

**Chattanooga, TN**  
**Mayor Andy Berke**

## **Council Against Hate**

In his 2018 State of the City address, Mayor Andy Berke announced the formation of the Council Against Hate, an effort in his city to “understand the factors leading to the spread of violent extremism and intolerance in Chattanooga and to advise the public and private sectors on policies and strategies that will create a more civil, safe, and welcoming community for all people.” The Mayor then drew on 21 of the city’s community leaders to form the Council’s steering committee; its report was presented in the Council’s first public meeting, held in Spring 2018. Strategies outlined in the report include:

- Work to create public policies to protect targeted constituencies from hate crimes and violent extremism;
- Define and understand the problem of hate in our community;
- Engage young people in combating hate;
- Prepare educators and other school staff to identify, respond to, and work against hate speech and extremist behavior;
- Engage the private sector and business community;
- Improve the community’s media literacy -- including social media -- around hate speech and radicalization; and
- Create additional cultural programming.

An Action Team to carry out the work of the Council has been formed for each of these strategy areas. The steering committee’s report can be downloaded at <https://cha.city/CAHreport2019>.

Since its initial public meeting, the Council has held meetings addressed by speakers including former Charlottesville Mayor Michael Signer, the ADL’s Allison Padilla-Goodman, and former Nazi Christian Picciolini, who now works to help individuals wanting to leave the white supremacy movement. Information on the scope and activity of the Council is found on its [website](#). This site includes a form that can be used by anyone who overhears or has been a victim of hate speech to anonymously report this to the Council.

The following examples illustrate approaches the Council is taking in its attack on hate in Chattanooga.

### **Pivot Point Policy Forums**

A new series of policy forums is focusing on topics relating to bias-motivated incidents, anti-hate crime policies, community programs, and local government outreach. The Council is hosting one nationally recognized expert on these topics each month, January through April 2020. Speaking at the first public event in this series, held January 21 at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, was Becky Monroe, Director of the [Divided Community Project](#) at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. Ms. Monroe discussed the physical and mental harm caused by hate incidents and crimes and the importance of community outreach and policy change to combat hate in local communities.

Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best, slated to speak at the February event, is focusing on the importance of tracking hate incidents and crimes, and strategies to engage communities that may be targeted for acts of hate and discrimination. Each forum begins with a 15-minute presentation by the speaker followed by a 30-minute

interview with the co-chair of the Council's Public Policy action team and Research & Data action team. These two action teams release policy briefs on the topics covered by the speakers in each of the forums.

### **"The Scanner" Podcast**

In August 2019, the Council launched "The Scanner," a bi-weekly podcast featuring short interviews with journalists, filmmakers, researchers, activists, elected officials, and others who are working to improve media literacy around issues relating to hate and violent extremism and to develop localized responses to these problems. The first episode, which included an interview with Allison Padilla-Goodman, was recorded shortly after the El Paso Wal-Mart mass shooting; subsequent interviews have addressed social media, refugee resettlement, the Tree of Life attack in Pittsburgh, anti-racism training, the Chinese government's treatment of Uyghur Muslims, deradicalization, and myriad other topics. The podcasts can be heard on [Spotify](#), [Stitcher](#), [Google Play](#), and [Apple Podcasts](#).

### **Hatebase**

A Canadian tech project that crowdsources, catalogues, and tracks hate speech in real time, Hatebase is essentially an early warning system that helps identify situations of concern and allows the organization to inform and empower communities to implement preventative measures and stop mass violence before it begins. The project originated with the [Sentinel Project](#), an international nonprofit based in Toronto that works to prevent genocide and mass atrocities through engagement and cooperation with victimized populations around the globe. Information on Hatebase is at [hatebase.org](https://hatebase.org).

Since its creation in 2013, Hatebase has extended its work to help inform law enforcement agencies and social media platforms, and to provide researchers a tool to better understand the ever-evolving language around hate. Hatebase analyzes and maps incidents of hate speech submitted by front-end users through their web interface. Additionally, the database uses its natural language engine, Hatebrain, to analyze public conversations to determine the probability of their use in a hateful context.

The City of Chattanooga is one of the first local government entities in the U.S. to partner with the project and has embedded a Hatebase iFrame on the Council's website.

*Additional information is available from Kerry Hayes, Deputy Chief of Staff, at [khayes@chattanooga.gov](mailto:khayes@chattanooga.gov), or 423-643-7816.*