



Portland’s New Police Oversight System – September 2023

Comparing the current system to that proposed by the Police Accountability Commission.

Background

City Charter Section 2-10 was voted into existence in November, 2020. It establishes an oversight system to replace the current one with a more community-run, empowered system.

The Police Accountability Commission (PAC) spent 20 months from December 2021 to August 2023 designing what the new system will look like.

In the PAC's plan, the new **Community Board for Police Accountability (CPBA)** will have 33 members who rotate through three-year terms and hear cases in panels of five or more. The Charter requires the Board membership to represent diverse lived experiences, including those who experience systemic racism and/or mental illness, addiction, or alcoholism. The charter also prohibits current and former officers and their families from Board membership. The CPBA hires the Director of the **Office of Community-based Police Accountability (OCPA)**.

Portland City Council will vote on September 21, 2023 whether to accept the PAC's report. Following that, the City needs to send proposed revisions to the US Department of Justice Settlement Agreement to accommodate the way the new system will work.

Differences Between the Proposed and Current Systems

New System (proposed)	Current System	Source
The new Board is community-led with investigations run by non-police investigators . The new Community Board for Police Accountability will hire the Director of the new Office of Community-based Police Accountability. Cases will move through one system.	In the current system, cases are routinely shifted among four systems : the City's Independent Police Review (IPR); the Police Bureau's Internal Affairs unit (IA); the Citizen Review Committee (CRC), and the Police Review Board (PRB).	Charter Sections 2-1001 and 2-1005
The new Board will make decisions about whether officers violated policy and corrective action/discipline if appropriate.	Currently, only in the appeals process (at CRC) are community members the majority decision-makers. If the Chief disagrees with the committee's findings, City Council makes the final decision.	Charter 2-1007, proposed code 35D.180
The new Board will investigate deadly force incidents and allow for community members to appeal findings in those cases if officers initially have findings other than "out of policy."	In the current system, IPR can go to the scene of deadly force incidents, observe the investigations, and vote on proposed findings at the PRB, but cannot investigate . The CRC has been told that they cannot hear appeals on deadly force cases .	Charter Section 2-1008, proposed code 35D.240
The new system will provide complaint navigators to community members from the beginning to the end of the process.	In the current system, a person only gets access to an "Appeals Process Advisor" toward the end of the process when there is an appeal filed.	Proposed code 35D.090
The new system will make recommendations about police policy, training, directives, & practices to the Chief. If the Chief doesn't accept the Board's policy recommendation, the new oversight board may send it to the City Council , and the Charter mandates that the Council votes whether to approve the recommendation.	In the current system, IPR and CRC can make recommendations and the Chief can decide whether or not to accept them, without City Council's involvement.	Charter Section 2-1007b

More Information

The Proposed City Code and Final Report (as of 9/16/23 the Report is still a draft) are available on the City's Police Accountability Commission site (portland.gov/police-accountability); check the “PAC Final Recommendations” link for updates.

This flyer was created by Portland Copwatch and is also available online at <https://tinyurl.com/PDXoversight2023>

For more information call Portland Copwatch at 503-236-3065 or email copwatch@portlandcopwatch.org

Disclosure: Portland Copwatch member Dan Handelman served as a member of the Police Accountability Commission.