

Final Task Force Report

December 16, 2025

Executive Summary

This report documents the six-month process undertaken from June through November 2025 to reimagine Anchorage's Public Safety Advisory Commission. The Task Force, convened by the Anchorage Assembly and supported by Denali Daniels + Associates (DDA), engaged in a highly participatory and iterative process designed to inform the development of recommendations for a new Anchorage Public Safety Commission.

Over the course of this process, the Task Force:

- Heard from municipal agencies, community advocates, those with lived experiences, and the public;
- Revised its decision-making process to increase transparency and participation following community feedback, to include more members of the public who actively participated;
- Held structured deliberations using public feedback, panel insights, and amendment proposals; and
- Adopted formal recommendations on November 20, 2025 with 15 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention. While this vote reflects alignment among those eligible and present at the final deliberation, it represents one point in a longer six-month process in which participation varied and perspectives evolved.

A total of 70 individuals participated in one or more meetings, including Task Force members, municipal partners, community organizations, and members of the public. Two online feedback forms received 95 responses combined. Insights were also gathered from two informational panels, a community workshop, one-on-one interviews, and direct public comment.

This report provides:

1. A narrative summary of what happened;
2. How input was incorporated;
3. The final approval and amendment process; and
4. The recommendations adopted by the Task Force.

These recommendations, along with this report, have been submitted to the Anchorage Assembly and Mayor for consideration in determining next steps for establishing a new public safety commission.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Process Overview	5
Community Engagement Overview	6
Facilitation Approach and Principles.....	7
Summary of Meetings.....	8
Final Recommendations.....	14
Next Steps	18

Appendices

- Appendix A: Overview Document
- Appendix B: AR 2025-111, As Amended
- Appendix C: Draft Recommendations presented on November 20, 2025
- Appendix D: Amendments from November 20, 2025
- Appendix E: Overview of Responses from July Feedback Form
- Appendix F: Overview of Responses from October Feedback Form

Acknowledgements

DDA extends sincere thanks and congratulations to the Task Force members, community participants, and Assembly liaisons for the time, energy, and insight you contributed to this process over the past several months. Your dedication, thoughtful engagement, and commitment to strengthening public safety in Anchorage were evident throughout, and your efforts culminated in a set of recommendations that truly reflect broad input. Congratulations on the progress you made on this important work.

Task Force Members

- Felix Rivera, Task Force Co-Convenor, Anchorage Assembly
- Rich Curtner, Task Force Co-Convenor, Alaska Coalition for Justice
- Anna Brawley, Assembly Liaison, Anchorage Assembly
- Kameron Perez-Verdia, Assembly Liaison, Anchorage Assembly
- Thea Agnew Bemben, Special Assistant, Mayor's Office
- Mercedes Arciniega, Alaska Public Interest Research Group
- Katie Baldwin-Johnson, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Enei Begaye, Native Movement
- Randi Breager, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis
- Sean Case, Police Chief, Anchorage Police Department
- Cheryl Cox Williams, NAACP Anchorage
- Darrell Evans, Anchorage Police Department Employees
- Carl Jacobs, Anchorage School District Board President
- Julia Luey, VOA Alaska
- Kim Rash, Director, Anchorage Health Department
- Tafilisaunoa Toleafoa, Pacific Community of Alaska



Thank you to all who participated throughout this process. Below is a list of names who participated in at least one meeting.

Thea Agnew Bemben*	Mike Garvey	Catherine Nicholas
Mercedes Arciniega*	Melissa Gould	T.N. Obermeyer
Katie Baldwin-Johnson*	Celeste Growder	Janna Osterhaus
Tina Barr	Darrell Hess	Casey Peavy
Enei Begaye*	Matthew Hurt	Kameron Perez-Verdia*
Arianna Bellizzi	Marie Husa	Daniel Rampke
Jennifer Booz	Erin Jackson-Hill	Kimberly Rash*
Anna Brawley*	Carl Jacobs*	Felix Rivera*
Randi Breager*	Catherine Jones	Bill Roth
Amanda Bremner	Jim Kehmann	Douglas Schrage
Matt Carlson	Lisa Keller	Sydney Scout
Sean Case*	Maria Kimmel	Christina Shadura
Charlie	Emily Kloc	Yarrow Silvers
Jeff Chen	Mel Langdon	Jasmin Smith
Cheryl Cox Williams*	Dennis Lasley	Daniel Solomon
Rich Curtner*	William Leroy	Kyle Stevens
Denise Elseneast	Jason Lessard	Christy Terry
Darrell Evans*	Ptery Lieght	John Thurber
Bruce Farnsworth	Jamie Lopez	Tafilisaunoa Toleafoa*
Brian Flynn	Julia Luey*	Trusted Connections
Andrew Ford	Heather MacAlpine	Dev Williams
Drew Ford	Megan McBride	Leroy Williams
Jamie Franzen	Suki Miller	
Cynthia Gachupin	Dawn Morse	

**Task Force member*

Process Overview

Purpose of the Task Force

The Task Force was established to evaluate the former Public Safety Advisory Commission, which was discontinued in spring 2024, and provide guidance on designing a new commission that strengthens public safety, improves accountability, and builds trust between the community and public safety systems. *Appendix A: Overview Document* provides more background and context for this work, and prior iterations of this municipal commission.

Process Phases

The Task Force process unfolded in two phases. The process was intentionally iterative, meaning that each engagement activity informed the next, building toward consensus-based recommendations grounded in public input, practitioner knowledge, and community values.

Phase 1: Discovery – Understanding the landscape and hearing from the community

- Initial meeting, public comment, and subsequent process redesign to increase transparency and participation
- One-on-one listening sessions with Task Force members
- Community workshop
- Informational panels
- Online feedback forms
- Publication of an Overview Document to ground shared understanding

Phase 2: Task Force Business – Drafting, deliberation and formal adoption

- Compilation of key insights and development of draft recommendations
- Public distribution of draft recommendations for review and amendments
- Two structured deliberation meetings to review feedback, propose amendments, and vote on changes
- Review, vote, and adoption of the final recommendation report

The Task Force was convened by Assembly Member Felix Rivera, with Rich Curtner serving as co-convenor, and included seats designated in the establishing resolution for the Mayor or designee, the Anchorage Police Department, the Anchorage Police Department Employees Association, the Anchorage School District, municipal agencies, and community groups. *Appendix B: AR No. 2025-111, As Amended* outlines the purpose of the Task Force further.

Community Engagement Overview

Below is the compiled summary of community engagement activities over the six-month process.

Engagement Activity	Participation	Format
Focus on Public Safety Webpage goes live in June 2025		
June 26 Task Force Meeting	19 in-person, 7 virtual	Hybrid
August 5 Community Workshop	21 participants	In-Person
Community Feedback Form #1**	87 responses	Online form
Overview Document published – September 15*		
Panel Discussion 1 – September 25	32 participants	Virtual
Panel Discussion 2 – October 16	29 participants	Virtual
Community Feedback Form #2***	8 responses	Online form
Deliberation Session 1 – November 13	25 participants	In-Person
Deliberation Session 2 – November 20	28 participants	In-Person

*Appendix A: Overview Document

**Appendix E: Overview of Responses from July Feedback Form

***Appendix F: Overview of Responses from October Feedback Form

Published Press Releases

- June 23 - [Members launch Task Force to reimagine Public Safety Advisory Commission](#)
- July 9 - [Task force July update](#)
- July 24 - [Task Force to host community workshop](#)
- September 5 - [Task Force to begin next phase](#)
- November 18 - [Task Force final deliberation session this Thursday](#)

Facilitation Approach and Principles

This process was co-designed by the Assembly Liaisons, Co-Convenors, and DDA. DDA served as an external facilitator and supported the group by guiding dialogue, synthesizing input, drafting materials, and documenting outcomes.

Shared Design Principles

The strategy team grounded the process in four facilitation principles:

1. Centering Community and Lived Experience

Public comment, a community workshop, feedback forms, and panel discussions ensured perspectives beyond municipal leadership shaped understanding of issues and options. This design choice strengthened legitimacy in the process, while at times slowing the pace of decision-making as space was created for broader participation.

2. Adaptive and Iterative Design

After concerns surfaced at the first meeting about transparency and representation, the process was paused and restructured to expand public access, clarify expectations, and make the decision process more inclusive. This responsiveness reflects a facilitation approach in which process evolves based on participant feedback.

3. Public-Informed Decision-Making

Draft recommendations were formed through synthesis of Task Force dialogue, community input, panel insights, and written feedback from individuals and organizations who put forwards ideas for consideration. Decision-making emphasized consensus first, and when voting was required, participants (Task Force members and community member attendees) were eligible if they had attended at least one Phase 2 meeting, which was a decision of the strategy team to help ensure informed participation.

4. Structured Deliberation and Consensus-Building

While the process allowed for open participation, the final phase incorporated clear pathways for closure, including draft circulation, an amendment process, voting protocols, and documentation of outcomes. Inclusion and structure operated in balance: the process invited broad participation and shared responsibility, while also providing mechanisms to conclude debate and formalize recommendations.

Throughout the process, the Task Force was intentionally structured to consider different options and perspectives, and to provide recommendations that can inform future work to propose a new version of this commission. Expectations were set throughout the process that the work of this group is important, but also only one part of the overall deliberation that will occur before a new body is created, and in what form.

Summary of Meetings

First Task Force Meeting – June 26, 2025

The Task Force Meeting to Reimagine the Former Public Safety Advisory Commission (Task Force) held its first meeting at the Loussac Library on June 26, 2025, bringing together Task Force members to introduce themselves and begin defining a shared vision for public safety in Anchorage. During public comment, community members raised concerns about transparency, representation, and meeting accessibility. Public comment surfaced the need for more intentional community engagement moving forward.

As a result of this input, the Task Force strategic planning team, which includes Assembly Members Felix Rivera, Kameron Perez-Verdia, and Anna Brawley, co-convenor Rich Curtner, and the facilitation team, decided to pause Task Force meetings in July to reevaluate the structure of the Task Force and consider opportunities for public participation. This pause allowed time to reassess the format and membership of the Task Force and to develop a more transparent and inclusive process.

Task Force 1:1 Facilitator Interviews

Preceding the first Task Force meeting on June 26, facilitators held one on one meetings with all task force members to ask their background with the previous commission and their initial input on this process.

- Overall interest in a Public Safety Advisory Commission (PSAC) – Nearly all members expressed interest in creating a public safety-focused body.
- Background of the previous PSAC – Overall, Task Force members did not have much background of the previous commission, and those that did were critical that it wasn't meaningful or effective, and that it lacked authority. See *Appendix A: Overview Document*.
- Defined scope – There's an interest in defining the scope of public safety, this task force, and the commission. Homelessness, health and schools are part of this but not necessarily the lead.
- Voices of lived experience – The importance of hearing from individuals directly impacted by public safety systems and ensuring they are represented in a future commission.

Community Feedback Form #1

The Assembly Liaisons and Co-Convenors led the analysis of what was heard via the online feedback form opened on July 9, 2025, and closed on September 2, 2025. The purpose of the feedback form was to provide an avenue for public input to help frame the scope of "public safety." The form received 87 responses which have informed the design of this process. Themes included:

- Safe Public Spaces – Safety and cleanliness of parks, trails, downtown, and family areas; many noted not feeling safe using these spaces due to crime, loitering, or unsafe driving.
- Crime and Law Enforcement – Concerns about theft, violence, gun use, and repeat offenses, alongside debates over police accountability, transparency, and the balance between enforcement and community trust.
- Homelessness and Encampments – Strong concern about visibility of camps, sanitation, and safety impacts on trails, parks, and neighborhoods.
- Root Causes and Prevention – Recognition that long-term safety requires addressing poverty, inequality, affordable housing, education, and community supports, rather than only reacting to crime.
- Substance Use and Mental Health – Calls for expanded treatment, detox facilities, and mental health services; emphasis on diversion programs and addressing root causes rather than punishment.

See Appendix E: Overview of Responses from July Feedback Form.

Community Workshop – August 5, 2025

The Task Force hosted an evening Community Workshop that brought together 31 participants at Spenard Recreation Center for open, honest, and constructive conversations about perceptions of the public safety system and community safety needs in Anchorage. The insights shared during the workshop will help shape the focus of future Task Force meetings and contribute to ongoing discussions about the potential structure and role of a new public safety commission.

In attendance were 21 members of the public and 10 Task Force members. The format provided an open opportunity to answer the question, “What does the community need to ensure safety and wellbeing in Anchorage?” to help inform the overall public safety needs as a first step. Themes include:

- The authority of the commission could help in bridging between system and community needs.
- Public safety assures safe neighborhoods and connected community members.
- Accountability in public safety systems is important, especially in community–police interactions.
- There is an interest in rebuilding and maintaining trust.
- Public safety is a broad topic and involves community health and other factors that help people feel safe. The conversation began to focus more specifically on safety as it relates to law enforcement, and how the community interacts with police.

Overview Document – September 15, 2025

The goal of the *Overview Document (Appendix A)* was to provide a landscape of where we are today, how we got here, and what decisions the Task Force is being asked to make. This document did not make recommendations, and the purpose was to inform the Task Force and the public.

Panel 1: Existing Public Safety Agencies in Anchorage – September 25, 2025

This session held online via Microsoft Teams examined Anchorage's current public safety landscape, explored where gaps exist and how a future PSAC might complement existing efforts. Panelists included Sean Case, Chief of Police; Douglas Schrage, Fire Chief; Kimberly Rash, Health Department Director; and Thea Agnew Bemben, Special Assistant, Mayor's Office (Crisis Response). There were 31 attendees online for this panel.

Panel 2: Models + Functions – October 16, 2025

This panel held online via Microsoft Teams focused on how commissions function in Anchorage and elsewhere, emphasizing authority, sustainability, and membership. The session featured Tina Barr of the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement; Darrel Hess, Anchorage Municipal Ombudsman; and Jennifer Booz, Executive Director of the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission. There were 29 attendees online for this panel.

Community Feedback Form #2

The facilitation team launched an online feedback form on October 22 to gather additional public input. Responses, as well as any proposals uploaded as attachments, were accepted through November 10. Input will help shape the Task Force's deliberations in November. The form invited comments on:

- The proposed role and responsibilities
- Membership and representation
- The appropriate level of authority

See Appendix F: Overview of Responses from October Feedback Form.

Deliberation Session 1

November 13, 2025

Participants: 25

On November 13, DDA convened a deliberation session in person at Loussac Library with Task Force members and community participants to review feedback received through the second public feedback form. This form, launched on October 21 and open through November 10, generated 8 responses, including one comprehensive proposal for consideration submitted by the Alaska Coalition for Justice (ACJ).

During the session, participants reflected on the structure, purpose, and challenges of forming a Public Safety Commission, highlighting themes around representation, scope of authority, sustainable funding, and approaches to building community trust. This meeting served as a bridge between the earlier public engagement activities and the draft recommendations.

Deliberation Session 2

November 20, 2025

Participants: 29

- Felix Rivera, Co-Convenor, Anchorage Assembly*
 - Rich Curtner, Co-Convenor, Alaska Black Caucus*
 - Kameron Perez-Verdia, Assembly Liaison, Anchorage Assembly*
 - Thea Agnew Bemben, Mayor's Office*
 - Mercedes Arciniega, ACJ/Alaska Public Interest Research Group*
 - Randi Breager, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC)*
 - Amanda Bremner, Native Movement
 - Sean Case, Anchorage Police Department*
 - Jeff Chen
 - Cheryl Cox Williams, NAACP Anchorage*
 - Bruce Farnsworth, ACJ
 - Drew Ford, MOA Ombudsman
 - Jamie Franzen
 - Darrell Hess, MOA Ombudsman
 - Emily Kloc, Native Movement/ACJ
 - Mel Langdon
 - Dennis Lasley, APDEA**
 - Ptery Lieght, Trusted Connections
 - Jamie Lopez
 - Heather MacAlpine, MOA Ombudsman
 - Suki Miller, Victims for Justice
 - Dawn Morse, Greener Fields
 - Janna Osterhaus, Trusted Connections
 - Casey Peavy, Native Movement
 - Bill Roth, Anchorage Daily News
 - Yarrow Silvers, Anchorage Assembly
 - Daniel Solomon, Trusted Connections
 - Kyle Stevens, Coalition of Community Patrols
 - Tafilisaunoa Toleafoa, Pacific Communities of Alaska
- *Task Force Member*
***Task Force Proxy*

At the November 20 meeting, DDA compiled all advance and live amendments into a single amendment packet. This packet included:

- The full Draft Recommendations Report
- All received amendments for Task Force and community review

Amendment Review

During the meeting:

- 10 amendments were formally proposed
- 6 amendments passed through the voting process

See *Appendix D. Amendments from November 20, 2025.*

Final Vote on the Recommendations

At the conclusion of the meeting, Task Force members voted to approve the full Recommendations Report as amended:

- Yes: 15
- No: 0
- Abstain: 1

Final Meeting Outcome

The November 20 deliberation reflected the culmination of months of learning, dialogue, and public participation. Discussion acknowledged several strategic tensions that surfaced throughout the process including:

- the balance between advisory and oversight authority,
- the importance of lived experience representation (such as crime victims, department customers, experienced homelessness, etc.), and
- the need for a commission that is both independent and collaborative.

Task Force members expressed alignment around the need for a body that can bridge community voice and municipal decision-making, promote transparency, and conduct system-level review without duplicating functions of existing agencies.

Amendment discussion further refined membership expectations, clarified the role of ex officio participants, strengthened attention to lived experience, and emphasized a trauma-informed, culturally responsive foundation for commission operations.

After consideration of amendments, the Task Force and participating community members reached near-consensus and formally approved the recommendations. Members noted the importance of continued public engagement as the Assembly moves from recommendations to formal ordinance development.

Voting eligibility for the November 20 meeting followed the established rule that participants (Task Force members and community participants) who had attended at least one Phase 2 meeting were eligible to vote. The vote therefore reflects the views of those informed participants present on November 20 and should not be interpreted as representing unanimous consensus across all individuals who participated at various points in the six-month process.

Final Recommendations

The recommendations below represent the final, approved, and amended version of what was originally proposed (see *Appendix C: Draft Recommendations Presented on November 20*). Prior to the November 20 Task Force meeting, DDA distributed the Draft Recommendations Report to Task Force members, and the Anchorage Assembly Legislative Services issued a public press release that included the draft recommendations document, instructions for public review and guidance on submitting amendments, and an overview of the planned voting and amendment process. In response, DDA received one submission containing eight amendments in advance of the meeting, and per the press release and meeting instructions, additional amendments could be submitted live during the session. Ten additional amendments were introduced during the meeting. The full record of all amendments and the approval process is documented in *Appendix D: Amendments from November 20*, which together show how the Task Force arrived at the final recommendations that follow.

TASK FORCE TO REIMAGINE THE PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

ADOPTED 11.20.2025

Anchorage Public Safety Commission

MISSION and DUTIES

Mission

The Anchorage Public Safety Commission (Commission) shall serve as a structured and independent community body that helps strengthen public safety, transparency, and trust. Its work includes advisory roles, system-level review, evaluation, and oversight functions.

Duties

- Review public safety policies, data, engagement strategies, and systemic issues.
- Convene community input, including public concerns related to law enforcement response, crisis response, and broader safety conditions.
- Provide recommendations to the Mayor and Assembly.
- Conduct system-level reviews of completed cases.
- Identify trends and evaluate system-level issues.
- Prepare an annual public report summarizing findings and recommendations.

Note: The Commission is encouraged to include in their bylaws a scope that addresses the following issues: voices and safety of houseless constituents, those experiencing crises of domestic and public violence, family violence, responses to mental health crises.

COMMISSION AUTHORITY

Note: At the Deliberation Session on November 20, 2025, participants were presented with three options for Commission Authority. The Task Force voted in support of Option C, and the language used at that time described Option C as cumulative, incorporating the elements of both advisory authority (Option A) and system-level review (Option B).

Recommended Commission authority includes:

- Reviews public safety policies, data, engagement, and systemic issues.
- Convenes community input on public safety concerns.
- Makes recommendations to the Mayor and Assembly.
- Produces an annual report.
- Conducts system-level reviews of completed cases to identify trends and lessons.
- No involvement in personnel matters.
- Receives complaints from the public.
- Monitors the status of active cases without interfering.
- Reviews completed investigations for thoroughness and consistency.
- May have investigatory and/or subpoena authority with safeguards.
- May conduct follow-up inquiries after cases are closed.
- Has enhanced access to information for oversight purposes.
- Identifies systemic patterns requiring policy or practice changes.

Note: The final recommendation is for a higher level of authority than what has existed in the past. This higher level of authority was intended to include advisory, system-level review, and oversight functions together, rather than replacing one with another.

MEMBERSHIP, STRUCTURE and STAFFING

Note: Municipal Code establishes baseline eligibility criteria for commission members. The items listed below are additional expectations the Task Force recommends beyond what is set in code. These recommendations do not supersede Municipal Code.

Membership

- Between 9 and 13 members.
- Representation includes individuals with lived experience (such as crime victims, department customers, experienced homelessness, etc.), youth perspectives, BIPOC, behavioral/mental health expertise, and diverse communities, groups and cultures
- Appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Assembly, like most boards and commissions.
- Terms are 3 years and staggered, consistent with most boards and commissions.

- Additional non-voting Ex officio members may be appointed to the Commission in an advisory capacity, by either term limits or for time limited offering of guidance an expertise on focused projects, e.g. Mayor's Office, Department of Law, etc.

Structure and Independence

- Operates independently within municipal code.
- Works collaboratively with APD (Anchorage Police Department), AFD (Anchorage Fire Department), and AHD (Anchorage Health Department).
- Members receive training in confidentiality, trauma-informed practice, culturally responsive engagement, understanding city ordinances, constitutional rights, and the criminal justice system.

Staffing and Volunteers

- The Commission receives dedicated staff for operations and public engagement.
- The Assembly allocates sufficient resources for Commission work.
- Critical to the efficacy of this commission is representation by people with lived experience, including those from marginalized neighborhoods and those who are not independently wealthy, and recognizing that volunteerism is not sustainable, members should be compensated for their expertise and contributions at least at the federal value of a volunteer hour in Alaska (\$37.13/hour in 2024). **Members may choose to donate their stipend to a community safety fund that supports grassroots safety efforts in Anchorage.**¹

BYLAWS, EVALUATION, and REPORTING

Evaluation and Reporting

- The Commission evaluates trends, patterns, and systemic issues.
- Produces an annual public report summarizing findings and recommendations.

Effective Date and Bylaw Development

- The Commission is created through and becomes effective upon adoption of an ordinance by the Anchorage Assembly.
- Within 12 months of formation, the Commission creates and adopts its own bylaws to include but not limited to complaint intake and forwarding, monitoring active

¹ *Municipal code generally states that board and commission members serve without compensation. Implementing stipends would require a policy change; this idea is raised frequently in community processes, and while widely supported, can be complex to implement in the current volunteer-based municipal structure.*



investigations without interference, review of completed investigations, confidentiality requirements, trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices and cause for removal process. Bylaws are submitted to the Mayor and Assembly.

Next Steps

The Task Force has completed its charge, but the work of building a meaningful public safety commission now shifts to the Anchorage Assembly and the community. Immediate next steps include:

- Presentation of this report and recommendations to the Assembly and Mayor
- Develop and introduce a legislative proposal to establish the commission structure and authorities, as an ordinance
- Hold public hearings and work session(s) to refine ordinance language

If adopted, implementation will include:

- Appointment of members
- Commission onboarding and training
- Resource allocation
- Bylaw development and annual work planning

Conclusion

Over the six months of this process, participants tackled difficult questions about accountability, authority, trust, and the role of community in public safety systems. As the Assembly considers whether and how to move forward with ordinance development, it will be important to view the November 20 vote as one milestone within a much larger learning arc. Over six months, the Task Force heard directly from the public through two feedback forms, a community workshop, testimony, and written feedback. The cumulative body of learning captured in this report provides essential context for the final recommendations and should remain part of the Assembly's deliberation moving forward.