Public Comment to the Albany Common Council Public Safety Committee

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the FINAL DRAFT REPORT of the City of Albany Policing Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Recommendations. The Center deeply appreciates the work of all the volunteers on the Collaborative who contributed to making Albany a safer place to live for all our residents; we sincerely thank them for their service. However, although the Collaborative members have done everything asked of them by the City, the City has not completed its responsibility to transform the recommendations of the Collaborative into a PLAN that reinvents policing in Albany.

Prior to this meeting, the Center submitted extensive written commentary for the Common Council to consider regarding the particularities of the report submitted by the City. Today in this meeting, we confine our remarks to two very immediate and pressing concerns.

First, the following statement appears on page 3 of the report: “The collaborative asks the Common Council to adopt our report at the February 8th, 2021 meeting of the Albany Common Council Public Safety Committee Meeting.” The term “adopt” in that statement clearly indicates that the Committee is expected to vote on the report on February 8, 2021 --- allowing insufficient time for the community to react to the report.

Second, and more importantly, what has been submitted thus far does not ON ITS FACE fulfill the mandate of Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order #203. The Executive Order states: “Each local government entity which has a police agency … must … develop a PLAN … for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency…” . What has been submitted thus far is a set of recommendations, with no indication regarding which of those recommendations the City is committed to fulfilling. A PLAN requires goals, objectives, implementation strategies, projected target dates, required resources, and a proposed budget. The Public Safety Committee should direct the City to submit a PLAN to reinvent Albany policing, for the Common Council’s consideration.

Collaborative members, collectively, have already done a yeoman’s job, volunteering countless hours and tireless effort in providing everything the City has asked of them. The Center suggests that the City staff assigned to each of the Collaborative’s five working groups be tasked with producing a draft that transforms the Collaborative’s recommendations into a PLAN with goals, objectives, implementation strategies, projected target dates, required resources, and a proposed budget. Once the draft has been produced, Collaborative members should be invited to review and revise it, if they so choose.

The Governor’s mandate requires Albany to produce a reinvented policing PLAN for the city; the Public Safety Committee should not vote on anything less. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.