

## OVERVIEW DOCUMENT

### Task Force to Reimagine the Public Safety Advisory Commission

*Information in this document was compiled by the Legislative Services Office on behalf of Assembly Member Felix Rivera, Assembly Vice Chair Anna Brawley and Assembly Member Kameron Perez-Verdia.*

The goal of this overview document is 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 does not make recommendations but will inform the Task Force and the public.

## BACKGROUND

### Timeline of the former Public Safety Advisory Commission.

- **1995** Public Safety Advisory Commission (PSAC) is established through Assembly approval of AO 95-65(S). The commission was intended to act in an advisory role on matters pertaining to public safety issues and create a comprehensive public safety plan for the Municipality to be updated regularly. Emphasis was on community membership with nine members appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the assembly. Other powers and duties included producing interim or special reports on specific concerns the commission believed would affect the Municipality; and to make recommendations to the Mayor and Assembly regarding policies, practices and legislation which affect the safety of the community's residents.
- Over the past **30 years** the PSAC had varying levels of staff support, engagement among commissioners, and success in meeting its objectives. The powers, duties and responsibilities of the commission have changed over time through approval of amending ordinances.
- **2020** The Muni's Internal Audit team completed [2020-S1](#) and recommended a temporary reauthorization of the commission. As a result of this audit, Assembly members appointed three Alaska Native women to the commission in hopes it could focus on the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Two Spirit within the Municipality and extended the duration of the commission to October of 2023.
- **2023** Internal Audit suggested a review of the viability of the commission via Sunset Audit Report [2023-S1](#), once again suggesting a work session and review of the purpose of this commission.
- **2024** Assembly agreed to terminate the commission.
- **2025** Task Force established ([Resolution No. 2025-111, As Amended](#)) to explore the viability of bringing back the PSAC in some form.

### **Officer-Involved Shootings (OIS) in Anchorage**

Separate from conversations about the Public Safety Advisory Commission, there were a series of fatal shootings in 2024-2025, several of which were recorded on body worn camera footage, and which led to a significant period of public reflection and scrutiny regarding policing practices in Anchorage. The shooting death of Easter Leafa, a 16-year-old high school student killed by Anchorage police officers in August 2024 and of Kristopher Handy in May 2025, brought community anguish and focused public attention on the department's use-of-force policies. The August OIS led to demonstrations and a large public turnout, with [hundreds of individuals marching](#) in downtown Anchorage to call for justice, accountability, and reform. A [community discussion](#) on the topic of officer-involved shootings, organized by multiple member organizations of the Alaska Coalition for Justice, including Native Movement, the Alaska Black Caucus and the Pacific Community of Alaska, was held in September 2024.

In response to community concerns, Mayor LaFrance directed the Municipal Attorney to arrange two layers of outside review to understand the factors that lead to officer-involved shootings and to recommend changes to APD policies and training to reduce officer-involved shootings. The first layer, a third-party administrative investigation of Easter Leafa's death is complete and resulted in a set of policy and training recommendations (see AIM 21-2025 linked below). A contractor was selected to begin the second layer of review and provide a comprehensive assessment of APD's policies, training, and tactics relating to use of force and de-escalation and make recommendations (see AIM 143-2025 linked below).

The series of high-profile officer-involved shootings and community concern were a contributing factor in the formation of the Task Force, which was established to support dialogue and respond to community calls for a reimagined relationship with Public Safety.

### **Links to resources for the Task Force, including those outlined in AR 2025-111:**

- Officer-Involved Shooting (OIS) Review 2009-2023. [Link to full review](#).
- Anchorage Police Department [Strategic Plan 2024-2026](#)
- Critical Incident Review – OIS Response Review & Recommendations, [AIM 21-2025](#)
- Information Memorandum No. [AIM 143-2025](#), Contractor selected for comprehensive review of Anchorage Police Department
- [Mayor LaFrance Public Safety Strategy](#)
- Police Chief Case's presentation, Change with Purpose, given at the June 11, 2025, Assembly Public Health & Safety Committee. [Presentation](#) and [video recording](#).

## WHAT WE'RE HEARING

### Task Force 1:1 Facilitator Interview Themes

Preceding the first Task Force meeting on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 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.
- 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 Workshop Themes

A community workshop was held on August 5, 2025. 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.

### Feedback Form Themes

The Assembly Liaisons and Co-Convenors led the analysis of what was heard via the 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. 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.

## **TASK FORCE PROCESS AND WORKPLAN**

### **What is the Goal of the Task Force?**

- Consider how a new, reimagined Municipal commission or other type of body can build a bridge between the community and Public Safety professionals and agencies.
- Provide a space for effective communication, collaboration, and learning to happen between the community and Public Safety.
- Answer the questions: What does our community need from public safety to feel safe, heard, and included? What does public safety need from the community to be successful and supported? How can we provide these things to one another? What does shared responsibility look like in practice, and how do we build that trust, together?



## Membership and Decision Making

In response to public input, the project team consistently heard the importance of community voices being included, members of the public are invited to participate in the decision-making process alongside established Task Force membership.

As the *Phase 1: Discovery* comes to a close, the project team has restructured the process to be more inclusive of interested community member participants. The intention of *Phase 2: Task Force Recommendations* will focus on convening the Task Force and other participants to inform them about the broader issues and then move into decision-making deliberation meetings. This approach is meant to create a balance of understanding.

Decision making will take place during the deliberation meetings. All participants present will first work toward consensus, with Task Force members and participating community members seeking to reach agreement together. If consensus cannot be reached, all participants will move to a majority vote. **ALL are welcome to participate in all meetings. To vote in deliberation sessions, participants must have attended at least one other meeting during Phase 2.** Phase 2 meetings, outlined in the table below, are all held on Thursdays.

## Phase 2 (September-November) Meeting Timeline

Date	Meeting	Description
Sep 25, 2025 from 10:30-12	Panel 1: <i>Existing Public Safety Agencies in Anchorage</i>	This session will examine Anchorage's current public safety landscape, exploring where gaps exist and how a future PSAC might complement existing efforts.
Oct 23, 2025 from 10:30-12	Panel 2: <i>Models + Functions</i>	This panel will look at how commissions function in Anchorage and elsewhere, focusing on authority, sustainability, and membership.
October 23- November 11	Tentative: Feedback Form Open	Brief form with decisional questions for community members to provide input on.
Nov 13, 2025 from 10:30-12	Deliberation Meeting 1	Facilitated sessions with Task Force members to identify decision points and draft recommendations
Nov 20, 2025 from 10:30-12	Deliberation Meeting 2	
December 2025	Final Report Recommendations	Menu of possibilities with pros/cons that came up throughout process.

Early 2026	Potential Ordinance drafted	If the Assembly chooses to pursue an Ordinance based on the findings from the report, an ordinance would be drafted for Assembly consideration.
------------	-----------------------------	---

### **Task Force Roles and Responsibilities**

- Offer input and lived experience
- Identify needs and challenges
- Co-develop recommendations on a municipal public safety body. This could take many forms – it could be a board or commission, it could function in an advisory, oversight or other capacity, etc.

### **Why Does this Work Matter?**

We've seen prior versions of the PSAC fall short in the past, and we're committed to creating something that can work for the long term. Public trust is strained, and communities have felt unheard or unsupported. Public safety workers face real challenges and need community partnership.

### **Decisions for the Task Force**

- What should a Municipal Public Safety Commission or some other type of formal body do?
- What are its responsibilities?
- Who should serve on body?
- What authority does it have?

### **Final Report and Outcomes**

- Task Force work will culminate in a set of recommendations that:
  - Are informed by voices at the table
  - Reflect lived experience and expertise
  - Are discussed, reviewed, and amended by the Task Force itself
- Task Force is advisory in nature. If the Task Force recommends reinstating a Public Safety Commission in code, the final decision would rest with the Anchorage Assembly. If the Task Force recommends creating something in the Charter, the voters would decide.