Revisit the City's Strategic Homelessness Plan, specifically where it addresses the issue of homelessness in San Antonio and the absence of information regarding the homeless population that became homeless because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- d. Assess the need for more beds designated for women at Haven for Hope.
- e. Discuss how the facilities the city has built can be used as hubs to help foster closer relationships between the LGBTQ community and law enforcement (i.e., substations near the Pride Center).
- f. In coordination with the Office of Equity, review the police department's policy for interactions between officers and transgender persons for possible improvements.
- g. Establish metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of the Police Academy's LGBTQ+ training.