



News Release

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Public Review Committee presents report to Pierce County Council

For seven weeks, 14 community members from across Pierce County came together at the request of the Pierce County Council to review county policies, procedures and best practices within its criminal justice systems.

The culmination of the committee's work was presented to Council at a meeting Nov. 18, where members shared a report outlining observations and recommendations for moving forward with an action plan to achieve meaningful reform.

"The committee's work offers a valuable community stakeholder perspective that is needed when reviewing the important issues facing the county," said Council Chairman Doug Richardson. "Council is appreciative of the committee's work and for the dedication these 14 volunteers, along with facilitator retired Judge Frank Cuthbertson, took to complete such a thorough report."

The internal review looked at whether justice is administered equally in Pierce County. Initial information showed African Americans are arrested at disproportionately higher rates, but more data is needed to understand why. As such, one of the committee recommendations is for the county to take a more substantive review of what leads to these arrests.

Already the Council acted on one of the committee's recommendations. This summer Council adopted [an ordinance](#) authorizing the Pierce County Sheriff's Department to purchase body and dash cameras for deputies. Funding to purchase the equipment and operate the program is part of Council's mid-biennium budget adjustment, set for final consideration Nov. 24.

Under Council [Resolution R2020-43](#), the Executive branch was directed by Council to review policies, procedures and best practices within its law and justice departments. The Judicial Branch was also requested to participate in the review to provide a full picture of how people move through the county's law and justice systems.

The completion of the committee's report marks the beginning of Council next steps as outlined in Resolution R2020-43, which includes the development of an action plan to prevent and reduce inequality and injustice within county operations. Council is committed to creating and implementing public policies and procedures that allow for fair distribution of public services and management of all county operations serving the public directly to ensure fairness, justice, equality and equity.

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