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May 21, 2026

Honorable Council President Harris-Dawson
Los Angeles City Hall – Council District 8
c/o City Clerk's Office
200 North Spring Street, Room 450
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Council President Harris–Dawson:

On behalf of the Police Commission, the following comments are respectfully submitted regarding the recommendations of the Charter Reform Commission that relate to the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

The BOPC oversees the LAPD, operating one of the nation's most robust systems of civilian oversight of a municipal police department. Supported by its professional staff and an independent Office of Inspector General (OIG), and with unfettered access to the personnel and records of the LAPD, the BOPC's responsibilities include setting the policies that govern LAPD's operations, adjudicating all serious uses of force involving LAPD officers, and interfacing with stakeholders at its weekly public meetings.

The BOPC was first established a century ago, providing measured, structural insulation between the policy-making process for the Police Department and the City's elected officials. More recently, from the inception of the Federal Consent Decree in 2001, the BOPC has led the LAPD through a significant process of reforms. Beyond the myriad policy revisions that arose from the Consent Decree regarding issues such as the conduct of integrity audits, use of force investigations, and biased policing investigations, the BOPC has established policies that have defined national best-practices in the areas of de-escalation, use of force policy, the use of body-worn cameras by officers, and the release of body-worn video following critical incidents. Additionally, this same period saw the significant strengthening of the OIG's capacity to perform day-to-day oversight of the LAPD on behalf of the BOPC. As reflected in the attached correspondence from the Inspector General, that oversight includes real-time monitoring and analysis of investigations of complaints and serious uses of force, as well as audits of critical LAPD functions and the development of policy recommendations to improve the quality of the services LAPD provides to City residents.

Following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police Department officers in 2020, the BOPC moved swiftly to place LAPD policies at the forefront of emerging standards regarding

safer positioning of restrained individuals, the prohibition of neck restraints, and expanded reporting and review requirements for uses of force that occur during protests. Notably, prior to the policy revisions that followed George Floyd's death, the State of California had updated its legal requirements regarding the release of body-worn video, requirements to employ de-escalation techniques, and stricter limits on officers' authority to use deadly force, in terms that closely mirrored policies already established by the BOPC. The influence of the BOPC on professional and legal standards state- and nation-wide reflects the leading role it plays in the field of civilian oversight of policing, as well as the robust and expert nature of the professional infrastructure that supports its operations and decision-making.

Police Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the City Council. Consistent with the Ralph M. Brown Act, BOPC meetings are held in public with opportunity for members of the public to address the Board and express their views on the matters before it. While these appointment and meeting processes ensure a democratic framework for the selection of the individuals who serve the City as Police Commissioners, and for routine public input, the structural insulation of the BOPC from day-to-day political pressures facilitates a data-driven decision-making process focused on long-term, deliberative policy development and accountability rather than short-term political cycles.

Any structural changes that would diminish the BOPC's independence should be approached with caution, as unintended disruptions to established oversight mechanisms may weaken accountability, reduce operational efficiency, and erode public confidence. The BOPC's effectiveness depends on maintaining a boundary between direct political influence and independent decision-making, oversight, and review, as well as on the professional advisory infrastructure consisting of employees with policing expertise that informs and guides the BOPC's decision-making process. Preserving the BOPC's structural independence is essential to maintaining credibility and stakeholder confidence, and to the continued capacity of the BOPC to provide evidence-based, consistent decision-making and leadership. For these reasons, the Police Commission does not support the Charter Reform Commission's recommendations that propose shifting policy-making authority from the BOPC to the City Council.

In addition to their consideration of the Charter Reform Commission's recommendations regarding the authority of the BOPC itself, the BOPC President and Executive Director have consulted with LAPD officials regarding the recommendations that directly relate to the LAPD. As indicated in its attached report, the LAPD has concerns regarding the recommendations. The BOPC shares some of those concerns. For example, the recommendations relating to the LAPD's disciplinary process are insufficiently developed and raise significant unanswered questions. The proposal that the City Council would assume authority to veto and remand determinations by a Board of Rights (BOR) back to the BOR, and to ultimately override determinations of the BOR, raises a raft of unanswered questions as to the scope of such actions, the procedures by which such vetoes would be decided, the impacts on due process and procedural integrity, labor relations implications, legal viability, and the fiscal impact to the Department. Similarly, the proposal to grant authority to the Chief of Police to directly remove officers for certain types of misconduct lacks definition and raises unanswered questions that, should the recommendation be carried forward, would threaten to undermine the effective functioning of the most critical component of the LAPD's disciplinary system. The LAPD has recently concluded a lengthy and comprehensive internal review of its disciplinary processes and the BOPC will be considering a series of policy reforms in the coming months to enhance the effectiveness of the overall disciplinary system. Consistent with its evidence-based, deliberative policy-making methodology, the BOPC believes that this process provides a preferable pathway to improving accountability as well as stakeholder confidence in LAPD discipline.

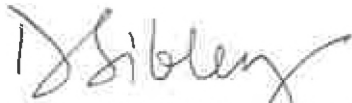
The Honorable Marqueece Harris-Dawson

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The BOPC recognizes and appreciates the good intentions underlying proposals to increase accountability and responsiveness to stakeholder concerns and is committed to the continual improvement of the services LAPD provides and to the protection of the public's constitutional rights. It is with these objectives in mind that the BOPC will continue to work with stakeholders as it undertakes the above-mentioned discipline policy review process, its current review of pretextual stops and associated policy, and its ongoing work ensuring compliance with the Mayor's Executive Directive No. 17, to name but a few of its current areas of focus.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Sibley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DJANGO SIBLEY, Executive Director
Board of Police Commissioners

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May 21, 2026

The Honorable Marqueece Harris-Dawson
President, Los Angeles City Council
City Hall, Room 450
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Councilmember Harris-Dawson:

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) respectfully submits this letter to underscore the historic role of the OIG, the progress achieved through independent civilian oversight, and the importance of preserving the structure that has enabled Los Angeles to become a national leader in civilian oversight of law enforcement. At a time when the City Council is considering structural changes to the City's model of oversight, it is critical that any reforms strengthen, rather than unintentionally weaken, the independence, access, and institutional stability that have been established over decades.

The Origins of the Office of the Inspector General

The OIG was created by a voter-approved amendment to the City Charter in 1995. Its original mandate was straightforward but essential: to inspect, on behalf of the Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC), the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD or Department) handling of misconduct complaints and to perform other duties assigned by the Commission. The creation of the OIG reflected a recognition that meaningful oversight requires independence from the Department it reviews.

The need for this independence arose from hard lessons. The 1992 Los Angeles uprising and the subsequent Christopher Commission revealed patterns of excessive force, racial bias, and systemic failures in accountability. Those findings demonstrated that effective civilian oversight must be institutionalized, permanent, and empowered.

The Rampart Incident and the Expansion of Authority

The late-1990s Rampart corruption scandal further exposed the consequences of inadequate oversight. The incident prompted sweeping reform. Beginning in 2000, the OIG's authority was significantly strengthened. The office gained the power to initiate audits and investigations without prior BOPC approval, guaranteed access to all Department records, and subpoena authority.

These changes transformed the OIG from a complaint-review body into a comprehensive oversight institution capable of systemic review and reform.

Federal Oversight

In 2001, the City of Los Angeles entered into a federal consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice following a civil-rights investigation into LAPD practices. The decree required reforms in nine major areas, including:

- Management and supervisory measures to promote civil rights integrity;
- Critical incident procedures, documentation, investigation, and review;
- Management of gang units;
- Management of confidential informants;
- Program development for response to persons with mental illness;
- Training;
- Integrity audits;
- Operations of the Police Commission and Inspector General; and,
- Community outreach and public information.

A federal monitor worked closely with the OIG to evaluate compliance. In 2013, the court terminated federal oversight entirely after finding the Department in substantial compliance. At that point, responsibility for maintaining reform passed fully to local oversight, principally the BOPC and the OIG.

Oversight in Practice

Today, the OIG retains authority to initiate audits and reviews unless directed otherwise by a majority of the Commission. The office has direct access to LAPD records, data, and personnel, and all employees have an affirmative duty to cooperate.

This access enables timely, independent, and data-driven oversight. Among other work, the OIG has:

- Analyzed LAPD's detentions (or stops) of individuals;
- Reviewed the LAPD's use of data-driven policing strategies; and,
- Evaluated the LAPD's implementation of selected national best practices as identified by the Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

These efforts illustrate the value of an oversight structure that combines independence with meaningful institutional access.

Independent Oversight of Use-of-Force Investigations

A core responsibility of the OIG is oversight of the Department's response to categorical uses of force. The OIG personnel deploy to the scene of these incidents around the clock to observe and assess the Department's initial response and investigative steps.

This real-time presence allows the OIG to ensure that evidence is properly preserved, investigative protocols are followed, and the Department's response reflects established policy and procedures. The OIG then monitors the Department's internal investigation and subsequent review process from start to finish.

For each categorical use-of-force incident, the OIG conducts an independent assessment and prepares a detailed report for the BOPC. These reports evaluate the tactics used, the thoroughness and objectivity of the Department's investigation, and the adequacy of the Department's conclusions and recommendations. This process provides the Commission with an independent, contemporaneous analysis that strengthens accountability and public confidence in the review of critical incidents.

Relationship Between the OIG and the Board of Police Commissioners

The BOPC provides a civilian oversight structure insulated from day-to-day political pressures. This relationship gives the OIG a stable reporting framework focused on long-term accountability rather than short-term political cycles.

Any structural changes that alter this relationship should be approached with caution, as unintended disruptions to established oversight mechanisms may weaken accountability, reduce operational efficiency, and erode public confidence. Expanding the City Council's authority over the BOPC could create new pathways for reform, but it also carries risks. The OIG's

effectiveness depends on maintaining a clear boundary between political influence and independent audit and review. Preserving this independence is essential to maintaining credibility and public trust.

Ongoing Work and Community Engagement

The OIG's effectiveness depends not only on access to data and records, but also on sustained engagement with the community. Oversight is strongest when it is informed by lived experience as well as empirical analysis.

The OIG regularly participates in public forums, stakeholder meetings, and community listening sessions. These engagements provide a direct channel for residents, advocates, and local leaders to share concerns, identify emerging issues, and help shape the office's priorities. Planned town halls and public meetings will further expand these opportunities for dialogue and transparency.

Community input plays a meaningful role in guiding the OIG's work. Current areas of review, including but not limited to, pretextual stops, crowd control and protest management, the use of automated license-plate readers, immigration-related policies, and the Board of Rights disciplinary process, reflect concerns raised repeatedly by community members. By integrating these perspectives into audits, policy reviews, and recommendations, the OIG helps ensure that oversight remains responsive to the public it serves.

This ongoing engagement also strengthens trust. The OIG's integration into Department processes—through participation in trainings, ride-alongs, and major meetings and discussions—allows the office to translate community concerns into practical, data-driven recommendations.

The National Context for Civilian Oversight

This discussion also arises at a moment when independent oversight is under increasing pressure nationwide. In recent years, inspector generals and oversight bodies have faced removal, budgetary pressure, and challenges to their independence.

Against that backdrop, Los Angeles stands out. The City has spent decades building a deeply integrated civilian-oversight system that combines independence, access, and community engagement. At a time when many jurisdictions are retrenching, Los Angeles has an opportunity to reaffirm its leadership by preserving and strengthening the structures that have proven effective.

Conclusion

Los Angeles has built a robust system of civilian oversight through decades of reform. That system was shaped by crisis, strengthened through federal oversight, and sustained through local commitment.

While continued refinement and improvement of civilian oversight are appropriate and necessary, Los Angeles should preserve the foundational structure that has proven effective over decades. Reforms should build upon, not dismantle or weaken, the independence, access, and institutional authority that have made this progress possible. Maintaining a strong and independent Inspector General is essential to ensuring that the City continues to advance transparent, accountable, and community-informed policing.

We remain committed to working with you to ensure that Los Angeles continues to lead in civilian oversight and police reform.

Very truly yours,
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew J. Barragan", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

MATTHEW J. BARRAGAN
Inspector General
Police Commission

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

May 20, 2026
1.14

TO: Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

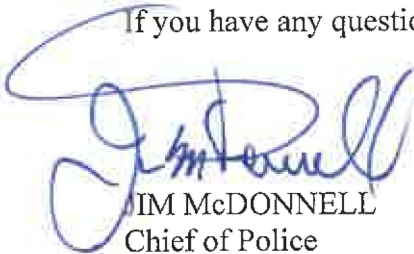
FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Los Angeles Charter Reform Commission Final Report

The Los Angeles Police Department (Department) opposes Reform No. 1, 2, and 3 in the Los Angeles Charter Reform Commission Report as they are currently written. Reform No. 1 diminishes the authority of the Board of Police Commissioners to establish Department policy. Additionally, Reform No. 3 eliminates the authority of the Chief of Police and the Board of Rights process for personnel actions by inserting Council as the last and final decision. As they are currently written, Reform No. 1 and No. 3 require further detailed analysis because the fiscal and legal ramifications are unknown. The Department opposes Reform No. 1 and No. 3 and proposes that the Chief Legislative Analyst completes a thorough assessment to ensure their feasibility.

With regard to Reform No. 2, which references liability insurance for officers, the Department is concerned that the recommendation is underdeveloped and lacks definition as to the scope of the coverage contemplated. Additionally, the availability of such insurance at the cost proposed is uncertain, and the fiscal impact of the recommendation at a time of tight budgetary pressures presents a concern. As such, the Department cannot offer their support to this recommendation at this time. Moreover, should future analysis reveal that such a measure is warranted, implementation would not require an amendment to the City's Charter. The Department opposes Reform No. 2 and proposes that the Chief Legislative Analyst completes a thorough fiscal assessment of the reform and an actuarial study.

If you have any questions, please contact me, at (213) 486-0150.



JIM McDONNELL
Chief of Police