



Draft Recommendations for the Hillsborough Police Department
Mayor's Task Force on Re-imagining Public Safety
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Mental Health Crisis Response Recommendations

1. *Collaborate with other local jurisdictions to pool funding resources and develop a coordinated, countywide mobile mental health crisis response service.* These jurisdictions are Orange County Sheriff's Office and Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Mebane police departments. This countywide effort should also look at restructuring the 911 call system by enhancing training for 911 operators so they can divert mental health crisis calls to non-police behavioral health first responders and/or by establishing an alternative emergency number for community members to call in case of a behavioral health crisis.
2. *Increase training.* Ensure that all officers are Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained, and assure that other first responders are also trained (EMS, Fire Department). The training for all officers is already a goal of the department. Explore whether additional training could be beneficial, depending on what data shows in terms of incidents in our community (e.g., the intersection of domestic violence and behavioral health, Mental Health First Aid). Allocate funding for additional training specific to these issues, if needed. Law enforcement officers are already required to complete a certain number of training hours per year, so new training content could be incorporated into this existing structure.
3. *Allocate funding to add a minimum of one to two social workers (or similarly trained staff) to the Town of Hillsborough.* The social work position would serve as a co-responder to crisis calls while also responding to calls without an officer present, when safe and appropriate. The position would also focus on preventative and follow-up work, reaching out to community members to assure they are connected to needed resources. It would also serve as a consulting role for the Police Department with regards to behavioral health issues and needs in our community (mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability). Lastly, the social work position would review and track crisis response data, disaggregated by demographics (with a focus on racial disparities), to critically analyze effectiveness of responses and to identify underlying causes of behavioral health crisis calls (e.g., social determinants of health). Housing these positions under a Town of Hillsborough department other than the Police Department may increase capacity to build trust and would allow for response to situations in the town that fall outside the realm of law enforcement yet within the realm of enhancing public safety.

Traffic Stop Recommendations (short version)

1. *Expand current traffic stop reporting data set to include all significant citizen interactions.* This includes public complaints, use of force incidents, marijuana arrests, community events, mental health crises, and vehicle pursuits (per Chapel Hill-Carrboro/Northern Orange Branches of the NAACP Memorandum of Understanding with law enforcement agencies).
2. *Make a commitment to not pull people over by using the traffic code as a pretext for suspect criminal behavior, and limit the investigation during a traffic stop to the reason for the stop (except for situations that pose a risk to public safety).*
3. *Cease low level, regulatory traffic stops, such as for equipment violation, expired tags, license plate light out, and broken taillight.*
4. *Implement use of a written consent card.*

5. *Reallocate funding to develop resources to assist people who meet certain income eligibility criteria with fixing minor vehicle maintenance issues and with registration/insurance renewal payments. We also recommend that Hillsborough begin contributing support to the Orange County Criminal Justice Debt Program and that this program be expanded to include assistance for costs related to vehicle maintenance and registration/insurance renewal.*
6. *Cease regulatory checkpoints.*

Traffic Stop Recommendations (detailed version)

1. *Expand current traffic stop reporting data set to include all significant citizen interactions. This includes public complaints, use of force incidents, marijuana arrests, community events, mental health crises and vehicle pursuits (per Chapel Hill-Carrboro/Northern Orange Branches of the NAACP Memorandum of Understanding with law enforcement agencies). North Carolina General Statute 143B-903 requires police agencies to keep statistics on traffic stops. Hillsborough began collecting this data in 2014 and submitting it to the [North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation \(ncsbi.gov\)](https://www.ncsbi.gov).*
2. *Make a commitment to not pull people over by using the traffic code as a pretext for suspect criminal behavior, and limit the investigation during a traffic stop to the reason for the stop. A problematic trend noted by expert analysts has been the use of the traffic code to conduct a criminal investigation. Traffic stops as a pretext for an investigation lead to disparate outcomes. The goal of this recommendation is to reduce the frequency of searches following traffic stops unless there is an imminent safety concern. If someone is pulled over for a broken headlight, for example, then the subsequent investigation and conversation should be limited strictly to the headlight issue, barring extenuating circumstances that pose imminent threat to public safety (e.g., the person is visibly intoxicated).*

Reasons underlying this recommendation (and some data)

- A. Since Hillsborough began collecting data in 2014, the department has made 9,948 traffic stops. Of the stops, 367 led to searches and 143 led to contraband hits derived from these searches, which led to 70 arrests. Racial disparities are found throughout traffic stop data:
 - African Americans are stopped at a higher rate than their overall population in all jurisdictions reviewed — Hillsborough 2019: 33% of traffic stops versus 21% of overall population.
 - Non-moving traffic violations — vehicle equipment and vehicle regulatory, 2019: 54% white, 37% black*.
 - Subsequent searches as a percent of total traffic stops — 2019: 8% black, 3% white.
 - Demographic breakdown of total traffic stop searches — 2019: 39% white, 60% black*.
 - Arrests derived from traffic stops — 2019: 43% white, 51% black, 5% Hispanic*.
- B. *Hillsborough demographics: 64% white, 21% black, 11% Hispanic.

- C. Vehicle equipment violation is the most common reason for a traffic stop (2019: 31%), followed by vehicle regulatory violation (25%).
3. *Cease low level, regulatory traffic stops such as for equipment violation, expired tags, license plate light out, and broken taillight.* When these issues arise in the context of another reason for a stop, provide the person with information on how to obtain cost assistance (see Recommendation 5). This allows for more time to focus on more pressing community safety concerns, such as speeding, DWIs, and running red lights and stop signs. This has already been implemented in other jurisdictions, including Fayetteville and Chapel Hill.
 4. *Implement use of a written consent card to support and educate people in understanding their rights.* The Hillsborough Police Department reports very few consent searches; however, data shows that as consent searches decrease, probable cause searches increase, resulting in no real difference in tickets and arrests made following a traffic stop.
 5. *Reallocate funding to develop resources to assist people who meet certain income eligibility criteria with fixing minor vehicle maintenance issues and with registration/insurance renewal payments. In addition, Hillsborough should begin contributing support the Orange County Criminal Justice Debt Program and should support expansion of the program to include assistance for costs related to vehicle maintenance and registration/insurance renewal.* The Hillsborough Police Department reports that it makes routine efforts to provide education and give warnings rather than ticket people. Chief Hampton noted that the vast majority of vehicle stops for equipment violations do not lead to a charge and that officers regularly help people fix their vehicles. This recommendation is made to further this spirit of aid. The Town of Hillsborough currently does not contribute money to the Criminal Justice Debt Program, which is operated by the county and available to all residents of Orange County. Carrboro and Chapel Hill contribute.
 6. *Cease regulatory checkpoints.* Although Hillsborough reports only doing a very small number (two to three in 2019, two in 2020) and often to help other agencies such as the North Carolina State Highway Patrol, we recommend that these checkpoints cease altogether. This does not include DWI checking stations, which serve an important public safety purpose.

Citation:

“Traffic Stops in Hillsborough, NC, 2019”: Published by Hillsborough Police Department for the Mayor’s Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety, March 2021

Use of Force Recommendations

1. *The recommended standing advisory board should hear community complaints and be able to promptly respond to community members.*
 - A. The Police Department should be given incentives to cooperate with the recommended standing advisory board by providing case information (including police reports), the ability to interview officers at the scene in question, and body camera footage.

1. A policy should be issued that if a complaint is filed on any incident, the body camera footage should be kept as long as the incident is under review (either internally or by the advisory board). The current Hillsborough policy is to store body camera footage for ninety days for incidents that do not end in arrest.
2. A policy should be issued in which the presumption is that disclosure of recordings will be granted to a person making a complaint to the advisory board if the person's image or voice is in the recording. The person further would be allowed to show the recording to the advisory board without making a copy of the recording, and the advisory board could advise the person making the complaint on the proper procedure to request the recording. Per North Carolina General Statute § 132-1.4A(c), the head of the custodial law enforcement agency can disclose a recording to any person whose image or voice is in the recording. The statute also prohibits making a copy of the recording.
 - a. Alternatively, the advisory board shall be granted limited authority to act as the personal representative of the person in the recording in regard to obtaining any recordings in the custody of law enforcement related to the incident under review (North Carolina General Statute § 132-1.4A(c)(2)). The board would be able to apply to the head of the custodial law enforcement agency for the recording.
 - b. There is an effort in the state legislature to make all police recordings public record.
2. *The recommended standing advisory board must suggest and/or create clearer policies about when use of force is justified.* The current use of force policy is vague.
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.* Show of force is an issue related to use of force. The task force received a community comment about a call for a non-urgent manner for which that person had police arrive at his house in full tactical gear, which was quite intimidating. Officers should dress for the type of call to which they are responding.

Hillsborough Police Department Procedures Recommendations

1. *Police officers should be more involved in the community.*
 - A. Establish policies where officers can attend community events in street clothes (off duty) or at least dressed down.
 1. Officers should have a stand at Last Fridays events. Something like a popcorn machine would be cheap and would draw people in, allowing officers to talk to community members.
 2. Officers used to go to the Community Garden in Fairview; this practice should be revived.
 3. Fairview Live is another opportunity for officers to attend community-specific events and do outreach to improve relations and potentially recruit.

- B. Meetings with various Hillsborough communities should be standard on a quarterly basis. Outreach for these meetings should be a focus for officers. Chief Hampton reported that the annual Community Summit isn't well attended. Having meetings with specific neighborhoods might increase participation. Other ideas to increase participation in the meetings:
 - 1. To build relationships and trust with communities, it is crucial to have police presence at community events/meetings first. Connecting with community leaders to act as bridge builders could help develop these relationships.
 - 2. Officers could post about community forums or events in the meeting place, park or office that each community has so that more people know about what is happening.
 - 3. Police officers should do more outreach to people who are connected to the communities they are trying to reach. Word of mouth is one of the best outreach methods, as well as connecting with leaders in the community.

2. *Hiring and training recommendations*

- A. The recommended standing advisory board should do exit interviews for officers leaving the Police Department to be able to independently ascertain the factors that led officers to leave. Any observations or recommendations should be reported back to the department.
- B. The advisory board should participate in the hiring process to review methods of interviewing and selecting candidates. Are interviews currently panel interviews? Are scenarios provided to interviewees to help determine how they would react in certain situations? The advisory board could play a role in strengthening the interview process.
- C. Those involved in recruitment should be diverse. If administrative staff need to be added to the recruitment team to achieve a diverse recruitment team, then do that. Potential candidates need to see that people like them are present in the department.
- D. The salary offer for a Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (BIPOC) potential candidate should be increased to further incentivize strong BIPOC leadership in the department. We say this knowing that Hillsborough's current rate of compensation is equal to or above compensation in other local jurisdictions. A further increase would demonstrate commitment to hiring diverse staff in leadership roles and put emphasis on the importance of that goal.
- E. More hours of racial awareness training should be made mandatory for Hillsborough officers, with training content reviewed and approved by the advisory board.

Additional recommendations

- 1. *Support expansion of diversion and deflection efforts underway in Orange County and fully partner with these initiatives.*
- 2. *Reallocate or increase funding into establishment of accessible recreational opportunities for youth and other members of the community who are located in or accessible to areas with statistically higher numbers of calls for law enforcement.*

- 3. Reallocate or increase funding for community-based and community-led violence prevention programs and other initiatives that increase neighborhood capacity to address harm and violence within the neighborhoods' own communities.*