

# Policy Referral: Youth Crime

HOUSING, SAFETY AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

MAY 23, 2024

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## Today's Discussion

- ◀ Stakeholder Feedback
- ◀ Insights from Youth Engagement
- ◀ Preliminary Recommendations
- ◀ Next Steps

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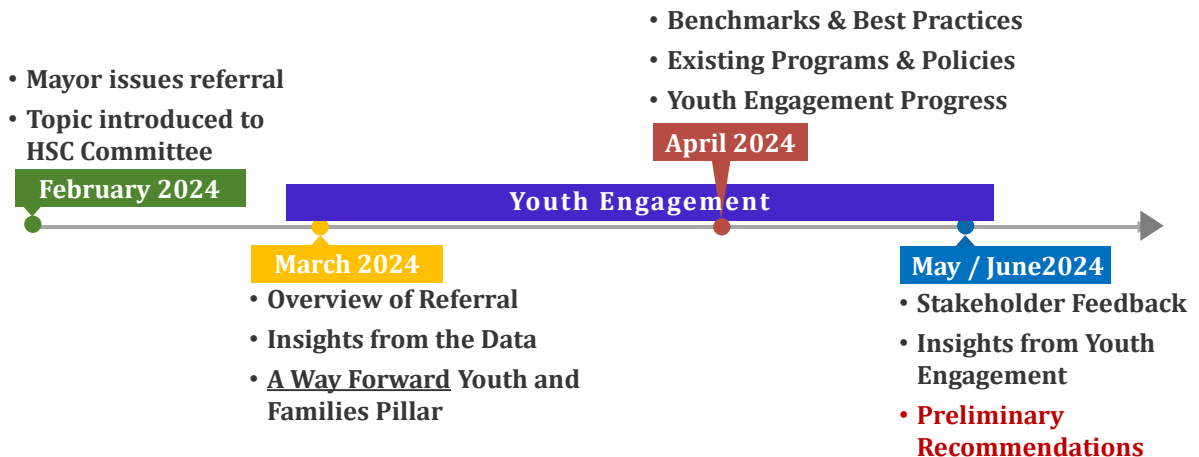
# Policy Referral Overview

## ◁ Primary Objective of the Policy Referral

Recommend strategies to support meaningful reductions in juvenile crime rates (as measured by CMPD) over a five-year period

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Recommendations may include</u>	<u>Key Assumptions</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on age 17 and below</li> <li>• Property and violent crime</li> <li>• At-risk youth, first-time offenders, and repeat offenders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programming, investments, and policy (state/local levels)</li> <li>• Mix of actions within city’s direct control, as well as advocacy for actions that could be taken by other local/state entities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City’s strategic priorities (e.g., affordable housing, corridors of opportunity, workforce development) are of direct relevance to long-term efforts to reduce youth crime rates</li> </ul>

# Policy Referral Timeline



## Stakeholder Feedback

1. Importance of integration with existing strategies (e.g., County's Community Violence Strategic Plan) and community advisory groups (e.g., Juvenile Crime Prevention Council)
2. Support for 'Raise the Age' law, but recognition of need for more state resources to fully realize the policy vision
3. Healthy family environment and engaged parenting are key variables influencing youth violence prevention and successful re-entry
4. Importance of community-level, evidence-based violence prevention strategies
5. Need exists for more/better disposition options (e.g., residential treatment programs, group home placements, etc.) for serious, chronic youth offenders
6. Mental health support for youth is a growing need, with a direct link to violence prevention
7. Closure of Mecklenburg County's Juvenile Detention Center (in 2022) has created a void

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## Youth Engagement

- ◀ Survey distribution through more than a dozen youth organizations
- ◀ Tabling at community events
- ◀ Youth-led MYEP Ambassador Street Cleanup in March
- ◀ Listening sessions in Corridors of Opportunity
- ◀ Featured at teen leadership summits and at high school vocational week events



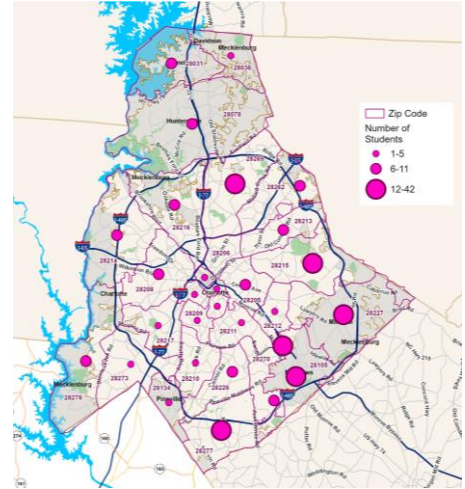
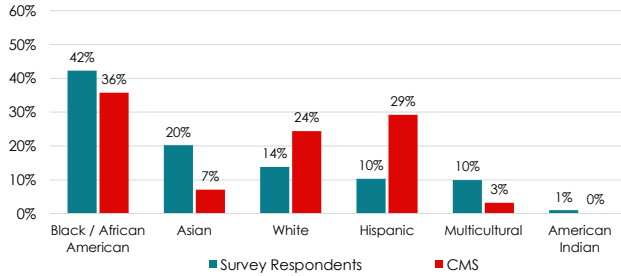
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# Insights From Youth Engagement

## ◀ 253 Youth ages 13 to 17 responded to the survey

- 42 Schools represented
- 68% female
- 64% are not employed

Demographics

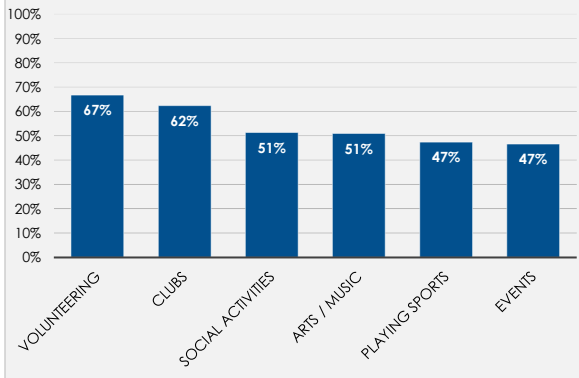


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# Insights From Youth Engagement

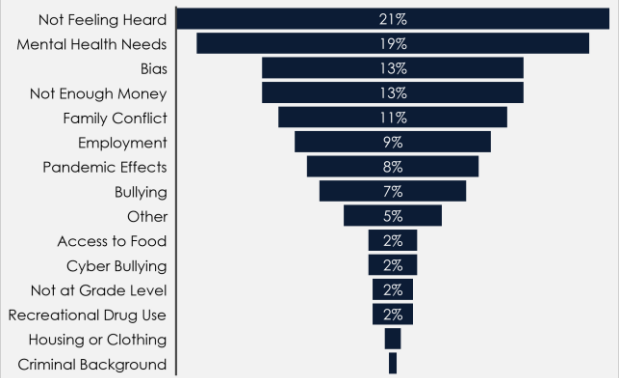
## ◀ Interests

Percentage of Youth Interested in Activity Types



## ◀ Challenges

Percentage of Youth Experiencing Challenges



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## Insights From Youth Engagement

### ◀ Safety

- **7%** do not feel safe in their everyday life
- **93%** feel safest at home (compared to school and community)
- **8%** responded affirmatively to all three questions regarding friends or family members being incarcerated and knowing a victim of youth violence

### ◀ Relational Ties to the Justice System



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## Insights from Youth Engagement

- ◀ Overall sense of frustration and fear
- ◀ Expressed a sense of not being heard or valued in decision-making, especially when those decisions directly affect them
- ◀ General distrust of authority, earn respect through relationships
- ◀ Need to invest in preventative measures
- ◀ Stress for rehabilitation not punishment, not more police
- ◀ Mental health support is needed for youth and the adults that care for them
- ◀ Lack of awareness and access to programs and opportunities (Access = cost, transportation, language, info geared to parents/guardians)
- ◀ Lack of programming for tweens, not enough jobs for 14-year-olds
- ◀ Inconsistent resources in schools, limited resources in neighborhoods
- ◀ Youth feel safest when surrounded by people they trust, primarily family and friends, and when they are in familiar environments
- ◀ Strong community ties and social connections are associated with feelings of safety
- ◀ Feeling important to someone increases sense of safety

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# Preliminary Recommendations

Preliminary Recommendations	Estimated 3-Year Investment
Expand inclusion of at-risk and justice-involved youth in workforce and employment programs	\$1.8 Million
Expand and scale youth programs in CMPD	\$1.9 Million
Expand community-based investments in "what works"	\$2.5 Million
Establish clear goals and measurable outcomes and evaluate impact of city programs and partner investments	\$500,000
Youth Behavioral Health Care Facility (Katie Blessing Center)	\$2.5 Million
Expand and scale pilot efforts and partnerships in Corridors of Opportunity	\$1 Million <i>This item is included in the proposed FY 2025 PAYGO allocation for Corridors of Opportunity</i>

Year 1 / Phase 1

**\$4.5 Million**

# Preliminary Recommendations

## Existing City Programs

### ◀ Expand inclusion of at-risk and justice-involved youth in workforce and employment programs (fully incorporate best practices into existing programs)

- Trauma-informed and culturally responsive staff and programming
- Provide incentives for youth participation
- Employ empirically-informed curriculum
- Expand programming and case management
- Establish system for referral and warm hand-off between programs (e.g., Youth Diversion to Youth Employment)

## Preliminary Recommendations

### Existing City Programs

#### ◀ Expand and scale youth programs in CMPD

- Scale pilot programs:
  - *Fifth Element mentor and diversion program*
  - *JADE Initiative home/family outreach*
- Expand current programs:
  - *ENVISION*
  - *REACH*
  - *Police Activities League*
  - *CMPD Serves*
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Campaign



## Preliminary Recommendations

### New Opportunities for Consideration

#### ◀ Expand Community-Based Investments in “What Works”

- Youth-led social norms campaign, Youth Fellows, and community mobilization program
- Mentoring skill-building, recruitment, training and incentives
- Community-wide mental health awareness and skill-building
- Expand capacity-building for grassroots organizations

#### ◀ Impact Assessment

- Establish goals and measurable outcomes for youth safety and youth violence prevention investments
- Partner with UNC Charlotte and the Violence Prevention Data Collaborative to track, monitor and measure participation and impact in city programs and partner investments

# Preliminary Recommendations

## New Opportunities for Consideration

### ◀ Youth Behavioral Health Care Facility (Katie Blessing Center)

- NC's largest pediatric behavioral health care facility
- Central/Albemarle Corridor
- Full continuity of services on one campus

### ◀ City Support Requested: \$2.5M

- Total project cost: \$62.5M
- Firm commitments thus far: \$37.5M



# Preliminary Recommendations

## Existing City Programs

### ◀ Expand and scale pilot programs in the Corridors of Opportunity

- Partnership with Teach for America and the Mayor's Youth Employment Program
- Targeted engagement and connection to resources in apartment communities with large youth population (e.g., Little Rock partnership)
- Career exposure programming for youth ages 13-15





## Preliminary Recommendations

### ◀ Advocacy and inter-governmental collaboration:

- Advocate for increased state funding for juvenile justice to address demand for intensive programming, family-focused interventions, staffing, and system coordination
- Engage in stakeholder discussions to identify short and long-term solutions to address the void created by the closure of the local Juvenile Detention Center in 2022
- Continue collaboration with Mecklenburg County to advance the Community Violence Strategic Plan (*The Way Forward*)

## Preliminary Recommendations

### ◀ Continue to...

- Build capacity of impactful grassroots organizations through Safe Charlotte grants
- Interrupt violence through Alternatives to Violence and Project BOOST (Hospital-Based Violence Intervention)
- Reduce recidivism through the Youth Diversion Program
- Advance work of the Violence Prevention Data Collaborative
- Invest in the city's strategic initiatives that support economic and housing stability, healthy neighborhoods, and access to resources – e.g., Corridors of Opportunity, Affordable Housing, and Workforce Development
- Shape priorities and investment with youth voice and participation

## Next Steps

- ◀ **Committee discussion and feedback**
- ◀ **Align recommendations and investment opportunities with City Manager's recommended FY 2025 budget**