



HILLSBOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Chief of Police Duane Hampton



February 16, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor Jenn Weaver,
Commissioners of Town of Hillsborough,
and Members of the Mayor's Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Task Force for their efforts and work on exploring a variety of different, very complicated issues that have resulted in the recommendations they have made.

Hillsborough is an amazing town, and I believe we have a very strong, professional and responsive police department that many communities should be envious of. The officers and staff who serve here work hard day in and day out to provide the highest level of service. I believe our officers are worthy of, and have made every effort to earn, the trust of the community they serve, and I think the 2019 Citizen Survey that showed an overall 91% satisfaction rate with police services reflects this.

Regardless of how well we provide services, disparities for people of color exist in our data. Unfortunately, these same disparities exist in law enforcement data across our state and nation. These same disparities also exist across almost all of our other systems including the medical field, education, employment, housing and others. Exactly what is driving this, and which factors influence others is subject to significant debate.

The murder of George Floyd and the subsequent unrest and distrust of policing that followed have brought this to the forefront in a way they cannot be ignored. We all want to find a solution. However, we have to be sure we are looking for solutions that actually fix the problem, not ones that simply address a symptom leaving the real problem unsolved and festering.

While I do believe that there are ways we can improve our law enforcement systems and that law enforcement should be a part of the solution, I do not believe we can do it alone. It has to be a cooperative effort across all disciplines and involve the public for us to make a lasting impact.

It has taken more time than I would like to respond to these recommendations, and for that I apologize. HPD did not have an opportunity to be involved in the formation of these recommendations and, as they covered a very broad range of topics, including some areas that were not part of any discussions HPD was involved in, we had to do additional research to understand some recommendations and to determine what was and was not possible. Some of the

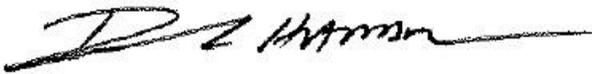
recommendations still remain unclear to us, and some were outside of the purview of HPD, and as such we really cannot respond fully to them. Many are also dependent on each other, which complicates the response.

It was our understanding that this response is a starting point for our discussion on these recommendations. We do not yet know how the elected officials, or our community views these recommendations. Our responses reflect our views based on our understanding of the recommendation, the efforts and practices of our agency, discussions among our staff and our feeling on the need or appropriateness of the recommendation for our town and agency. As this response is the starting point for conversation, it is critical to be clear that we are open to and seek the direction of the Town Board, even should it be counter to what we perhaps feel is the best course.

In this response I have tried to duplicate (or in some cases summarize for space) the Task Force's recommendation, and then provide a response in italics. We have done our best to respond to each item as fully as possible by including information on items, explanations of our current practices, explanations of limitations, action items that we are already doing/planning to do, and in some cases alternatives.

We look forward to the discussion and additional direction on these recommendations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hampton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chief Duane Hampton

Advisory Board Recommendation

The Task force has recommended that a diverse, 5-person standing Advisory Board be established. Woven into the report, the following were suggested as possible responsibilities they felt this board could/should be tasked with:

- Research into police practices and continue to issue recommendations to Board as necessary
- Review community complaints regarding use of force or about other police conduct.
- Review data regarding racial disparities in local policing (traffic stop data show disparities and ideally these would be eliminated)
- Play a role in helping make HPD more diverse.
- Consider additional policies to reimagine public safety such as alternatives to policing, educating the community about wellness and mental health resources, violence prevention, community training to help communities reduce violence without police intervention.
- Suggest and/or create clearer policies about when use of force is justified. (from UoF section)
- Do exit interviews (from hiring and training section)
- Participate in the hiring process to review methods and helping strengthen the interview process. (from hiring and training section)

Hillsborough is a unique town, and while some other communities have formed advisory boards of various types, we remain unsure that this is the best path for Hillsborough. Considering the vast number of jurisdictions cross the state and country, only a very small percentage of communities have formed any type of advisory board, and in most cases those that have are significantly larger jurisdictions.

On its face, HPD has no issue with creating and having any kind of community-based group that would work with us on a regular basis, but we are not sure enough work has been done to clearly define what this group would do and what would be expected of them. Because of this, we do have some hesitation and concerns with this recommendation:

- *Considering our Town's size, comparatively low volume of significant incidents of interest, existing close relationships and public access to elected officials, and already strong internal controls, we are worried that any standing group formed would not be sustainable as members would lose interest or simply not have enough to do.*
- *The role of any advisory board, and their specific tasks would need to be clearly defined. At this point a number of things have been suggested as ideas, but they are not specific and in some cases may not be possible due to personnel law, employee privacy and other laws and restrictions.*
- *It has not been made clear exactly what problems or issues exist in Hillsborough that this group is needed to address. Overall Hillsborough is a very safe community with an excellent police department and few significant problems, so we are not sure exactly what this group would be expected or empowered to accomplish.*
 - *We already review our uses of force to a level that is far superior to the standards used by most agencies.*
 - *We get very few complaints about officers' conduct and performance. These are also reviewed to a level far above the standards of most other agencies.*

- *Any time there has been a questionable situation involving a complaint or significant use of force details have been reported to the manager and relayed to the Town Board. In cases where termination has been recommended, details have been shared with the Board in closed session. I do not believe we could share this level of detail with an advisory group.*
- *We are already reviewing, using and making public an enormous amount of data for an agency our size. Any requests for additional data would add a significant burden.*
- *We already provide several public opportunities each year (a community summit and a presentation to the Board) where we share information, take questions and address concerns.*
- *Creating and managing a standing advisory board is going to be an added workload. It is not clear who would be tasked with “managing” this group, but if it falls to the PD this will be challenging and we will have to realign responsibilities and possibly add staff to allow for enough bandwidth to handle it.*
- *Some of the tasks proposed for an Advisory group, such as being involved in hiring and recruiting and addressing complaints, are somewhat time-sensitive processes, so involving a group that meets infrequently will potentially slow down many of those processes and cause bureaucratic problems.*
- *We also have a concern that creating a special group may limit how much information ends up being shared broadly with the public at large, and because a group exists, other citizens who might otherwise be interested in engaging with us will defer.*

Should the Town Board decide to pursue forming an Advisory Board, we feel that additional work will need to be done to define what that means and what would be expected. We are not sure of the process but feel that it should still be a citizen-led effort to bring back to the Board a more specific recommendation. We would suggest either reconvening the task force with that specific and narrow mission or convening a new workgroup to accomplish this.

Additionally, we feel that if some kind of advisory board is created, doing so with a broader Community Safety focus, that could consider all nature of community safety issues, not just policing, would be more beneficial to the town and hopefully provide more ways to keep members engaged.

As alternatives to forming a police-specific advisory board we offer:

1. *Rely on existing Town Board as the main body to oversee police operations and issues.*
We feel that our existing town board already provides much of the oversight that the task force would like to see. We regularly share information with them, and citizens regularly go to them with issues and complaints. We are able to frequently share information and interact with them at a level that we may not be able to do with an advisory board.
2. *Form Task Forces when issues arise.*
Due to the infrequent nature of significant issues in Hillsborough, we could form task forces to look into problems, such as has been done in this case, when problems arise.

3. *Increase transparency and communication to the community at large. We already do a detailed annual report and have done other special reports. We are working on adding more information quarterly and exploring ways to make our entire policy manual easily accessible to the public.*
4. *If a Board is going to be created, consider a more broadly focused Community Safety Board. A broader focused advisory board could explore a variety of community safety and quality of life issues, as well as addressing concerns with police services. Having a broader focus and mandate could allow this group to advise the Town Board in various ways, and hopefully give them enough to focus on that they do not lose interest.*

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will support and work to make a reality whatever decision the Town Board makes related to the formation (or not) of an Advisory Board.*
- *HPD is already at work on increasing transparency in reporting and policies.*

Other Task Force Recommendations

Mental Health Crisis Response Recommendations

1. Collaborate with other local jurisdictions (OCSO, Chapel Hill PD, Carrboro PD, Mebane PD) to pool funding resources and develop a coordinated, county-wide mobile mental health crisis response service.

HPD is supportive of creating some kind of collaborative crisis response team as it is a resource that is sorely lacking. That said, any kind of program that is developed will have to be a cooperative county-wide effort. Hillsborough averages 1-2 mental health/crisis-related calls each week, including an average of one (1) reported "CIT Response" call a week. A large majority of these calls are simply officers serving commitment papers and transporting subjects with no issues. While the resource is needed, we do not have the volume to justify or sustain a program on our own.

An Orange County Behavioral Health Task Force was created in 2019 and has been working on these issues for the past several years, including work to look at proposing some kind of county mental health facility as an alternative to hospitals. HPD has participated in this process, but real progress is largely out of our control and dependent on all the parties being engaged.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *Continue to actively collaborate with partner organizations in support of projects related to creating a response team and/or building a behavioral health facility.*
- *Report to the Town Board when there is progress and some estimates of cost-share funding needs are defined.*

2. Increase training and ensure all officers are Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained.

HPD supports this recommendation, however we are unsure of what more we could be doing in this area. HPD has always had a goal of having all patrol officers CIT trained and due to staffing turnover and availability of classes, this is a continual work in progress. Currently over half of the department has completed this training, including 80% of patrol.

The class is 5 days and is only offered a few times each year (usually 2-3 classes a year). We do not have any control over this as it is offered by external sources. During COVID the class has not been offered at all and is only just now starting to open up in some areas.

In 2021 HPD initiated getting all officers trained in Mental Health First Aid. While not as in-depth as CIT, this course provides officers with tools for interacting with people in crises and will help us bridge the gap until CIT classes become more available. Issues around dealing with people in crisis are also incorporated into various in-service trainings each year. As an agency we continue to look for new and additional trainings in this area.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *Continue to pursue CIT training for all officers as it becomes available in Orange County and neighboring counties.*

- *Continue to keep staff trained on Mental Health First Aid*
- *Seek out additional trainings that can be located in the areas of mental health and crisis response.*

3. Allocate funding to add a minimum of 1-2 social workers (or similarly trained staff) to the Town of Hillsborough

This recommendation was to add these positions to the Town, outside of the Police Department, so this ultimately rests outside our purview. However, while we believe, and agree, that this recommendation is well meaning, we do not believe it is practical or appropriate for our town.

Social services functions are the purview of County government, so it does not seem appropriate for the Town to step into that domain. We do not have systems, expertise or networks in place to support an entirely new functional area. We do not know if there are laws or limitations that could restrict what the town can or cannot do in this area. We also do not know if there is a volume of need that would support a position or positions considering there are already services in place. If we as a town feel that better service provision is needed, we believe we would be better served working with the existing county social services to enhance the structure we have in place.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD has no specific action items planned on this at this time, but if the Board decides to create some kind of positions, HPD will support this as best we can.*

HPD Alternative:

- *While not a direct equivalent, if the Board is interested in exploring adding new positions and structures, HPD believes exploring some kind of non-armed responded model for low-level calls for service may be a better fit and have a better overall impact for our community. Developing this kind of program would represent a significant cost (2-3 personnel and vehicles and equipment).*

Traffic Stop Recommendations

1. Expand current traffic stop reporting data set to include all significant citizen interactions including but not limited to public complaints, use of force incidents, marijuana arrests, community events, mental health crises, and vehicle pursuits.

HPD has always worked to be as transparent as possible and has included information in the majority of these areas in both published annual reports, community presentations and in-person reports to the Board of Commissioners for many years. Data on mental health calls and marijuana enforcement have not been a part of our reporting in the past, but we have been working to develop systems so we can include these in future reporting.

The amount of data work we have been doing has highlighted a need for better quality control of our records, and potentially a dedicated records/data manager position. Collecting, analyzing and reporting data takes an enormous amount of work, and we are limited by both staff and systems. We are a small agency and do not have anyone dedicated to just managing data and our reporting system. Over the past year we have spent an enormous number of hours doing data work, and at times this has pulled staff away from other tasks. In addition, our systems were not designed or intended to report data in many of the ways we are being asked to look at it, so it requires a lot of manual work to find and match data sets.

HPD Action Item(s)

- *HPD is working to finalize a publicly available quarterly reporting system to address many of these areas.*
- *HPD will continue to do annual reports and updates to the Board on many of these issues.*
- *HPD will continue to make public presentations and host Community Summits to share information about these issues.*

2. Make a commitment within the Hillsborough Police Department to not pull people over by using the traffic code as a pretext for suspect criminal behavior. Limit the investigation during a traffic stop to the reason for the stop (except for situations that pose a risk to public safety).

Asking officers to narrowly limit investigations to the purpose of a traffic stop is not something we support nor do we feel that is reasonable. This is also counter to a significant amount of case law and court decisions that have been issued.

While we agree that the primary purpose for an officer stopping a car should be to enforce (or educate) the operator about a violation. We also want our officers to then investigate evidence or suspicions that develop once they make contact or based on information they receive. Setting a policy where officers have to turn a blind eye to evidence and suspicions is counter to their mission.

We agree with and understand the concern that officers, even with the good intention of trying to get criminals off the streets, could improperly use their ability to stop cars in a way that damages community trust. This is why it is so important for us to monitor officer behavior by analyzing traffic stop data, reviewing body worn camera footage and having a complaint process in place.

From our review of body cam footage and traffic stop data, the vast majority of situations where officers investigate beyond the initial purpose of the stop occur when a clear suspicion forms after making the stop. To try and get into the officer's head to figure out if they had suspicions before they decided to stop a car is simply not possible.

There are occasions where a traffic violation provides an opportunity to investigate a situation where an officer otherwise may not have enough legal justification to make a stop. A prime example of this would be a car slowly driving through a neighborhood that has been plagued with car break-ins in the middle of the night. Absent a clear traffic violation, the reasonable

suspicion to stop the car is questionable, but should the vehicle have a clear violation, such as a headlight being out, the officer's decision to stop the car would stand up to legal scrutiny.

HPD Action Item(s)

- *HPD will continue to monitor and review officer performance internally to ensure that officers are not using their authority inappropriately.*
- *HPD will comprehensively review any complaints received about officers exceeding their authority inappropriately.*

<p>3. Cease low level, regulatory traffic stops, such as equipment violation, expired tags, license plate light out, and broken taillight.</p>
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HPD has been working to ensure that we are prioritizing moving violations over non-moving violations. We have been tracking the data and have seen a significant change in the distribution of these stops over the past year as a result of our efforts. While we do agree and support the idea of putting more emphasis on moving violations than non-moving, we do not support a policy of ceasing enforcement of specific laws. Doing so is problematic for us in a number of ways:

1. *Deciding at the local level that we will not enforce certain laws that were passed and put into place by the state legislature erodes our system of government. Even if well intentioned, local governments starting to pick and choose which state laws matter and which do not, leads us down a very dangerous path.*
2. *Directing officers not to enforce certain laws goes against the oath officers (and elected officials) have taken to support and maintain the Constitution and laws of North Carolina. Officers are certified by the State and trained to enforce state laws, so being put in a position where they have to act contrary to their oath and that training can create professional and personal conflict.*
3. *Social and societal inequities will not be fixed by selectively ignoring certain laws. The law should be applied evenly, fairly and consistently across all people. Ignoring a problem will only mask it and not make it go away.*

While not a priority, we still believe enforcing non-moving violations has a place in HPD's mission. Education and discretion are important tools our officers use when dealing with these issues. While we do stop people for these non-moving violations, our officers do a very good job applying those tools.

HPD has put significant effort into analyzing our traffic stop data and looking at the information in different ways. We have found that while the data North Carolina collects is good, and far superior to what is collected in some states, it also is very incomplete and does not account for many things that can influence an officer's decision to stop a car. We also found that for Hillsborough specifically, we found errors in our data and issues with consistent use of some of the reporting fields. Some of the fields are not clearly defined by the state and we could not get any guidance on what was "correct." We have since conducted re-training for our staff and created a guide, so our reporting produces better data.

There are a few places that have taken steps to change enforcement of these kind of violations through legislative action. HPD would fully support and comply with any legislative changes that are made. Our role is to enforce the laws that elected officials have put in place. Places that have made changes (Virginia, Philadelphia, etc) have done so very recently and there has not been time yet to understand the impacts of these changes. We believe any consideration of changes in this area should wait and give these localities time to help us understand the full implications.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to track and report comparative percentages of moving vs. non-moving violation stops.*
- *HPD will continue to monitor traffic stop reporting and improve quality of data.*
- *HPD will continue to put emphasis on enforcement of safety-related and moving violations over non-moving violations.*
- *HPD will continue to monitor trends across the country and review data that is generated by jurisdictions that have made changes to their enforcement in this area.*
- *HPD will support any legislative changes that are made.*

4. Implement use of a written consent card for searches.

HPD conducts very few consent searches (8 in 2021) and due to this we do not feel this recommendation is necessary. We believe that our very low reliance and use of consent searches demonstrates that we are using this tool with restraint and only in limited, appropriate situations.

HPD policy does require officers to capture their request for consent and the subject's response on their BWC. We believe this is a far superior process than any paper document as the record of exactly what and how consent was secured is available for internal review and any court proceedings.

While we understand there may be a concern that people may be granting consent in an uninformed manner, this does not appear to be what is happening in our limited consent searches. If we felt that our officers were abusing consent searches, or using coercive tactics, we would not tolerate it. In most cases our consent searches result from clear articulable suspicions and are quick and handled professionally and non-confrontationally.

As an additional point, almost all of the work our officers do now is electronic, so creating some kind of form that they then have to fill out and get signed and then a process to track and manage that paperwork is an added burden for something that is not a significant HPD tool

Current data regarding searches is limited and incomplete in many ways and does not capture the full picture. We are continuing to monitor and gather data on searches, to better understand when, why and how officers are doing them. We are working to make this information available as part of our reporting process. As we continue to gather more information, the need for additional changes may develop and we believe should be addressed at that time.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to gather data on searches and report that data as part of our quarterly and annual reporting.*
- *Routinely review consent searches to ensure officers are not engaging in coercive tactics or using consent searches inappropriately.*

HPD Alternative:

- *If the concern is making sure that persons granting consent are informed using specific language, then as an alternative to creating a written form, we would suggest creating some kind of standard language that the officers would read to people off of a card (similar to Miranda rights) and capture on their Body Worn Cameras. This would accomplish the standardization of language and not add any additional administrative burden.*

5. Reallocate funding to develop resources to assist people who meet certain income eligibility criteria with fixing minor vehicle maintenance issues, as well as assistance with registration/insurance renewal payments. We also recommend that Hillsborough begin contributing support to the Orange County Criminal Justice Debt fund and expand this fund to include assistance for costs related to vehicle maintenance and registration/insurance renewal.

HPD is very supportive of the idea of a program to assist people with fixing minor vehicle equipment issues. There are a few programs that exist across the country that we have looked at trying to emulate, but they have all been larger jurisdictions that have a variety of resources and partners to choose from. In 2020 we spoke with some of our auto parts stores about doing some kind of pilot program. We found that while we may have been able to work out a way for people to be able to go to them to get a bulb at no cost, the auto parts stores could not help people install it so we ended up shelving the idea. We are still open to some kind of program like this and would be willing to revisit it if the Board is supportive and willing to allocate funding.

We support contributing to the Orange County Criminal Justice Debt fund. This program was started and is still managed by Chapel Hill PD. Currently only Chapel Hill PD, Carrboro PD and the Orange County Bail Bond Project contribute, and funds are only distributed to residents of those jurisdictions. The program assists people with paying court costs and fines associated with violations. This program does not provide assistance with vehicle maintenance or registration issues. I have spoken with Chapel Hill PD and while it would increase their administrative burden, they are open to our joining the project so Hillsborough residents could benefit. As a reference, Chapel Hill contributes \$20,000; Carrboro contributes \$7,500; and the Bail Bond Project contributed \$6,000.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *Present to the Board, if they are supportive, a request for funding to contribute to the Orange County Justice Debt Relief Fund and work with Chapel Hill PD to set up a structure to partner with them.*

- *If the Board is supportive, HPD will revisit the idea of developing some kind of program to assist community members with vehicle repairs and return to the Board with a proposal and funding request within the next 6 months.*

6. Cease regulatory checkpoints

As with consent searches, regulatory (driver's license) checking stations are used rarely by HPD (2 in 2020 and 1 in 2021). We believe our very limited use of this tool illustrates that HPD is using it with restraint and in an appropriate manner. Even though this is a tool we use infrequently, we do believe it can be a valuable tool and it is an option that should remain available.

HPD is very conscious that this tool can be abused and takes steps to make sure that when checkpoints are done, they are not done in a manner that is discriminatory or unduly targets one segment of our population over another. All checkpoints must be approved by a supervisor and must have a written plan in place.

Having unlicensed drivers on our streets is a problem and these checkpoints are a tool to help with that. In addition, these checkpoints offer additional benefits to the safety of our community as we often find subjects that are wanted, drunk driving or have weapons. These checkpoints are also a tool to help show increased police presence after a community has been victimized in an effort to reassure the community.

Related to this, our officers also help other agencies (OCSO and SHP) with checkpoints they establish. Again, this is not a frequent activity, but does happen occasionally in town. Working cooperatively in support of our peers is very important to us.

We are actively exploring ways to conduct more DWI focused checkpoints. These generally require more logistics and personnel than a driver's license focused checking station but may be an option we could use instead of driver's license checking stations.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to use regulatory checkpoints sparingly, and only at locations that do not unduly target any specific neighborhood or demographic.*
- *HPD will explore moving away from regulatory checkpoints and instead focusing on DWI enforcement checkpoints.*

Use of Force Recommendations

1. Advisory Board should hear community complaints and be able to promptly respond to community members.

This recommendation and some of its sub-parts are connected to the Task Force's overall recommendation of an advisory board and our response to that has been provided.

A.1. Current Policy is to store body camera footage for 90 days for incidents that do not end in arrest. A policy should be put in place that keeps footage involving a complaint for as long as needed for investigation.

The Task Force's understanding of our policy and practice is incomplete. Any footage that is subject to a complaint, use of force, or any potential internal process is specifically held outside of any retention guidelines until any possible reviews are completed. As soon as we become aware of a possible complaint or internal issue, recordings are set to be retained until manually deleted.

It is noteworthy to point out that HPD's decision to hold non-arrest recordings for 90 days exceeds the state records retention guidelines (30 days) and was driven by a concern that it was not unreasonable for a complaint or problem to arise after 30 days.

HPD Action Item(s): None at this time as this is already standard practice.

A.2. Policy should be put in place to allow an advisory board to see body camera footage.

We are specifically limited by state law in this area. The statute simply does not allow us a way to share this video with any kind of advisory board absent a court order. We can disclose (allow them to view) the video to a person who is on the video or their personal representative. We can only allow them to see the portion that they are in.

The recommendation suggested allowing an advisory board to act as the "personal representative" of a person so they could be granted access, but a "personal representative" is specifically defined in the statute language and could not be used in that manner.

HPD has sought court orders in the past to release video, and could do so in future situations, but these would have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis and may not always be successful, especially if there is also ongoing criminal prosecution.

HPD Action Item(s): None at this time. If an advisory board is created, then this can be revisited, but we believe this will only be possible with legislative changes.

2. Current use of force policy is vague. The advisory Board must suggest and/or create clearer policies about when use of force is justified.

We do not understand this recommendation and do not agree. We are always open to suggestions for policy improvements, but feel our current policy incorporates the best practices of our profession, reflects current case law, includes model policy recommendations and incorporates elements that we feel make our policy stronger than many of our peers. We review this policy annually and make adjustments as needed.

In addition, proper application of use of force goes far beyond just policy. Training and education are key components. Use of force situations are dynamic, unpredictable and constantly evolving. Officers have to be able to have guidelines that help them understand the boundaries they operate in and training to reinforce and help them apply those guidelines.

It is also noteworthy that there is work being done at the state-level to look at the possibility of creating a state-wide definition of use of force and state-wide policies that all agencies could use.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to regularly review policy and practices in this area and keep up with professional trends and promising practices.*
- *HPD will continue to educate the public on our policy and welcome public feedback.*
- *HPD will continue to focus on policy, training and education as tools to ensure the best possible outcomes.*

3. Procedures shall be developed where officers do not need to be in full tactical gear to respond to non-criminal, or non-emergency calls.

This recommendation seems to stem from a singular complaint that was made to the Task Force by a citizen who did not like the look of the current external body armor carrier our officers wear. Our officers do not respond to calls in “full tactical gear” and we do not support changing from our current uniform, which includes a load bearing external carrier.

We moved to the load bearing external carriers in 2019. We were sensitive to how our officers would be perceived and selected a product that blended more with our uniforms than some more tactical-looking products that were available. We then shared information about the carriers (and pictures) with the Town Board before moving forward.

The decision to move to this type of carrier was made for the health of our employees. Officers carry a significant amount of equipment, and it has been documented that having the weight of that equipment on their belt can lead to back issues. The external carriers allow us to get a large portion of that weight off of their belts.

We have also found that moving to this type of external carrier has been a huge morale boost. These carriers are more comfortable, and easier for officers to change in and out of. Transitioning away from them would not be well received by employees.

The idea that officers can change from one uniform to another depending on the type of call is simply not practical or realistic. Officers cannot be expected to get a call, stop, make a uniform change, and then go to the call. We require our officers to wear their body armor when responding to any call. Officers operate in an uncertain world, often with limited information, and there is no way to know when they may be walking into a potentially dangerous situation.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD continues to evaluate the equipment they ask officers to carry. HPD explores new and lighter products, as well as assessing whether any items could be eliminated or made optional.*
- *HPD will continue to explore other products that can benefit employee health, while at the same time providing a softer image.*

Hillsborough Police Procedures Recommendations

1. Police officers should be more involved in the community.

A. Establish policies where officers can attend events in street clothes (off-duty), or at least dressed down.

B. Meetings with various Hillsborough communities should be standard on a quarterly basis.

While we respect the sentiment of this recommendation and cannot argue that one can always “do more”, we feel that HPD has, and continues, to do an amazing job of engaging with our community. Community engagement has always been a priority for HPD. This was never part of any discussion we were involved in with the Task Force, and as a result we feel it is important that the amazing work our officers do in this area be acknowledged.

In 2021, in spite of COVID putting a significant damper on our activities, HPD officers spent over 450 documented hours engaging with the community in various ways including:

- *Delivering Meals on Wheels and food boxes to seniors several times each month.*
- *Straw for Dogs event in January.*
- *Classroom Visits, reading to classes, and Field trips throughout the year.*
- *Attending and participating in community meetings and discussions such as the Orange County Human Relations discussion: Unraveling the #DefundthePolice debate: A Community Conversation (March); My Brother and Sister’s Keeper Town Hall event (June); and the One Orange public hearing for the OC racial Equity Framework (September).*
- *Attended National Night Out events at Lory Apartments and on W. Queen St.*
- *Hosted a block party for residents at Gateway including food, bounce houses and partner organization resources information. (August)*
- *Attended Pollinator Garden workdays and hosted a paver painting event for kids at HPD’s pollinator garden. (June).*
- *Regularly attend Community Watch meetings such as Fairview and Cornwallis Hills.*
- *Attending business Grand Openings and open houses.*
- *Participated along with other public safety personnel in the OC Dept on Aging’s “Storytime Adventure” presentation at the Passmore Center. (May)*
- *Hosted a cupcake event for the seniors at Eno Haven.*
- *Hosted a cookout and music event at Passmore Center in July.*
- *Delivered flowers to various healthcare facilities to thank and recognize their staff. (July)*
- *Presentation at Orange County Rec Summer Camp (July)*
- *K-9 Demos*
- *Hosted a Doggie meet and greet in plaza in front of HQ (July)*
- *Brought HPD’s MADD vehicle to Cedar Grove family fun day.*
- *Child passenger safety seat event at the Fairview Child and Family Center on Lawndale Av. (Sept)*
- *Hosted a Trunk or Treat (Oct)*

- *Attended Orange Middle School Band fundraiser event*
- *Fairview community clean up workday (Nov)*
- *Meet and Greet at DSS (Dec)*
- *Eno Haven door decoration contest*
- *Winter Wonderland event in Fairview in December.*

In addition to the events, HPD is currently piloting a Community Response Team that is intended to focus on problem solving, bicycle patrol, community engagement and targeting specific issues such as traffic complaints.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to host, attend and participate in community events, including seeking out new and different ways to connect.*
- *HPD will continue to support officers attending events when they are off duty, in casual clothes.*
- *HPD will continue to develop their Community Response Team as a tool for more interaction and connection.*
- *HPD is working to build stronger connections with various neighborhoods and develop a system of regular contact.*

2. Hiring and Training

This recommendation and some of its sub-parts are connected to the Task Force's overall recommendation of an advisory board and our response to that has been provided.

A. Advisory Board should do exit interviews with officers leaving the department to be able to independently ascertain the factors that led them to leave.

The practicality and legality of this recommendation is likely best addressed by Human Resources.

B. Advisory Board should participate in the hiring process to review methods of interviewing and selecting candidates.

HPD has involved community members and elected officials in some hiring and promotional processes in the past and has no issue with doing so in the future. The main reason this has not been a sustained process is due to the sporadic nature of hiring opportunities and often time-limited nature of our hiring processes. We often have to do interviews very quickly when good candidates appear. Having to coordinate getting external participants involved can significantly slow down the process, potentially costing us a candidate.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to explore ways to incorporate external participants in processes when situations and circumstances permit.*

C. Those involved in recruitment should themselves be diverse. If administrative staff needs to be added to the recruitment team in order to achieve a diverse recruitment team then that should be done.

HPD does not have any kind of dedicated recruiting staff. Our recruiting process is managed by the Chief and Administrative Lieutenant and supported by all department personnel. We do not have the resources to participate in many formal recruiting campaigns. We make every effort to highlight diversity within our limited recruiting materials.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to highlight diversity in our recruiting materials and continue to seek diverse candidates.*

D. Increase salary for Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (BIPOC) potential candidates to incentivize strong BIPOC leadership in the department.

The practicality and legality of this recommendation is likely best addressed by Human Resources.

E. More hours of racial awareness training should be mandatory, with the content reviewed by the Advisory Board.

HPD continues to include training around issues of race, diversity and inclusion annually. HPD will also be part of town-wide initiatives that are being developed.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to support and participate in Town-wide efforts to provide racial awareness training.*
- *HPD will continue to provide training related to bias, racial awareness and fair and impartial policing to its staff.*

Additional Recommendations

1. Support expansion of diversion and deflection efforts underway in Orange County and fully partner with these initiatives.

HPD already fully supports and participates in all diversion programs that are available.

HPD Action Item(s):

- *HPD will continue to support and utilize all diversion programs available.*
- *HPD will include diversion efforts as part of their quarterly/annual reporting.*

2. Reallocate/increase funding into establishment of accessible recreational opportunities for youth and other members of the community that are located in or accessible to areas where there are statistically higher numbers of calls for law enforcement

This is outside the purview of HPD, but we would support it, though we recognize there are budgetary realities.

3. Reallocate/increase funding for community-based and community led violence prevention programs and other initiatives that increase neighborhood capacity to address harm and violence within their own communities.

We believe this is outside the purview of HPD but are unsure exactly what is being recommended. We would need more information to assess if this is something feasible or practical for Hillsborough and to what extent HPD would play a role.