

Policy Referral: Youth Crime

STATUS UPDATE AND INITIAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

JUNE 10, 2024

Today's Discussion

- ◀ Referral Background and Timeline
- ◀ Data Insights and Stakeholder Feedback
- ◀ Recommendations
- ◀ Next Steps

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 three to five-year period

Focus Areas

- Emphasis on age 17 and below
- Property and violent crime
- At-risk youth, first-time offenders, and repeat offenders

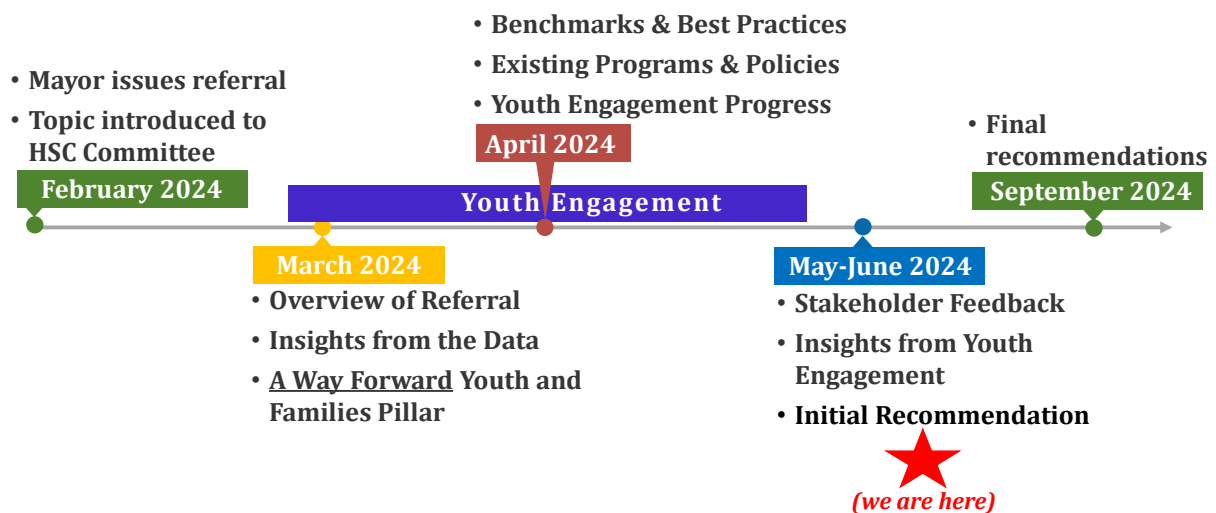
Recommendations May Include

- Programming, investments, and policy (state/local levels)
- Mix of actions within city's direct control, as well as advocacy for actions that could be taken by other local/state entities

Key Assumption

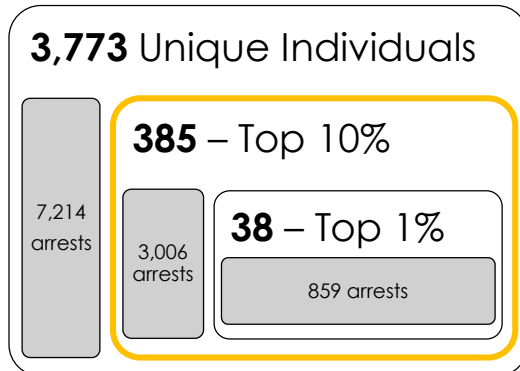
- City's strategic priorities (e.g., affordable housing, corridors of opportunity, workforce development) are of direct relevance to long-term efforts to reduce youth crime rates

Policy Referral Timeline



Insights from the Data

Youth Offenders (2021-2023)



- ◀ **Juvenile suspects in gun incidents up 33%**
- ◀ **Juvenile property crime suspects up 86%**
- ◀ **Juvenile auto thefts up 192%**

Stakeholder Feedback

1. Importance of **integration with existing strategies and community advisory groups**
2. Support for **'Raise the Age' law**, but recognition of need for more state resources to fully realize the policy vision
3. Importance of community-level, **evidence-based violence prevention strategies**
4. Need for **more/better disposition options** (e.g., residential treatment programs, group home placements, etc.) for serious, chronic youth offenders
5. **Mental health support** for youth is a growing need, with a direct link to violence prevention
6. Closure of **Mecklenburg County's Juvenile Detention Center** (in 2022) created a void
7. Example **insights from youth engagement**:
 - i. Overall sense of frustration and fear
 - ii. Strong community ties and social connections are associated with feelings of safety
 - iii. Lack of awareness and access to programs and opportunities
 - iv. Mental health support is needed for youth and the adults that care for them

Recommendations

Enhance Existing City Programs

- ◀ Expand inclusion of at-risk and justice-involved youth in workforce and employment programs
- ◀ Expand and scale youth programs in CMPD

Advance New Programs and Strategies

- ◀ Expand community-based investments in “what works”
- ◀ Establish clear goals and measurable outcomes and evaluate impact of city programs and partner investments

**Under
continued
evaluation by
Housing, Safety
& Community
Committee**

Project Investment Recommendation

- ◀ \$2.5million financial support for a new youth behavioral health facility (Katie Blessing Center)

**Endorsed by
Housing, Safety
& Community
Committee on
May 23, 2024**

Katie Blessing Center: Overview

◀ **Project summary**

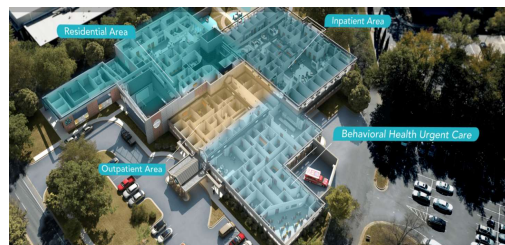
- Project vision to establish North Carolina’s largest pediatric behavioral health care facility targeting youth aged 5 to 18
- 70,000 square-foot building with 72-beds, to be owned and operated by the Katie Blessing Foundation (501c3)
- Located in the Central/Albemarle Corridor of Opportunity

◀ **Full continuity of services on one campus**

- Behavioral Health Urgent Care
- Acute Inpatient Hospital
- Residential Treatment Facility
- Outpatient Care

◀ **City Support Requested: \$2.5M**

- Total estimated project cost: \$62.5M
- Firm commitments to date = \$41.5M



Katie Blessing Center: “The Why”

- ◀ **Nearly one in five children in the United States has a mental, emotional or behavioral disorder in any given year. Only 20% of those children receive care from a specialized mental healthcare provider.**
- ◀ **Juveniles committed to North Carolina’s juvenile justice system in 2022 presented with multiple and complex behavioral health needs.**
- ◀ **A representative point-in-time survey of youth confined in North Carolina youth development centers (YDCs) revealed that:**
 - 99% carried at least one mental health diagnosis;
 - 48% had co-occurring mental health and substance use diagnoses;
 - 39% were taking prescribed psychotropic medication;
 - youth committed to YDCs had an average of four distinct mental health and/or substance use disorder diagnoses, and in some cases as many as eleven.

Katie Blessing Center: Key Points

- ✓ **Serve youth aged 5-18**
- ✓ **Accept private insurance and Medicaid**
- ✓ **Treat a wide range of behavioral health disorders**
- ✓ **Collaborate with the North Carolina Division of Juvenile Justice**
- ✓ **Majority of patients from Charlotte-Mecklenburg community**

Next Steps

- ◀ Council discussion tonight regarding Katie Blessing Center investment opportunity, with vote planned for June 24th (pending tonight's feedback)
- ◀ Committee discussion in September 2024 regarding other policy referral-related investment opportunities, aligning recommendations with approved FY 2025 budget
- ◀ Final recommendations for Council discussion in September/October