

**Preface:**

CU Citizens for Peace and Justice (CUCPJ) applauds the City Council’s effort to understand and respond to the traffic stop racial disparities documented by both IDOT data and the Traffic Stop Data Task Force’s statistical analysis. The Task Force report’s greatest service to the community may be its educational value. There is much for the City Council, UPD, and community to learn and understand. After fifteen months of study, the recommendations of the Task Force serve as a starting point for substantive and concrete action. CUCPJ urges the Council to plan how the stated recommendations can be implemented and provide a timeline for progress.

Although the Report’s recommendations are helpful and informative, CUCPJ believes several observations and meaningful recommendations need more attention. They are included below. We encourage the Council to make them part of its overall discussion of the Task Force report.

**CUCPJ Recommendations:**

1. **Reduce annual traffic stop numbers and citation rates.**

Many departments have significantly lower stop numbers and citation rates without any detrimental effect to public safety. Two examples are Danville’s 2014 stop number of 808 compared to Urbana’s 4205, and Bloomington’s citation rate of 30% compared to Urbana’s 55%. Intelligently lowering these two numbers twenty to thirty percent would reduce the impact of racial disparities and improve police/community relations.

1. **Eliminate all searches conducted as part of a traffic stop unless there is clear suspicion of a serious crime.**

As part of this process, officers must inform drivers of their right to refuse a search and obtain a voluntary signature before conducting a consent search. If the officer conducts a search, a statement explaining the reason for the search must be recorded on the traffic ticket.

1. **Eliminate or revise any city ordinances enforced as part of traffic stops that no longer serve a viable public safety purpose or appear to be racially biased in its enforcement.**

One obvious ordinance is “Operating a Vehicle with Loud System”. Vol. II, Table 16 on page 38 of the Task Force report identifies it as the seventh highest charge (452) for African-American drivers. This ordinance is almost exclusively used against African-American drivers and appears to be culturally and racially biased in its enforcement.

1. **Study the totality of the impact and effectiveness of the “investigatory stop” as a strategic policing tactic.**

Following Recommendations 1.1 and 2.4, the Council should give direction to the UPD to begin the process of collecting these data in a public reportable format. These data are critical for follow-up analysis and informed decision-making by future groups appointed by the city council.

1. **Create a new commission to review traffic stop data after it is made publicly available.**

In support of Recommendation 2.3, the commission should be composed of a city council member, UPD representative, former member of the Traffic Stop Task Force, and two members of the Urbana community familiar with the Task Force report. They will report to the Council whether progress is being made in reducing racial disparities in traffic stops. The commission may also make recommendations to the City Council.

1. **Support Recommendation 3.4 calling for a moratorium on issuing of citations for cannabis possession when it is discovered in the course of traffic stops.**

Citation for minor possession of cannabis serves little public utility, is often racially enforced, and places undue economic hardship on many citizens.