



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS PUBLIC SAFETY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 18, 2020, Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry announced the “Moving Forward Together” Action Plan to address public safety and racial justice and created the Mayor’s Commission on Police Reform and Racial Justice. This Commission is comprised of members representing a cross-section of the community—private and public sectors, non-profit and faith groups, and grassroots organizations. The Commission has been led by Councilwoman Michelle Chambers and Fort Wayne United Chairperson/Fort Wayne Boys and Girls Club President/CEO Joe Jordan. The findings are presented herein for Mayor Henry and Fort Wayne Common Council.

The Commission has grouped its findings into three primary areas of recommendations: Race Relations, Communication, and Departmental Transparency. There is significant overlap in these areas. The Commission has focused on issues for which it could make direct, substantive recommendations to Mayor Henry and the Fort Wayne Common Council for further review and action.

The Commission acknowledges that events following the tragic death of George Floyd have caused pain for some members of the Fort Wayne community. The Commission regrets this pain is felt and hopes these recommendations can help to bring about accountability, transparency, and healing. At the same time, the Commission recognizes that collaboration is key to a strong community, and that all members of the community must commit to collaboration for the City to succeed. Believing that the foundation of collaboration is mutual trust, the Commission’s recommendations reflect a desire for Fort Wayne to be strong in building, maintaining, and repairing trust.

The Commission created vision and mission statements to center its work on Fort Wayne amidst the backdrop of a national reckoning:

VISION STATEMENT:

The Commission on Police Reform and Racial Justice’s purpose is to help create positive and meaningful change that brings forth racial equity and peace to all Fort Wayne residents, especially those who are Black, people of color, or marginalized, to ensure everyone is respected, appreciated, and valued.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Commission on Police Reform and Racial Justice, through community dialogue and engagement, will provide recommendations and feedback to the Administration and Fort Wayne Common Council on policies, practices and procedures related to the City of Fort Wayne’s public safety division.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF RACE RELATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Conduct reconciliation / acknowledgement conversations, using a facilitator to promote productive dialogue, when pending civil and criminal litigation is completed.

Foster and maintain a culture of racial understanding, requiring certain trainings like diversity and implicit bias for all officers and staff.

Improve recruitment policies and procedures and compensation package, establishing a community task force to assist with diversity recruitment.

Involve community leaders in outreach opportunities to raise community awareness. Having community forums and conversations, with these leaders as facilitators, can help build, maintain, and repair trust.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF COMMUNICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a communication strategic plan to increase resources to better serve the community, including a public relations assessment of what the communication needs are and what the community is requesting.

Increase civilian staff and support a budget to increase community engagement, including through the use of social media and new technology to facilitate outreach.

Form more community partnerships to amplify communications about FWPD activities.

Upon recommendation from the Commission, FWPD has placed information about the Commission's findings related to the **#8Can'tWait** initiative on its website (www.fwpd.org) for immediate reference by citizens.

The Commission believes that greater focus on these three areas will begin the transition to strengthening trust between the community and the FWPD. This will require everyone to be committed to working to foster meaningful collaboration for a stronger community.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTAL TRANSPARENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

Support the expansion of the Board of Public Safety to 5 civilian members, the majority who should not have a background in public safety, and provide them appropriate trainings.

Ensure that information from the Board of Public Safety is accessible and searchable to the general public and create an annual report summarizing Board decisions.

Increase public understanding of Internal Affairs through a further review of the disciplinary process and an awareness campaign of rules and regulations and the whistleblower policy.

Work with community partners to better identify social service providers and gaps in service. Have officers utilize 211 or on-staff social workers to properly and effectively direct resources.

Enhance transparency of recruitment process, including exploring ways to increase the number of successful, diverse candidates and reasons why candidates may not make it through the process.

Support a culture that allows officers time to appropriately process traumatic events to ensure good mental health. This may include the hiring of additional officers to allow appropriate respite time.

Body-worn cameras are integral to trust with the citizens. Work to outfit every officer with a working and operational camera. Also, provide regular, public reports on implementation timeline and advocate for legislative changes to address the challenges of using body-worn cameras.

