



City of Grand Rapids Public Safety Alignment and Governance Report:

A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF THE
CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS' PUBLIC SAFETY
BOARDS, COMMITTEES, TASKFORCES,
TEAMS, AND COMMISSIONS.

Agenda

July 13, 2021

1. Purpose
2. Methodology
3. Current State of Public Safety Boards
4. Establishment and Primary Responsibility
5. Timeline of Public Safety Reports and Efforts
6. Strategic Plans
7. Structure, Findings, and Recommendations for:
 - Civilian Appeal Board
 - Community Relations Commission
 - Police Chief Advisory Team
 - Public Safety Committee
 - SAFE Taskforce
8. Recommended State of Public Safety Boards
9. Next Steps
10. Conclusion
11. Questions



Purpose

There are various boards, commissions, and taskforces that are dedicated to public safety in the City of Grand Rapids.

City Manager, Mark Washington, tasked the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability to lead an evaluation regarding the alignment and governance of those boards and commissions.

This report focuses on the:

- Civilian Appeal Board,
- Community Relations Commission,
- Police Chief Advisory Team,
- Public Safety Committee, and
- Safe Alliances For Everyone (SAFE) Taskforce.



Methodology



REVIEWED
APPLICABLE
POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES



ANALYZED GROUP
STRUCTURES



OBSERVED
GROUP MEETINGS



ENGAGED WITH
CITY STAFF



GATHERED
FEEDBACK FROM
GROUP MEMBERS

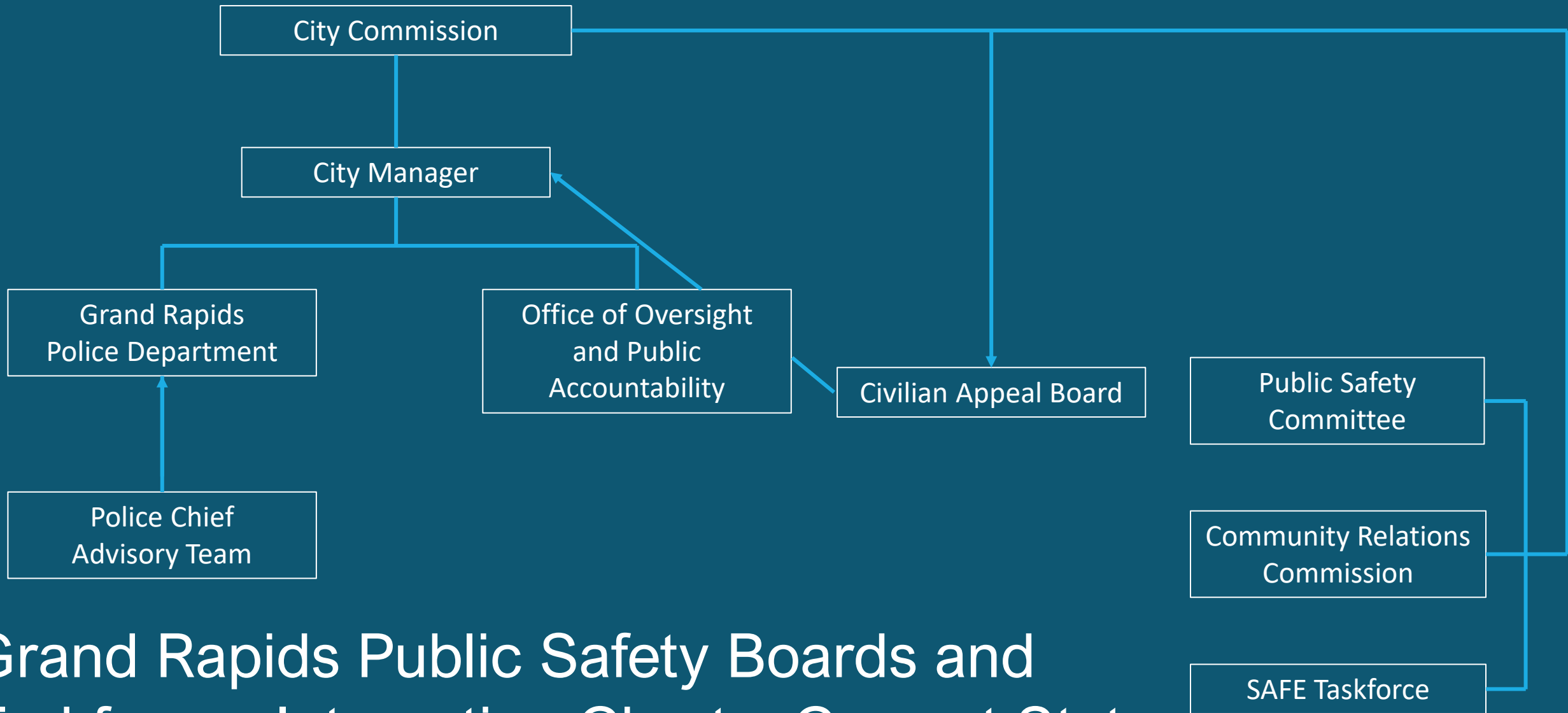


EVALUTED GROUP
ALIGNMENT WITH
STRATEGIC PLANS



ALIGNED TO
PRINCIPLES OF
GOVERNMENTAL
EXCELLENCE &
EFFICIENCY





Grand Rapids Public Safety Boards and Taskforces Interaction Chart – Current State

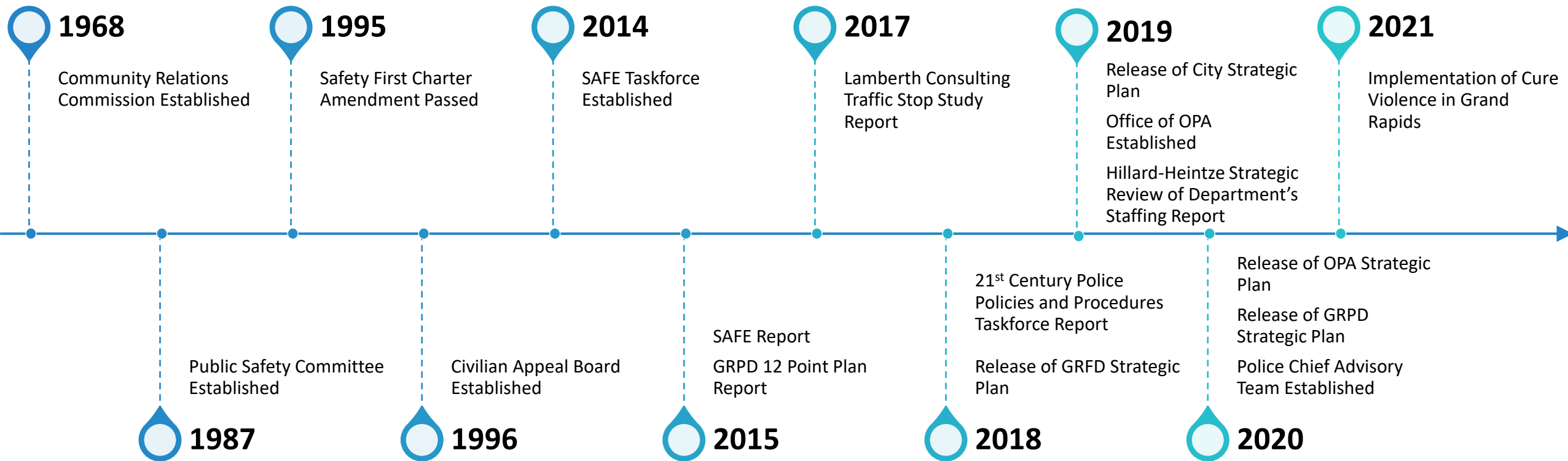


Establishment + Primary Responsibility

Public Safety Board	Year Established	Primary Responsibility
Community Relations Commission	1968	Systemic overview and policy work specific to inequities.
Public Safety Committee	1987	General overview of public safety.
Civilian Appeal Board	1996	Specific task of holding individuals accountable for individual actions.
SAFE Taskforce	2014	Created as a taskforce to recommend violence reduction strategies.
Police Chief Advisory Team	2020	Specific task of advising the Police Chief at a Departmental level.



Timeline of Public Safety Efforts



Strategic Plans

The City of Grand Rapids Strategic Plan approved by the City Manager (adopted by City Commission) is the City's official roadmap regarding crime prevention, violence reduction, and public safety strategy.

The strategic plans of the Grand Rapids Police Department, Grand Rapids Fire Department, and Office of Oversight and Public Accountability are supporting plans.



City of Grand Rapids Strategic Plan



Grand Rapids Police Department Strategic Plan



Grand Rapids Fire Department Strategic Plan



Office of Oversight and Public Accountability Strategic Plan



Civilian Appeal Board

History

City Commission established the CAB in 1996 by and through City Commission Policy 800-02. In 2019, the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability became staff liaison to the CAB.

Primary Controlling Document
City Commission Policy 800-02

Structure

Comprised of up to 9 community residents

- 3 members appointed by the Mayor
- 6 members appointed by the City Commission.

The CAB meets as often as necessary, but typically once per month, to hear all appeals and complete various trainings.

Responsibilities

Review findings from the Grand Rapids Police Department Internal Affairs Unit regarding complaints of 1) the use of excessive force, 2) falsification and lying, 3) civil rights violations, and 4) hostility, discourtesy or other conduct unbecoming an officer when such conduct is committed in a context of racial animosity or prejudice. The CAB members have the unique ability to confirm, modify, or reverse the findings of the Internal Affairs Unit.



Civilian Appeal Board Findings

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAB EXIST

- Board members in addition to nine notable community groups have expressed the need for a more effective structure.

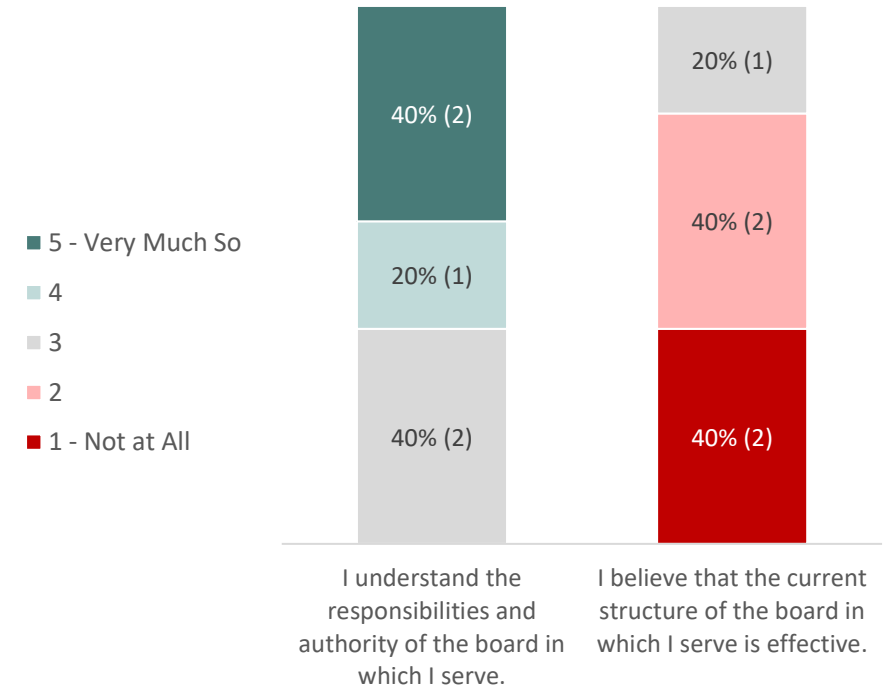
THE CAB IS EMPOWERED WITH UNIQUE, YET IMPORTANT AUTHORITY

- The CAB is unique, in that unlike some other civilian review boards, the CAB has the ability to review and overturn decisions of the Grand Rapids Police Department Internal Affairs Unit.

BOARD MEMBER EXPECTATIONS DO NOT FULLY COMPORT WITH COMMISSION POLICY 800-02

- The CAB members are eager to make long-term, systemic change in addition to their duty to hold individual officers accountable. Local and national calls for civilian oversight support this cause.

Responsibilities / Structure



Civilian Appeal Board Recommendations

1. Implement Mandatory Onboarding and Training for all CAB Members;
2. Improve Written Reports in Order to Promote Fairness and Enhance the Quality of Board Decisions;
3. Increase Jurisdictional Authority to Align with Best Practices and to Promote Increased Accountability;
4. Empower CAB to Make Formal Policy Recommendations to Elevate Community Voice in Public Safety Operations; and
5. Reimagine City Commission Policy 800-02 to Increase Procedural Justice and to Reflect and Ensure Transparency.

The City Commission has the authority to implement these recommendations.

CAB has authority to act to the extent allowed by City Commission Policy 800-02.



Community Relations Commission

History

City Commission established the CRC in 1968. In 2019, City Commission established the Human Rights Ordinance to refine the roles and responsibilities of the CRC. Currently, the CRC operates under the Office of Equity and Engagement.

Primary Controlling Document

City of Grand Rapids Code of Ordinances Title IX—Chapter 176

Structure

Comprised of 13 community members – appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Commission.

The CRC meets on a monthly basis in addition to having subcommittee meetings. Each member's term is for three years.

Responsibilities

The role of the CRC is to be an advisor to the Office of Equity and Engagement, City Manager, and City Commission to support and promote the Human Rights Ordinance and strengthen the relationship between the community and the City of Grand Rapids.



Community Relations Commission Findings

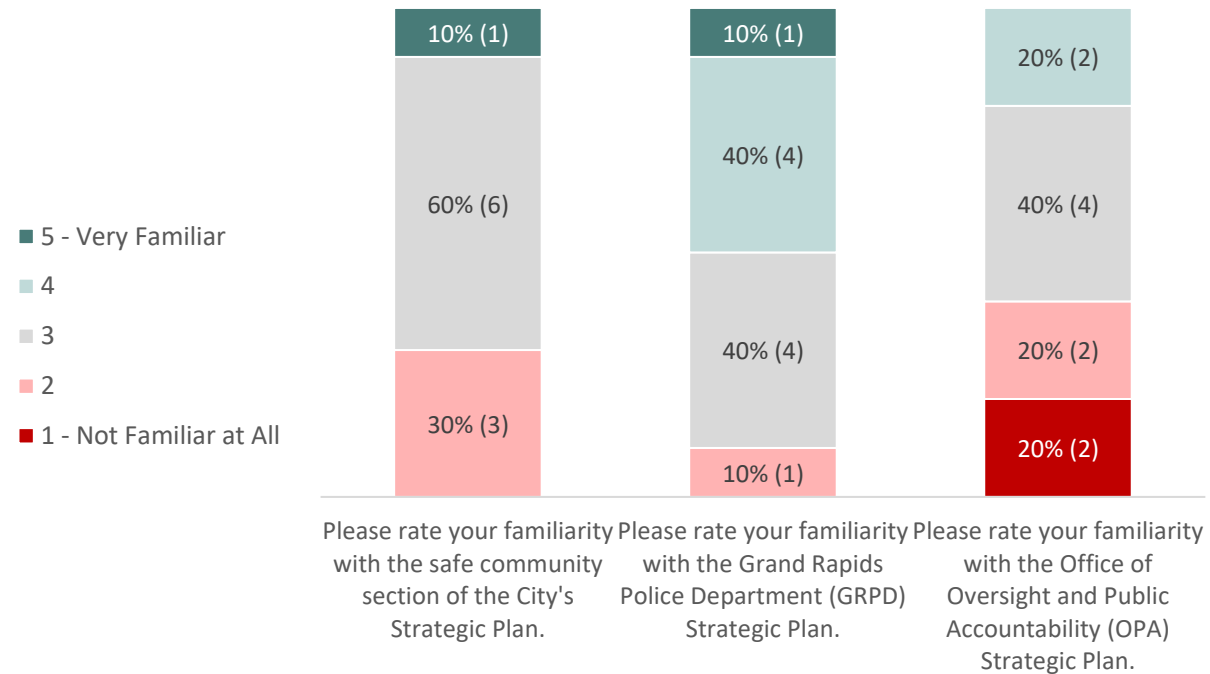
70 Year Fight for Human Rights

- The Community Relations Commission (CRC) has been on the front lines for the City advocating and uplifting the resident and community voices in areas of civil and human rights for nearly 70 years and has championed many community-based initiatives.

Specific Focus on Strategic Plan

- The CRC guiding documents specifically mention aligning the strategic plans in their work and efforts, with a focus on equity.

Familiarity with Strategic Plans



Community Relations Commission Recommendations

1. Refocus the Community and Police Relations Subcommittee to Address Systemic Inequities in the Criminal Justice System;
2. Provide Additional Training Regarding the City of Grand Rapids Strategic Plan, Grand Rapids Police Department Strategic Plan, Grand Rapids Fire Department Strategic Plan, and the Office of Oversight and Public Accountability Strategic Plan; and
3. Increase Public Access and Knowledge Regarding the CRC's Operations.

The Community Relations Commission has the authority to implement these recommendations.



Police Chief Advisory Team

History

Chief Eric Payne of the Grand Rapids Police Department created PCAT in July 2020 to improve respectful relationships between public safety and community. There are no guiding documents for this team.

Primary Controlling Document

None. Relies upon the GRPD Strategic Plan.

Structure

Currently comprised of 13 diverse community members – appointed by the Chief of Police.

It should be noted this advisory team did not require action from the City Commission as it is governed at the departmental level.

Responsibilities

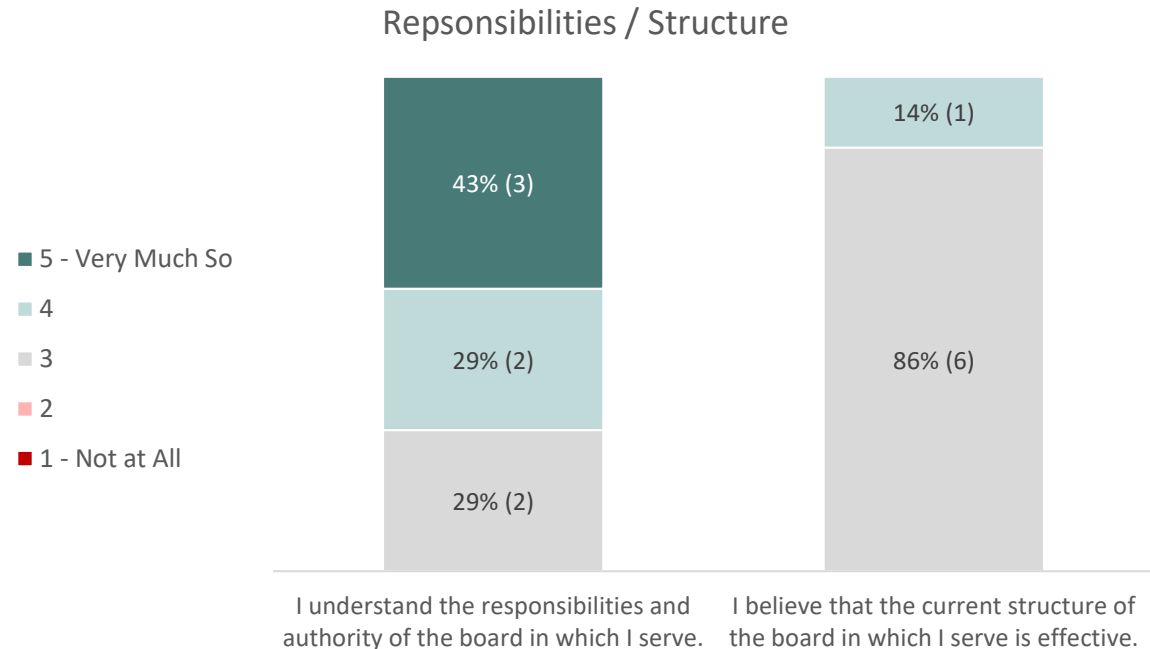
The purpose of the team is to advise the Chief of Police and offer recommendations.



Police Chief Advisory Team Findings

STRUCTURE OF TEAM OPERATIONS IS UNCLEAR

- The findings from the survey of team members suggest that questions exist regarding the effectiveness of the team structure.



Police Chief Advisory Team Recommendations

1. Create a Policy that Clearly Define Team Roles and Meeting Commitments;
2. Include People of Diverse Backgrounds Reflective of the Surrounding Community in an Effort to Learn from and Apply the Collective Wisdom of Grand Rapidians;
3. Identify Committee Objectives and Scope; and
4. Require Training and Orientation of Advisory Team Members.

The Chief of Police has the authority to implement these recommendations.



Public Safety Committee

History

City Commission established the Public Safety Committee in 1987 to consider public safety matters by and through the City Commission Standing Rules.

Primary Controlling Document
Grand Rapids City Commission Standing Rules

Structure

Comprised of 9 members
- 3 City Commissioners (1 per ward)
- 6 residents (2 per ward)

Although members of the public serve on this Committee, they serve in a non-voting capacity. The Public Safety Committee meets once a month in a public forum.

Responsibilities

The Public Safety Committee is charged with considering and making recommendations on all matters concerning public safety, except those matters that historically have fallen within the jurisdiction of the Fiscal Committee, unless invited to do so by the Fiscal Committee, or directed to do so by the Committee of the Whole.



Public Safety Committee Findings



THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO ELEVATE RESIDENT VOICE IN PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS

The Public Safety Committee was created to make recommendations regarding public safety matters. In practice, the Public Safety Committee receives general updates and informal recommendations from the City's public safety departments.



WRITTEN PROCESSES FOR FULFILLING RESPONSIBILITIES ARE UNCLEAR

The process in which recommendations of the Public Safety Committee is provided to the Committee of the Whole, or City Manager by and through staff, is unclear.



Public Safety Committee Recommendations

1. Create a Formal Structure to Track and Evaluate Progress on Public Safety Committee Recommendations;
2. Elevate the Work of the SAFE Taskforce by Converting it to a Permanent Advisory Committee of the Public Safety Committee in Order to Create Better Alignment with the City's Strategic Plan and Elevate Resident Voice in Public Safety Operations;
3. Increase Public Access and Knowledge Regarding Public Safety Committee's Operations.

The City Commission has the authority to implement these recommendations.



SAFE Taskforce

History	Structure	Responsibilities
<p>Former Mayor George K. Heartwell established SAFE in 2014 as a Mayoral Taskforce. In 2015, SAFE released an Anti-Violence Strategy Report and Recommendations. In 2018, an annual appropriation of \$100,000 of City Funding was budgeted SAFE to support the recommendations in the 2015 report.</p> <p><u>Primary Controlling Document</u> None. Relies upon 2019 SAFE Taskforce Bylaws.</p>	<p>Currently comprised of 10 members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 City Commissioners- 8 diverse members <p>There are no term limits. SAFE meets on a monthly basis.</p>	<p>Created to recommend violence reduction strategies. Currently partners with community organizations and businesses to solve issues facing 15–24-year-old residents. The 2015 Report highlighted several issues including, but not limited to issues of community safety, sense of community, juvenile gangs, proactive policing strategies, police community relations, and the lack of pro-social activities for youth.</p>



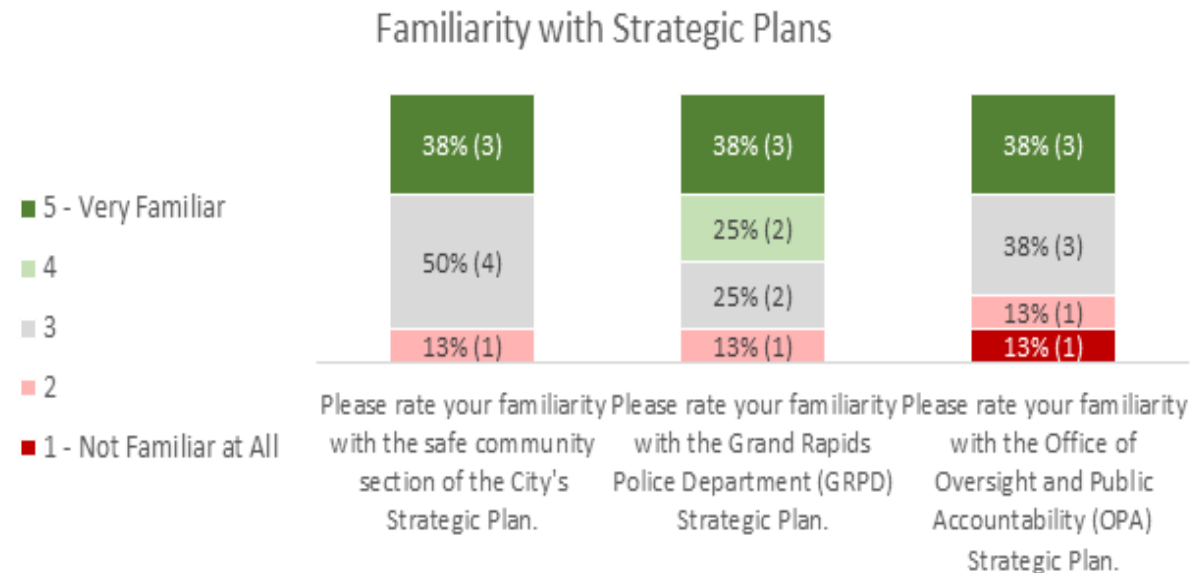
SAFE Taskforce Findings

By Definition, a Taskforce is Not a Permanent Entity

- The work of supporting grassroots efforts and uplifting community voice is a clear priority of the City, however, by definition, a taskforce is intended to be temporary.

Broad Base and Scope

- A clear priority of the City's Strategic Plan is to have an engaged and connected community and the scope of SAFE's work must be clearly defined and aligned to the City's current public safety and violence reduction strategy.



SAFE Taskforce Recommendations

1. Elevate the Work of the SAFE Taskforce by Converting it to a Permanent Advisory Committee of the Public Safety Committee in Order to Create Better Alignment with the City's Strategic Plan and Elevate Resident Voice in Public Safety Operations;
2. Fully Define the Role, Responsibilities, and Scope of SAFE Advisory Committee to Focus on the City and Public Safety Strategic Plans in Order to Provide Clarity and to Ensure Governmental Excellence; and
3. Increase Transparency Regarding SAFE's Activities and Outcomes.

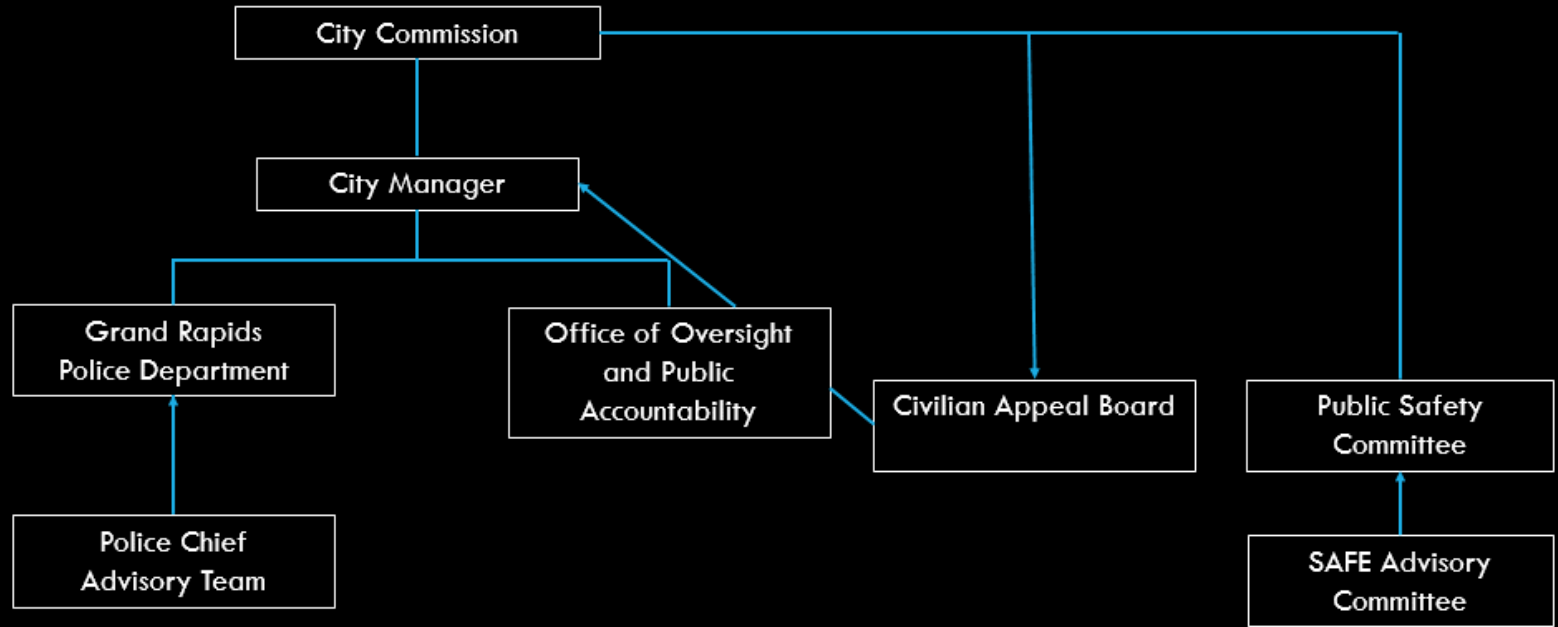
If SAFE remains a Taskforce, the Mayor has the authority to implement relevant recommendations.

If SAFE becomes an Advisory Committee, City Commission has the authority to implement these recommendations.



Recommended State

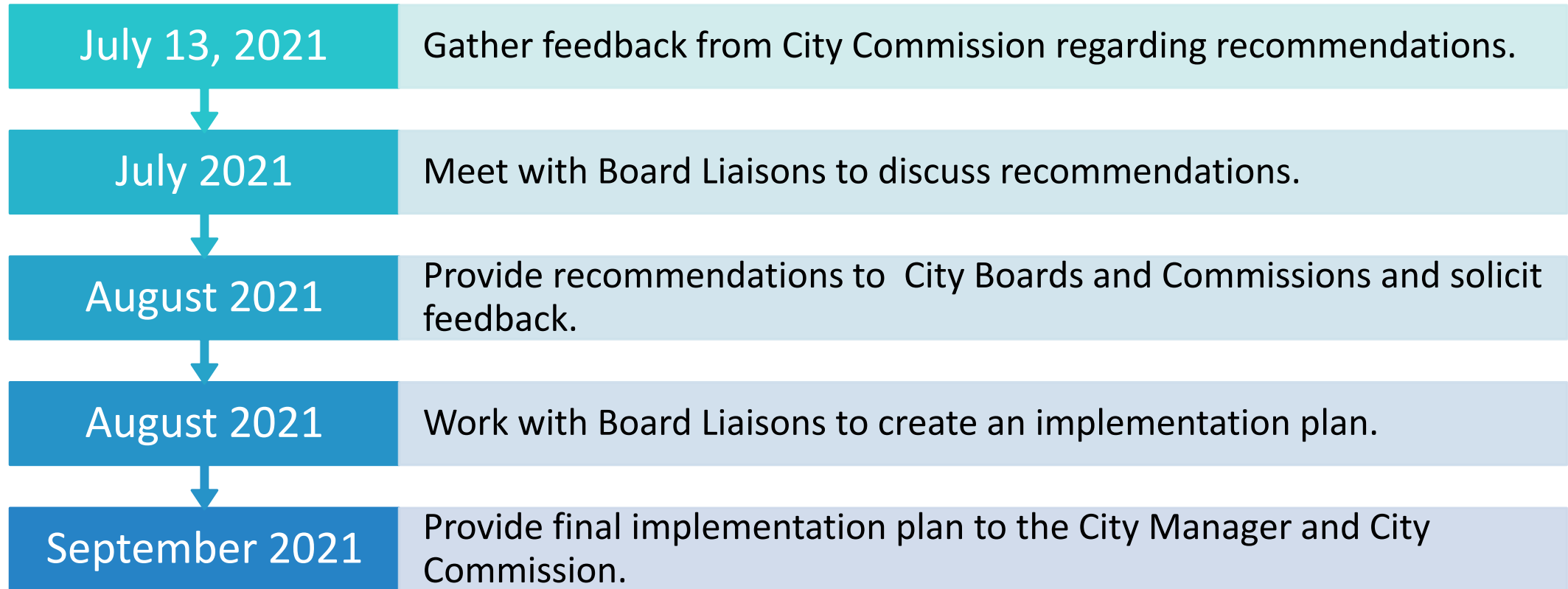
- All information regarding PCAT, CAB, the Public Safety Committee, and SAFE Advisory Committee should be uploaded to their webpages and accessible through the TRUE Action page of the City Website.
- The Community Relations Commission's work extends beyond the City structure, and is therefore not included in the interaction chart.
- All public safety boards and committees should provide regular updates to the Public Safety Committee regarding their operations.



Grand Rapids Public Safety Boards and Committees Interaction Chart – Recommended State



Next Steps



Conclusion

In order to align the work of the City's Public Safety Boards and Commissions, City Staff has made recommendations that revise and enhance the structure of the City's Public Safety Boards and Taskforces. These revisions and enhancements will provide clarity to the role, responsibilities, and operational procedures of the Public Safety Committee, Civilian Appeal Board, Police Chief Advisory Team, Community Relations Committee and SAFE. This clarity will lead to improved public safety outcomes which will help ensure that "all people feel safe and are safe at all times, in Grand Rapids."

Special Thanks to:

- ❖ Public Safety Boards, Commissions, Taskforce, Teams, and Committee members
- ❖ Public Safety Board Liaisons
 - ❖ Asante Cain
 - ❖ Patti Caudill
 - ❖ Chief Eric Payne
- ❖ Department of Law
- ❖ Comptroller's Office – Erica Bills





Questions

