AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE PORTLAND POLICE BUREAU: Agency Culture, Community Perception, and Public Safety in a Time of Change

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Introduction

The City of Portland initiated this project in the spring of 2021, a time when the Portland Police Bureau ("PPB") was bearing the brunt of multi-faceted criticism and concern. Much of this revolved around the George Floyd protest movement, in terms of both the unparalleled street demonstrations themselves and the substantive calls for reform that animated them. The ensuing months of demonstrations and clashes had become a national story – and magnified the strains between PPB and its detractors.

By April, the Bureau was also reckoning with a disappointing regression in its progress with the requirements of the settlement agreement between the City and the United States Department of Justice. This too was a byproduct of PPB's handling of the protests. In spite of having accomplished a great deal in satisfying the requirements of a 2014 settlement agreement with DOJ, the Bureau now faced questions about the thousands of force deployments that had occurred in 2020, and the seeming gaps in its record-keeping, review, and accountability regarding those actions. A formal letter of "non-compliance with settlement terms" extended the federal supervision and cast an additional shadow over the agency.

Other developing controversies complicated other fractious relationships. One of these was the inappropriate leak of confidential information relating to a hit-and-run accident that the Bureau was investigating – and that had initially named a City Commissioner as the subject. This was problematic on multiple levels, not the least of which (as Bureau investigators soon learned) was that the Commissioner had not, in fact, been involved in the accident.

In early June, the indictment by the District Attorney of a PPB officer for alleged excessive force in the context of protest response the previous summer further illustrated the disconnect between the Bureau and other local stakeholders. While many protest participants applauded the move as at least one gesture in the direction of accountability, PPB members saw it as further evidence of the misguided, distorted lens through which the protests had been

viewed. The Bureau drew national headlines when its entire "Rapid Response Team," a group of specially trained crowd control officers that had been highly utilized during protest response, resigned from their roles on the day after criminal charges were announced against their colleague.

As notable as each of these episodes was, they were accompanied by a broader, more fundamental reminder of shortcomings in the City's approach to public safety. The number of documented shooting incidents and homicides had increased alarmingly, and with no consensus as to causes or solutions.

Against this daunting backdrop, one of the many ideas generated by Portland's leadership was a study of PPB culture. The goal was to achieve a better understanding of – and to constructively address – some of the troubling perceptions about the Bureau that had developed over time, and that unfortunately seemed more pronounced than ever.

The City's framing of the review, which ultimately resulted in this Report, was as follows:

> **Community Perception of Racial Bias:** Are PPB's policies, culture, actions, or outcomes driven by racial bias? If so, what is the extent of any racial bias, what are the root causes of any racial bias, and what are the best practices to addresses those root causes?
>
> **Community Perception of Political Bias:** Are PPB's policies, culture, actions, or outcomes driven by political bias? If so, what is the extent of any political bias, what are the root causes of any political bias, and what are the best practices to address those root causes?
>
> **Community Perception that PPB is Resistant to Change:** Are PPB's policies, culture, actions, or outcomes resistant to change sought by the community? If so, what is the extent of this resistance, what are the root causes of this resistance, and what are the best practices to address that resistance?

The assignment of answering these questions went to OIR Group, a team from southern California that specializes in the independent review of police

practices.[1] Our familiarity with Portland and with the Bureau stems from a series of formal reviews that OIR Group has undertaken regarding PPB officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths. Our public reports on those evaluations, which date back to 2010, provide detailed accounts not only of the incidents themselves but also our evaluation of the resulting internal investigations, and our recommendations for future adaptations in policy or procedure.

That notion of "recommendations" proved to be a significant element in this cultural assessment of the Bureau along the lines of racial bias, political bias, and resistance to change. As drafted by the City, the scope of work sought ideas about "best practices" to address identified issues. And this was reinforced in our conversations with City leadership, during which the desire for concrete, attainable suggestions for improvement was a consistent point of emphasis.

The Report that follows is the product of our attempt to define the cultural mindset of the PPB, to the extent that the views of its individual members (with their varying perspectives and experiences) lend themselves to collective characterization. We combined our independent knowledge of the City's recent history with the input we received from community members, activists, and elected officials, and incorporated those elements into our efforts to question, challenge, and understand the PPB representatives with whom we interacted. We spoke with a number of individual Bureau members from all different rank levels, and offered the entire agency the chance to participate in a survey that explored the issues within our scope of work.[2]

We were disappointed that our plan to conduct a survey of the Portland community could not be timely actualized due to logistical roadblocks. But we did review of a number of recent existing surveys and spoke with community leaders, activists, and other engaged members of the public, some of whom

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[1] OIR Group is led by Michael Gennaco, a former federal prosecutor and a nationally recognized leader in the field of police oversight. For 20 years, OIR Group has worked in a range of jurisdictions throughout California and in several other states. It has extensive experience in the monitoring of police operations and administrative reviews. It consults on policy and practice, conducts investigations, and contributes to accountability and transparency through public reports. Its website is www.oirgroup.com.

[2] We discuss our specific survey methodology in detail below.

reached out to us directly to share their views. We also spoke with some retired Bureau members as well as numerous City employees not connected to the Police Bureau. We reached out to all five Commissioners, and met with three of them, including the Mayor. We are grateful to all of those who generously gave us their time, without which we would not have been able to complete our work. Unfortunately, due to pandemic-related restrictions, all of our interactions were virtual, mainly conducted via Zoom; this sometimes proved limiting in ways that were frustrating if unavoidable.

The conclusions we discuss below are not definitive with regard to answering the central questions in "yes or no" fashion. Certainly, our overall impressions were more nuanced than those of Portland residents who asserted as a given that the Bureau's culture was irredeemably racist, and that meaningful reform must begin by confronting that reality. Nor were we persuaded by those few PPB members who bristled at the mere mention of familiar critiques, and insisted instead that bias against *them* was central to the heightened dysfunction in their City. But the starkly contrasting views at either end of the spectrum were helpful: valuable both on their own terms and as a frame for considering the range of insights that fell within them.

And, importantly, there were useful threads that emerged over the course of the project and gave coherence to the multi-faceted feedback we received. There were ways that outside criticism overlapped tellingly with internal self-scrutiny. There was a recognition that statistics showing disparities in enforcement practices were real, and that they needed to be understood and reckoned with more effectively.

Unequivocally, we also came away with the understanding that troubling community perceptions about bias have a foundation in history and in dynamics that exist today, and that grappling with them constructively should be a priority – as many PPB members are willing and able to acknowledge.

In the sections that follow, there are several main themes that the Report develops, and that have prompted the recommendations that we offer in response:

- ***The Bureau's collective morale is low in ways that arise from and perpetuate antagonisms with parts of the Portland community – including local elected officials.***

  The concept of low morale as an identified concern was among the most universal (and least surprising) elements of the feedback we received. The reasons for this are numerous. Clearly, though, the 2020 combination of extraordinary demands and intense hostility/criticism left its mark on the membership. The repeated references to a "lack of support" from City government seemed even more acute than frustrations with protesters – and have seemingly contributed to a self-perpetuating dynamic of distrust and resentment. Such feelings are particularly focused against those in City government who are perceived to be "anti-police" and therefore undermining to Bureau operations.

- ***Some of the morale issues stem from the awareness that the Bureau is characterized as racially and politically biased by the community it serves in ways that its members overwhelmingly deny.***

  On the whole, Bureau members were clear in their rejection of any narrative that framed the agency as racially discriminatory. They also rejected the notion that their political views influenced their handling of specific situations or their treatment of specific groups. Skeptics are unlikely to be assuaged by such claims, particularly in light of high-profile cases that provide indicia of a discriminatory approach. Moreover, the studies showing collective disparate treatment of persons of color means that the Bureau's way of performing public safety in Portland has impacts that are not color blind. Our own impressions were shaped by multiple examples of thoughtful explanation and nuance in considering these important questions.

- ***Some of the morale issues also stem from a perception of leadership gaps, and a sense that Bureau management should assert itself more definitively, both internally and externally.***

  One refrain that emerged consistently from the different sources of PPB member input was frustration with agency leadership, in part because of a perceived lack of firm support for (or even engagement with) rank-

and-file officers. Interestingly, though, it had several facets. There was a shared sense that steady turnover at the Chief level has inevitably limited the development of a clear, coherent direction for the agency – as has the structure of City government itself. Beyond that, though, officers expressed disappointment that the management level had not been more consistently "front and center" in dealing with the protest challenges, both at City Hall and in the field. And knowledgeable parties outside and *within* the agency noted a tentativeness when it came to imposing new policies or dealing with the labor association.

- ***While PPB survey respondents and interview subjects provided nuanced insights that somewhat counterbalanced community perceptions, it remains true that individual episodes or patterns that cause concern about bias are often not addressed effectively within the Bureau.***

  Historical realities, structural inequities, political leanings, and individual prejudices have manifested themselves in specific examples and incidents that are justifiably cited by critics of PPB as troubling. While there is a basis for Bureau members' adamant assertions that the truth is often more complex than the portrayals (with the protest experience being a prime example), defensiveness can impede acknowledgement of genuine shortcomings and problems.

- ***The Bureau lacks effective connections to the community, and needs to refresh its approaches in a variety of ways.***

  This is a multi-faceted problem – and an obvious priority for altering the landscape in Portland. PPB members acknowledged a lack of meaningful community ties, and a detrimental withering of relationships with people most connected to grassroots neighborhood concerns. In addition to calls for more focused emphasis on training and supervision in promoting these ties, one notable question was how best to go beyond established entities to build bridges with a new generation of activists and community representatives.

- ***The Bureau's approach to information-sharing suffers from multiple limitations in ways that undermine public confidence.***

  For various structural and cultural reasons, PPB has fallen short of communicating with its public in ways that enhance understanding and trust. On the contrary, there are deep suspicions about the accuracy of the information that does go out, and concerns about what is routinely withheld. Meanwhile, inside the agency, there is frustration that PPB does not put its "best foot forward" in publicizing important realities and accomplishments that could alter the narratives about the agency.

- ***Effective recruiting and hiring are central to the Bureau's organizational health for the immediate future***.

  The notion that the Bureau's effectiveness is undermined by staffing shortages is widely shared within the agency. This is a familiar lament across law enforcement, but the realities in Portland are statistically more persuasive than in other jurisdictions. Still, there is a recognition that simply "adding bodies" is less important than attracting individuals who are prepared to embrace new expectations.

- ***With some justification, the public is skeptical about the Bureau's commitments to accountability.***

  The overwhelming success of the 2020 ballot measure calling for a new – and significantly more empowered – independent oversight entity belies the notion that concerns about officer misconduct are limited to a small number of misleadingly influential critics. Since that time, the process of implementing this ambitious new model has been slow, in part because of PPB challenges. This dynamic has lent itself to the reinforcement of perceptions that PPB is resistant to appropriate scrutiny, intractable in its dismissal of other perspectives, and reluctant to recognize or remediate officer wrongdoing.

To their credit, the City and the Bureau have been moving forward on multiple fronts during the pendency of this project. One noteworthy work in progress is the collaborative effort toward creation of a new "Focused Intervention Team" designed to address street violence. The team will be a special unit of carefully selected PPB members that will seek to address gun violence through direct connections in the community. Unlike previous iterations of

Bureau personnel dedicated to the cyclical nature of some shootings, this group will be guided in part by – and newly accountable to – an appointed group of community advisors with relevant backgrounds and expertise.

The ultimate effectiveness of the FIT initiative obviously remains to be seen. But to us, it constitutes a significant step in the direction of a beneficial new model: one that acknowledges the reality of gun violence in the City and recognizes the importance of the law enforcement role in addressing that problem, but incorporates policing into a community-driven and holistic approach. Ideally, this Report will help to illustrate why more of such approaches are needed in Portland – and how they might work for the benefit of all concerned.

This includes the many Bureau representatives whose candid input was critical to our efforts. At a time when many PPB members are wary of the intentions of outsiders and weary of being critiqued, we were especially appreciative of the insights we gleaned from all who cooperated with this project.

PPB and Bias: Bases for Community Concern

As we discussed above, our assignment did not come out of a vacuum. Instead, it is an additional response to longstanding dynamics that the City and the Bureau have grappled with for decades, and with new intensity in the aftermath of the George Floyd protest movement and Portland's genuinely unique experience of it. Here, we provide an overview of the key issues framed by the City, and the elements that collectively have given rise to the questions the City posed.

Racial Bias

As we say throughout this Report, the extent to which racial bias (either consciously or implicitly) shapes the culture and practices of the PPB is a question that does not lend itself to conclusive answers. But a starting point is to acknowledge the legitimacy of the question, given the history of the City in general and the Bureau in particular. There are various components to this, including a legacy of overtly racist incidents that generated much public outrage – but often a tepid internal response – and years' worth of data that show a statistical overrepresentation of Black people in the Bureau's stops, arrests, uses of force, and officer-involved shootings.

Some of the anecdotal examples that were shared with us are both dated and rightly infamous. These included the 1981 incident that connected Portland officers to the dumping of dead possums outside a Black-owned restaurant – an act that was understood by community members as a malicious and vile attempt at intimidation but was defended as a "mere prank" by participants. It led to intense protest and widespread condemnation in the City, but the officers were strenuously defended by their association, and attempts to fire them were ultimately overturned.

Similarly, memories linger for many Portland residents about the death of Lloyd "Tony" Stevenson, a 31-year-old Black man who died in 1985 after being subjected to a carotid hold by a PPB officer. While the officer's actions – and lack of accountability – were themselves concerning, the incident reached new levels of notoriety when two PPB officers produced and sold T-shirts saying "Don't Choke 'Em, Smoke 'Em" that were sold to fellow officers; the obnoxious slogan was a response to the temporary moratorium on use of the carotid hold that had been imposed by the Bureau's then-Chief.

More contemporary episodes also exist: the 2014 Facebook posts by multiple officers that depicted a modified PPB badge along with a supportive reference to Darren Wilson, whose shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri had ignited national protest. The 2017 "joke" by a PPB sergeant to fellow officers in the immediate aftermath of the controversial and fatal shooting of a 17-year old Black youth, in advising that they "just shoot" any Black person they encounter in the context of the specific enforcement operation he was describing. And as recently as 2019, the pre-employment social media postings that connected a newly hired officer with a militant right-wing group and generated public complaints that remained resonant with Portland activists whom we met this fall.

While current leadership of the Bureau does not "own" any of these historically troubling episodes, the Bureau itself does. Leadership should accordingly take appropriate opportunities to further acknowledge them as a way of ensuring forward progress. Moreover, new officers should be overtly exposed to them as conduct that is no longer acceptable. Both of these are steps current Bureau leadership acknowledges as legitimate and asserts it has taken at various times and in different contexts.

A broader, City-wide "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" may hold some answers for how the Bureau can finally move past some of its most troubling historical moments. We understand the City is engaging in initial, conceptual planning for that type of process, and we encourage the Bureau's continued engagement in those discussions.

Another component of this history that is frustrating to the public is the apparent inability of the Bureau to hold offenders sufficiently accountable for racially inflammatory remarks. Part of this is the failure to revise disciplinary guidelines to allow for dismissal for this category of repugnant comments. As we discuss and recommend below, a robust initiative designed to change

those guidelines would assist in sending a message to officers that such comments will no longer be tolerated. As importantly, it will reassure the community that the Bureau does not want such individuals providing public safety to Portlanders and has developed effective tools to enforce this principle.

The broader significance of individual acts of misconduct, even when they are as egregious as these, remains debatable. (And it should be noted that Bureau leadership often sought to impose appropriately severe sanctions in these cases, though with limited success.) What *is* fairly attributable to the Bureau more generally is the tone-deafness and defensiveness with which it has often reacted to such controversies.

The Association has been prominent in this regard, and the aggressive posture of its leadership reflects on all the officers whom the union represents. Some of this "goes with the territory" of their role as advocates. But we have worked with police labor groups in other jurisdictions whose approach is notably less reactionary and severe.

A 2017 incident makes for an interesting case in point. The Association reacted negatively and publicly to the Mayor's job posting seeking a new Chief that read, in part, that the City of Portland has "a history of legally sanctioned systemic racism and legally enforced exclusionary practices." The Association described its membership as "angry and confused" over the reference, choosing to perceive – and characterize it – as implying that the contemporary Bureau itself actively supported a racist culture.

The Mayor was quick to clarify his remarks. But he also expressed regret that the Association would opt for a "divisive" response to a description that many considered to be not only accurate but mild, and far from scapegoating the Bureau alone. A less pugnacious approach, such as acknowledging policing's problematic history while vouching for the integrity of current officers and a commitment to ongoing evolution, would obviously have left a different impression.

And it should hardly have been controversial. The willingness to recognize the role that national law enforcement has played in the perpetuation of slavery, Jim Crow, and structures of discrimination is a seeming baseline that contemporary police agencies should have long moved past – and is far from an inherent admission of current malice.

Apart from the long legacy of problematic episodes and the disappointing internal reaction to them, a wealth of statistics has emerged in recent years to quantify the disparities in policing activity relative to racial representation in the City. Numerous analyses have used PPB's own data to show significant racial disparities in policing practices, ranging from stops and arrests to officer-involved shootings.[3] We highlight just a few of the recent ones here as examples, with the idea that the numbers themselves have been well-documented.

In their own Stops Data Annual Report, PPB acknowledged: "the racial demographics of drivers stopped by PPB Traffic officers has significantly changed over the past five years, with officers stopping significantly more Hispanic (7.3% vs. 11.2%) and Black / African American (8.8% vs. 12.6%) drivers while stopping significantly fewer white drivers (71.3% vs. 69.4%)." And, further, that stop rates were higher for people of color than white drivers during the "stay-at-home" period of the pandemic.

PPB's arrest data, as analyzed by the group FiveThirtyEight, also showed racial disparities, ranking Portland fifth of the nation's 37 largest jurisdictions for arrest disparities. When the Bureau's 2019 arrest data was compared to Census data, FiveThirtyEight's analysis maintained that Portland police arrest Black people at a per capita rate that is 4.3 times higher than the arrest rate for white people.[4]

As for uses of force against subjects by PPB officers, the City of Portland's Training Advisory Council offered the following analysis in a 2020 publication called "Patterns in Portland Police Bureau Force Data Summary Reports": Black subjects experience force at a rate of 44.8 events per 1,000 custodies, significantly higher than the rate of 30.6 events per 1,000 custodies experienced by white subjects. The report found that 29% of all force incidents were used on Black subjects, even though only 6% of the City's population is Black.

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[3] To the agency's credit, its public website presents detailed statistical information about its operations across a number of significant categories.

[4] The full report is available on FiveThirtyEight's website: https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-biden-administration-wants-to-address-racial-bias-in-policing-what-cities-should-it-investigate/

Our own experience in reviewing PPB critical incidents coincides with these trendlines. We reported in 2019 that of 50 officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths reviewed during our work with the City over an eight-year period, 26% of the 50 critical incidents involved Black subjects.

These numbers are objectively consistent in reflecting the statistically disparate experiences of policing as between white and Black residents of the City.[5] The Bureau acknowledges as much. But its *interpretation* of that reality leads it to different conclusions – which is where frustrating stalemates have developed over the years and persist to this day.

In short, the Bureau's position tracks that of many law enforcement agencies who must confront similar patterns. It insists that its enforcement statistics can only be understood inside the larger contexts and dynamics that help to shape them, and over which they have limited control. These, of course, include the poverty and violence that strain communities of color to an equally disproportionate extent. They point out that many of their arrests are a function of calls for service to which they are merely reacting, and that the high percentage of crime *victims* who are Black is also a rightful source of civic concern.

It is a perspective that has elements of validity, as we discuss in more detail below.[6] Nonetheless, in our conversations with different members of the Bureau, we were struck by the vehemence with which they disputed the conclusions that were reached in recent high-profile statistical assessments. The 2018 audit of the Gang Enforcement Team's traffic stop patterns was cited repeatedly as a sort of "Exhibit A" of wrongheaded analysis that had damaging consequences to patrol effectiveness.

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[5] The dynamic was also reflected in arrest numbers during the initial months of the protest, when Black participants comprised 11% of the individuals who were arrested.

[6] We note also that the United States Department of Justice, whose teams are consciously searching for evidence of bias, did *not* make a finding of racial bias following its 2010 investigation, and the settlement agreement with the City in 2012 focused on disparate use of force against people in mental health crisis, but not against communities of color. This continues to be a point of contention for some community groups.

But in reviewing that audit ourselves, we noted that the findings revolved in part around deficiencies in the Bureau's *collection* of relevant data, and gaps in its meaningful *analysis* of that data. In other words, there was significantly more the Team and the Bureau could have been doing to enhance both the substantive effectiveness of its stops strategy, and the perceptions of public legitimacy in connection with it. At least one PPB executive conceded to us – if grudgingly – that this criticism had validity.

As we discuss in more detail below, the example is interesting for a few reasons, not the least of which is the different iterations of PPB violence prevention units that have followed that 2018 process. And it perhaps offers a path toward a more constructive approach to the perceptions of bias that are obstacles to PPB as well as to community confidence.

As a start, the Bureau needs to constructively examine its data – including use of force numbers – and use what it learns to guide its practices. PPB executives reported that the Bureau regularly performs proactive data analysis to identify trends and officer-specific patterns of practice. For example, the Bureau produces a quarterly "Applications of Force" report that identifies force used by every member and highlights where rates of force use have increased, or decreased, over time. And, in its internal report, "2021 Force Increase," the Bureau analyzed uses of force from 2019 to 2021 by various factors, including call and subject types, to better determine why use of force numbers had increased over the period. We encourage the Bureau to use this type of data analysis to determine if there are trends or patterns of practice that might indicate a need for specific additional training, counseling, or discipline and, to the extent that the data allows, include analysis of racial disparities.

We also noted that the Bureau currently publishes two quarterly dashboards on the City of Portland's public website. These dashboards present updated data on "Use of Force" and "Officer Involved Shootings" in an interactive format, including a breakout by demographics such as call type, type of force, injury, and subject and officer race. We commend the Bureau for developing these dashboards as a tool to increase data transparency, and encourage it to incorporate these into its public communications strategy.

> RECOMMENDATION 1: Bureau leadership should at appropriate times express formal contrition for prior episodes of racially discriminatory conduct.

RECOMMENDATION 2: New officers should be exposed to the prior discriminatory and racially charged conduct of Bureau officers in recent history and express messaging that such conduct will no longer be tolerated.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Bureau should continue to produce updated statistical dashboards relevant to racial disparity issues to increase transparency and show changes over time, and use these dashboards as part of regular communications with the community.

RECOMMENDATION 4: In its regular use of force analysis, the Bureau should identify any patterns of practice that may result in disparate uses of force specifically on persons of color.

Political Bias

The notion that Bureau culture, policies, and actions are driven by political bias takes a few different forms. First is that Bureau members are inappropriately involved in actual politics, as best evidenced by two recent cases – the leak of confidential (and inaccurate) information naming a City Commissioner as the perpetrator of a hit-and-run, and the violation of Oregon election law by a Bureau Commander who had opposed the candidacy of the District Attorney and spoken out in favor of his recall while acting in her official capacity.[7]

It is unclear whether the election law violation by the Commander will lead to disciplinary action by the Bureau. The initial position taken by the City's Independent Police Review Division (prior to the finding and imposition of a civil penalty by the Oregon Secretary of State) was that the Commander's actions did not violate the Bureau's existing directive on political activity. We recommend the language of that policy be tightened and aligned with the State's election laws.

[7] We understand that the Commander is appealing the adverse ruling by the Secretary of State.

These incidents are relevant to larger critiques that shape perceptions of the agency – namely, that the Bureau is "overly-politicized" and has become a "political pawn" in a City government structure that's become dysfunctional. Other critics said simply that many officers are "out of touch" with the City they serve – that a large majority of officers do not live in Portland and don't share the political views of a typical Portlander.

One example of this disconnect was the reaction of the Bureau's Rapid Response Team to the indictment of a fellow officer for using excessive force. This was particularly disquieting as a seemingly wholesale and organized repudiation of formal accountability measures – a further distancing of the PPB from a concerned community. So was the statement from a representative of the Police Association that the prosecution is "politically motivated" and the officer's use of force was "accidental." Though not unprecedented among law enforcement labor groups, it is nonetheless unfortunate that the Association has publicly criticized the prosecution of one of its officers and posited a specific defense in this fashion.

Any individual charged in a crime obviously carries the presumption of innocence and deserves effective representation. But a more prudent organization, recognizing the genuine questions that have arisen as to various aspects of the PPB force deployments in those admittedly challenging months, might trust the process and allow the proceedings to advance rather than criticize the decision based on incomplete information. While the Association's approach may provide some comfort for the charged officer, and reflect the sentiments of many in the beleaguered rank and file, the aggressive rejection of a decision by the prosecutor's office has been interpreted as another example of an organization that closes ranks rather than supports established processes.

The most resonant notion of "political bias," though, relates to the differential treatment of groups who organize and attend demonstrations in the City. This is a dynamic we saw played out in a number of cities during the summer of 2020 – a seeming study in contrasts between the police response to alt-right demonstrators (often carrying signs proclaiming "Blue Lives Matter") and those marching in support of racial justice and increased police accountability.

This dynamic existed in Portland well before the murder of George Floyd, however, as the City is the site of frequent protests and demonstrations. Portland's City Council recently approved a settlement stemming from a 2018

incident in which alt-right protesters carrying long guns faced no enforcement action from PPB, while police decided to deploy “flash bangs” to quell the progressive counter-protesters when tensions between the groups mounted, resulting in serious injuries to several attendees among the counter-protester group.

We frequently heard similar accounts and frustrations in conversations with community members about the Bureau’s tolerance for openly armed members of the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, or Three Percenters, in contrast to a seeming willingness to “crack down” aggressively on Antifa or Black Lives Matter protesters. The implication is that Bureau officers are aligned with the views of those on the right in a way that makes them sympathetic and non-threatening, while their disagreement or discomfort with those on the left more frequently prompts enforcement action.

Recent disclosure of an offensive meme that appeared in a 2018 training PowerPoint presentation – which we only learned about as we were finalizing this Report – provides further support for those who maintain that the Bureau is more sympathetic to groups with a far-right orientation while displaying intolerance to those on the left, to the point of celebrating violent conflict. The Mayor and the Chief have denounced the content of this training slide and contend it is not reflective of the Bureau’s values. In September 2021, the Bureau opened an Internal Affairs investigation into the origin and use of this material. There is an obvious need to ensure that investigation is conducted thoroughly and fairly, and for the Bureau to learn who was behind the decision to include the reference in training materials along with any articulated rationale for doing so. Importantly, the Bureau will need to be transparent about the investigation’s processes and outcomes.

While the initial focus of public concern and outrage was appropriately on the final slide, (which verbiage derived from a member of the alt-right movement), a review of the entire presentation through an equity/political lens would seemingly merit consideration as well. We hesitate to offer a detailed critique without being better versed on the presentation itself and the goals behind it. However, we noted slides that are not necessarily representative of evolving community sentiments, and that may unhelpfully (if unintentionally) fuel biased perceptions. For example, a slide featuring a white father flashing a peace sign and smiling as he crouches next to his young daughter is easily one of the most benign images, and a significant contrast to the violent imagery that

often features people of color. And an early slide makes reference to the "perceived" racial justice that animated the 1992 Los Angeles "Riots" in the aftermath of the notorious Rodney King trial. While other elements of the slide deck are more balanced, the negative attention the presentation has received for its final slide will ideally be an impetus for a more wholesale updating of the entire presentation.

There are, of course, more benign, less racially- or politically-charged explanations associated with how different groups of demonstrators relate to authority.[8] But given the history of systemic racism in Portland and the political tensions that exist within the City, the Bureau needs to do more to address the criticisms that will inevitably flow from any dissonances in approach.

As a start, the Bureau should take a more proactive role in identifying and addressing extremism and racism among its members. We heard from community members that they had located posts by PPB officers on social media sites indicating an affiliation with alt-right groups, but that those concerns were not taken seriously by IPR or the Bureau's Internal Affairs Division.[9] Investigating the truth of these claims was not part of our scope of work, but the existence of a perception that the Bureau and the City are unconcerned about the possible presence of white nationalists or extremists in its ranks undermines any effort to build the public's trust.

The Bureau must do everything it can to deal with extremism within the organization. Ensuring that all new personnel hired are free of any affiliations with extremist groups is an important step, and we recommend the Bureau ensure its hiring process is adequately addressing this. Prior to this year, the Bureau – like all other Oregon employers – was prohibited from asking recruits

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[8] In one city we've recently worked with, we heard police executives describe the "discipline" and "order" with which Proud Boys members marched, while labelling as "civil disobedience" the conduct of the Black Lives Matters protesters. For them, there was a clear preference for an approach that they experienced as *logistically* easier to contend with, apart from any viewpoint differences.

[9] Yet, according to media reports, an officer identified last year as a member of the Oath Keepers was referred by the Bureau for internal investigation. https://www.opb.org/article/2021/10/15/dozens-of-oregon-law-enforcement-officers-joined-far-right-oath-keepers-militia/

for access to their social media accounts. An amendment that went into effect January 1, 2022 changed that, and states:

> (1) Racism has no place in public safety.
>
> (2) Law enforcement officers hold a unique position in our community and must demonstrate principles of equity, transparency, honesty and trust with all members of society.
>
> (3) Membership or participation in hate groups, racial supremacist organizations or militant groups erodes public trust in law enforcement officers and community safety.
>
> (4) Participation in racist organizations and displays of symbols of racism or racial supremacy are at odds with the position of trust and authority law enforcement officers occupy in our community.[10]

That bill directed the State's Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to create a uniform background checklist for law enforcement agencies to assess applicants' "tendencies, feelings and opinions toward diverse cultures, races and ethnicities and differing social, political, economic and life statuses," and gives agencies the right to access applicants' social media accounts.

But it is just as important to identify those within the organization who espouse extremist views, because even a small number of those individuals can have an outsized impact on the entire Bureau by affecting culture as well as public perception.

Within the limits of constitutional protections of free speech and expression, the 2021 legislation also requires law enforcement agencies, to:

> adopt policies that set standards for speech and expression by officers in and outside the course and scope of employment. The policies must apply to all forms of speech and expression, including but not limited to film, video, print media, public and private speech and use of Internet services including but not

[10] House Bill 2936, amending ORS 659A.330, added to and made a part of ORS 181A.355 to 181A.670; ORS 659A.330(7).

> limited to electronic mail, file transfer, remote computer access, news services, social networking, social media, instant messaging, blogs, forums and video and other file-sharing sites.

Consistent with this mandate, the Bureau should ensure that its directives include a social media usage policy, and disciplinary guidelines should make clear to officers that "liking" and reposting white nationalist and extremist content could result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Beyond that, the Bureau should commit to working with community partners to address this issue, including an assurance it will thoroughly investigate allegations that particular members have ties to extremist groups.

> RECOMMENDATION 5: The Bureau should modify its directive on political activity by members to align its prohibitions with the parameters of Oregon election law.

> RECOMMENDATION 6: The Bureau should ensure that its background investigators thoroughly examine all applicants' social media posts and should eliminate from hiring consideration anyone found to have links to extremist groups or to have posted any communications associating themselves with racist viewpoints.

> RECOMMENDATION 7: The Bureau should require any potential hires to divulge any social media posts or affiliations that might cause discredit to them and the Bureau and should advise them that any subsequent discovery of undisclosed posts or affiliations could lead to discipline, including dismissal.

> RECOMMENDATION 8: Consistent with state law, the Bureau should modify its directives to make clear that membership or participation in hate groups, racial supremacist organizations or militant groups or posting on social media any communications associated with racist viewpoints is a violation of Bureau policy.

RECOMMENDATION 9: The Bureau should revise its disciplinary guidelines so that officers who associate with hate groups, racial supremacist organizations or militant groups, or display, make, or post on social media any statements or displays of racism or racial supremacy will be potentially subject to discharge.

RECOMMENDATION 10: The Bureau and/or the Independent Police Review Division should thoroughly investigate, to the extent permissible by law, all allegations that a Bureau member is associated with an extremist group or has posted on social media any communications associated with racist viewpoints.

Resistance to Change

While acknowledging that "change" in government agencies, especially law enforcement, can be more incremental and slowly paced than reform advocates might prefer , we noted some consistent themes in relation to perceptions about the Bureau's "resistance to change." The first relates to the concept of independent oversight. While we have enjoyed a positive relationship with the Bureau over our years of work in Portland, and found the various personnel we work with to be open to outside views and new ideas, the public's experience of actual reform doesn't always track with that experience of openness.

Among its other high-profile features, the November 2020 election in Portland delivered a resounding mandate to the notion of revamped and more vigorous independent oversight of the PPB. More than 80% of voters supported the measure. And within days of its electoral success, the concept was faced with renewed opposition from the Bureau's labor association, which had opposed it from the outset. The Police Association filed a formal grievance alleging that the new concept amounted to a unilateral (and thus impermissible) change in working conditions for its members.

Whatever validity the move had from a legal perspective,[11] the messaging was, in the view of many longtime observers, all too familiar. The PPA has a reputation and an established history of support for its members that has often taken the form of steadfast resistance to outside scrutiny of the Bureau. This is far from unique to Portland, but it has been a markedly influential dynamic over the years. And it seems reflective of a broader impression that the Bureau itself has left with many of the people who live in the City and/or engage with PPB on a regular basis.

Similarly, this year's setbacks in the DOJ compliance process were driven in part by the Bureau's recalcitrance with regard to the compliance officers' concerns. The issue was the agency's force review process in the aftermath of the protests, both in terms of the legitimacy of specific outcomes and the larger scope and rigor of the Bureau's review. A federal oversight process that was apparently heading toward successful completion became newly complicated, not only by the substantive realities of the protest response as a content area for DOJ concern, but by the Bureau's stated unwillingness to meet DOJ expectations that it considered beyond the scope of their agency's obligations.

We spoke to Bureau members who expressed frustration over what had transpired. In their view, the significant positive progress that had been made over several years had become overshadowed at a very late stage of the proceedings, and over issues that were not originally a focus of DOJ interest. This perspective struck us as having some validity, and the Bureau does deserve credit for the concrete strides it has made in achieving agreement compliance and instituting positive reforms. But the Bureau's disappointment over the incorporation of new protest issues into the federal oversight plan has seemingly taken counterproductive forms.

Another common thread in the perception of "resistance to change" stems from issues relating to accountability. Dissatisfaction with the legitimacy and rigor of the PPB administrative discipline process – as magnified by several high-profile examples of publicized cases – presumably fueled 2020's overwhelming public support of a new approach. But beyond the perception

[11] Our understanding is that subsequent changes to Oregon state law have facilitated the City's ability to move ahead in developing its new oversight model.

that officer misconduct is not addressed in effective ways,[12] there is a larger frustration that the Bureau itself is not sufficiently accountable to outside entities.

This dynamic has different components, including the inadequate communication and information-sharing that we discuss later in this Report. (Frustration with "stonewalling" or non-responsiveness was a recurring theme in our discussion with engaged members of the public.) Some of it, though, appears to be cultural in nature – a byproduct of both defensiveness and a disregard for the legitimacy of outside opinion that exists within a broad swath of law enforcement agencies.

But that paradigm, like many others in the context of police accountability and police-community relations, is shifting. Certainly, public expectations in Portland are galvanized in new, concrete ways. Whatever its past reputation and the justifications for it, the Bureau would be well-served to reconsider its posture and try instead to establish a positive, collaborative seat at the newly larger "table" where public safety reforms are developing.

One place to begin would be with the new oversight concept that was endorsed by voters and is currently being refined with the help of an appointed "ReThink Police Accountability" commission. In recognition of the value of its viewpoint as well as its need to be responsive, we encourage the Bureau to work with that group in proactive and constructive ways.

We have experienced our own version of Bureau intransigence as well. In our longtime role as reviewers of PPB officer-involved shootings and in-custody death cases, we have made numerous recommendations for reform. Some relate to the agency's internal review processes themselves, while others arise from the specific circumstances of the cases and offer suggestions for shifts in training, policy, or operational procedure. While our exposure to the Bureau's

[12] While this was somewhat outside the scope of our project, we did make note of conversations with knowledgeable parties outside *and within* the Bureau on this topic. They questioned the extent to which appropriate accountability (as opposed to determined, if strained, justifications for officer behavior) was the norm. This seemed especially true when it came to the review of force incidents, where officer actions are almost invariably defended by Bureau management.

progress on putting into practice any of these recommendations is limited to circumstances that arise in the context of future critical incidents, results have been mixed at best in our experience with regard to implementation.

It should be noted that the Bureau made quick and notable progress on some recommended reforms – training, policy, and equipment that resulted in officers more quickly rendering medical aid to wounded subjects, for example. But on others – the tendency for on-scene sergeants to forfeit their supervisory roles and assume tactical positions, for example – we have seen the same mistakes continue year after year, despite the Bureau's agreement with our repeated recommendations and its recurring pledges to implement reforms.[13]

This has been disappointing to us, particularly insofar as our interactions with Bureau members *during* the review process has often featured thoughtful dialogue and seeming agreement with proposed adjustments. We have worked with several other agencies that have engaged with our recommendations in a direct and public way – not necessarily to agree with them in their entirety, but to take formal responsibility for any disagreement, and to document efforts to implement those that they endorse. We would welcome the development of a similar process in Portland.

This phenomenon exists in other contexts where various community-based entities write reports and issue recommendations with no apparent deliberative consideration or implementation by the Bureau. As a result, community members have expressed frustration about a system in which there is ample opportunity to comment and develop recommendations designed to improve policing in Portland, but little effort undertaken to follow through in meaningful, accountable ways.

> RECOMMENDATION 11: The Bureau should seek out opportunities to offer constructive contributions to the City's pending process of developing a new oversight model.

[13] Part of this dynamic can be attributed to the recent phenomenon of rapid change at the Chief level. We have had initial indications of Bureau acceptance of recommendations fade away in the aftermath of turnover, with no seeming ownership by the next Chief to accomplish implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 12: The Bureau and/or the Independent Police Review Division should create a process for tracking the response to and implementation of recommendations for reform made by outside entities, and should regularly report to the public about progress on these measures.

One final area where change has been slow in Portland, at least relative to other large cities, is adoption of body-worn camera technology. The City and Police Bureau have not yet outfitted its officers with cameras, in part because of the lukewarm support of some advocates concerned about misuse and expense. However, as a result of a strong recent push from the United States Department of Justice ("USDOJ"), it appears that they will soon be deployed throughout the Bureau. While we had initial reservations about body-worn cameras, we find that the advantages of deployment outweigh any countervailing considerations.

That is only true, however, if a body-worn camera policy is adopted that is consistent with best practices regarding activation and review. We understand that the Association is pressing for a policy that allows officers to view body-worn camera footage prior to being interviewed about force or misconduct allegations.[14] Such a policy would not only be contrary to best investigative practices, but would also significantly undermine community support for the cameras as an accountability measure. While we acknowledge the challenges the Bureau faces in reaching consensus with the Association, our recommendation is consistent with USDOJ's position on the requirements for a policy governing use of body-worn camera recordings.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Any new body-worn camera policy must be consistent with best investigative practices, including obtaining a "pure statement" from officers in force and misconduct investigations prior to showing them the audio/video account.

[14] https://www.opb.org/article/2021/11/16/justice-department-body-camera-requests-portland-police/

Police Bureau Self-Perception: Survey Results and Conclusions

In this section, we delve into the results gleaned from the survey we prepared for Bureau members in furtherance of this project's goals. We recognized from the outset that there were advantages and limitations to obtaining feedback in this way. We needed to craft an instrument that would capture the relevant views and experiences of participants, do so in ways that could be quantified in the aggregate, and accomplish these goals with a measure of efficiency (so as not to impose unrealistically on people's time and attention).

We chose an online, Bureau-wide survey to gather data from the largest possible set of Bureau members. With an assistance of an academic and longtime research practitioner, we developed a survey of 45 questions that also included opportunities for respondents to share ideas in a written narrative.

We utilized various question and response types, such as simple multiple choice, ranking on "Likert" (e.g., ranking opinions from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") and "Bipolar" scales (e.g., ranking along a continuum of two opposite points), and open-ended response fields. We hosted our survey on SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey software platform.

The link to the survey was disseminated to all Bureau employees, including non-sworn personnel, via an email to the Bureau's entire listserv sent from the Chief's Office.[15] This Bureau-wide approach via a Chief's Message, rather than selecting sampling, was intended to ensure representation from all types of personnel in all ranks / positions. Participation in the survey was voluntary

[15] We are very grateful for the assistance of Bureau personnel in helping us distribute the survey and strategizing with us about how best to encourage member input, including setting up meetings and crafting follow-up messages to boost participation.

and encouraged by stating that the responses would be anonymous and reported in the aggregate.

The survey was then publicized during the first week of November via an introductory video that was created by OIR Group and meant to be played by sergeants during roll call. This video was also distributed for viewing by those who did not attend roll call, either because of their leave status or role in the Bureau.

The video was one component of an outreach effort that was itself informational for us. We knew that enlisting the voluntary cooperation of Bureau members would be challenging. This was in part because the ground was well-trodden. Over the past several years, experts, consultants, and even their own Police Association have requested that Bureau members at all levels respond to a myriad of questions related to their experiences, training and leadership. More than one person from the Bureau conveyed to us the sense that, at this point, the "average" officer is quite weary of being studied and critiqued. From that perspective, we are grateful that 277 employees eventually took time to participate, despite their likely and understandable experience of "survey fatigue."

Another challenge, and perhaps a deeper one, was overcoming the perception that our Report findings were largely preordained by a combination of our own biases and the impetus within City government behind the project. At the outset of the project, one elected official with whom we spoke offered an encouraging theory: perhaps Bureau members aggrieved by wrongful characterizations would welcome the opportunity to be heard. It was a note we tried to strike in our introductory video, and it may well have resonated for some portions of the agency. For others who declined to respond, though, it was seemingly not enough to overcome either inertia or distrust about the project's legitimacy.

This latter concern emerged most clearly in our discussion with the Police Association's Board, as we sought to enlist their support of the survey and other outreach. We met via Zoom to explain our role and answer questions. We appreciated the time the Board members offered us, and their respectful (if pointed) candor in sharing their skepticism about the project's aims. However, their request to see the survey's contents and to offer feedback prior to any commitment to support it eventually became a dead end, and our efforts at follow-up were unsuccessful.

Similarly, we were struck by the small number of sergeants who opted in to the several "virtual information" sessions we offered to accompany the survey's release. In coordination with Bureau management, and in time slots intended to correspond to the start of new shifts on both sides of the duty week, we were available to introduce ourselves, respond to any questions, and request the help of sergeants in promoting the survey as an opportunity for Bureau members to be heard.

Very few chose to attend. For those that did, their reasons seemed to be more about curiosity and professionalism than enthusiasm – and the most effusive comments were from people who (with good intentions) braced us for an underwhelming level of response from the Bureau as a whole. (A few, to be clear, also took the time to share their own detailed viewpoints in ways that were informative as well as generous.)

Data collection occurred from November 2 through December 2, 2021. Personnel could access the link at any time of day, even while on duty. The survey was available for completion on mobile devices, including phones and tablets, as well as on desktops.

Of 1040 Bureau members,[16] we received survey responses from the aforementioned 277 respondents, a response rate of 27%. We found this response rate, if disappointing, to be consistent with other recent online surveys of police officers.[17]

The majority (70%) of respondents were sworn personnel, ranking from officers up to Command Staff. The remaining 30% identified as non-sworn staff.[18]

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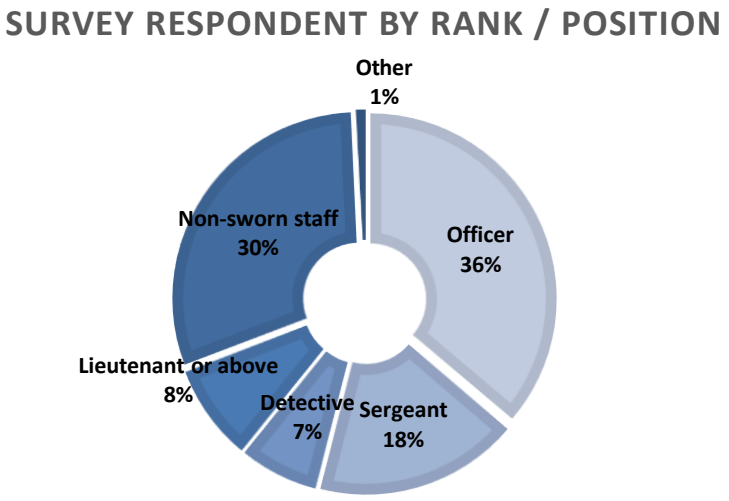
[16] All Bureau data was provided by PPB in the workbook, "Police Bureau Staff Demographic Breakdown, 1st Quarter FY 21/22 eff. 09/30/2021."

[17] See, for example, Bradley & Nixon, 2009; Thacher, 2008; Wood et al., 2007 and especially Nix et al., 2019, where the authors consider the possibility that law enforcement personnel are wary of survey research for a variety of external reasons.

[18] As previously noted, we did not collect any personal identifying information and responses were anonymous. And because we also offered the option of skipping survey questions, not all respondents answered all questions.



While nearly half of these were tenured members of the Bureau with over 15 years of service, 22% have been with the Bureau under 5 years. The majority of respondents (64%) reported that they did not live in the City of Portland, while 26% do and 11% preferred not to state their residence.

As we discuss below, the responses we received did provide an important cornerstone to the conclusions and recommendations that we ultimately reached. However, one qualifier that we note here, as elsewhere, is that the survey results were supplemented by a number of useful conversations with individual Bureau members that were obviously much more in-depth and nuanced. While those conversations did not negate or undermine the survey findings in any way, they did lend themselves to a more complete picture of the core issues that the Report addresses.

Here, as we do elsewhere throughout the Report, we list and describe Bureau members' responses with the goal of understanding their perspective and providing useful insight accordingly. We also note here that, while we periodically include our own assessments of the relevant issues, our sharing of the Bureau members' views is not by itself meant to imply an endorsement of their accuracy or validity. For example, many respondents discussed negative views about Bureau and City leadership, and the degree to which lack of community support impacts their work. These are not uncommon views in policing (or in the workplace), and should be recognized as both worth hearing and inevitably subjective.

Racial Bias

Concerns about racial bias in law enforcement are fundamental to the current national conversation – as they have been in one form or other for several years and even decades. And they have been discouragingly cyclical, marked by the same pattern of statistical disparities and discriminatory enforcement and troubling individual incidents, the same rationalizations and defenses and references to "bad apples," and the same moments of reckoning that slowly fade into a perpetuation of intractable dynamics.

As we discuss throughout this Report, historical realities in Portland and the PPB's own divisive reputation make biased policing a prominent concern in the City. Many residents and activists and caring observers take the racial bias of the Bureau as a given. Just as vehemently, individual Bureau members deny this outright – and insist that the antagonism they face on the basis of their supposed discrimination[19] has implications that are actually harmful to the very neighborhoods and community members whose status is at issue.

Stop telling us we're racist or being unconsciously racist when we are not and try supporting us verbally with the public and stop hiding from the fact that we are good people doing good work every day.

With this dynamic in mind, and with an awareness that national studies of racial bias have assembled a myriad of data without definitive success, we approached the topic in our survey (and in the Report more broadly) with two thoughts. One was to focus less on direct questions about people's *own* behaviors and attitudes, and more on their sense of the Bureau's culture more broadly. The other was to focus on ways that PPB could move beyond mere denial and somehow come to grips with – and help change – the reputation that exists and the reasons for it. In the survey, we accordingly asked personnel about their own perceptions of racial

[19] Some individual narrative comments that were included among the responses reflect a seeming rejection of the idea that we all possess some degree of unconscious bias, despite the Bureau's regular training on the concept.

bias *within the Bureau as a whole*, with the notion that candor and objectivity might increase if the lens were wider.

While we did not employ any formal sampling techniques to ensure representation across races, our respondent pool did end up somewhat reflecting racial make-up of the Bureau. And we noted that, when compared to the demographics of the City of Portland overall, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) are over-represented in the Bureau.

Our survey respondents' demographics as compared to Bureau totals are as follows:

Race / Ethnicity	Survey Respondents	Bureau Totals	Survey Respondents as % of Bureau
White / Caucasian	207	839	24.7%
Black / African American	13	40	32.5%
Hispanic / Latino	9	59	15.3%
Asian / Pacific Islander	8	70	11.4%
Native American	2	4	50.0%
Other (please specify)	5	28	17.9%
Prefer not to say	42	n/a	n/a

We asked three questions directly related to perceptions of racism.

First, we asked respondents to consider how personal racial views might impact the work of their fellow officers. This question was intended to understand the extent to which officers observed racial bias in the work of their fellow officers. Overall, most respondents reported that "none or close to none" of their peers allowed their work to be affected by their racial views. When we look at the data by race, we noted slightly different results, but this was not a statistically significant difference (when controlling for race, 78% of BIPOC responded "none or close to none," versus 84% of white / Caucasian).

Q29. I would estimate that the proportion of Bureau officers who sometimes allow their work to be unfairly affected by their racial views is. . .

None or close to none	83.46%	212
More than a few but less than half	12.99%	33
Half or more of all officers	3.54%	9
		254

We also asked personnel two questions regarding their perceptions of police stops.[20] The majority of personnel responded that officers "never or almost never" engage in what might be considered "biased policing," or stopping a person of color where they might not stop a white person.

Q27. Bureau officers will stop / question / arrest a person of color in situations where they might not do so with a white person. . .

Never or almost never	83.46%	212
Occasionally	9.06%	23
Sometimes	5.91%	15
Often	1.57%	4
		254

We also added a question asking the inverse dynamic: do officers *refrain* from stopping persons of color? We heard that officers might now be more cautious in their policing for fear of complaints, retaliation, or community perceptions of bias. As one member reported:

[20] Stop data is often used as a data point / measure in bias policing studies. Here, it is important to note that we asked personnel about their *perceptions* of police stops, not about the stops themselves. This issue has been a contentious one in the City, as we note elsewhere in the Report.

In regards to stopping individuals of color […] I am assuming this is absent probable cause of a crime and the question is asking if bureau members are seeking these individuals out based solely on appearance. I have never seen this and I truly believe bureau culture would not allow this to take place. I do believe the opposite is true and that officers will avoid stopping people of color for minor violations or petty crimes if possible. Why take the risk of being filmed or yelled at by bystanders if you don't have to, or can just ignore it? Simply stopping someone who could be perceived as a person of color to inform them of a headlight out with no intention of issuing a citation is "racial profiling" to bystanders.

Interestingly, the responses suggest that this may be happening in the Bureau, with 58% of respondents stating that it “sometimes” or “often” happens.

Q28. Bureau officers will refrain from stopping / questioning / arresting a person of color in situations where they might do so with a white person. . .

Never or almost never	16.60%	42
Occasionally	25.30%	64
Sometimes	30.83%	78
Often	27.27%	69
		253

Finally, we also asked respondents if they received “less favorable treatment from the Bureau than other officers” because of demographic factors such as their age, race, gender, or political views. These questions were meant to understand if personnel felt discrimination from within the Bureau. When we looked at results along demographic variables, we found that women and

persons of color reported experiencing less favorable treatment than their male white counterparts[21]:

- When asked if they experience less favorable treatment because of their gender, women were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement than men (37% of woman versus 9% of men)
- When asked if they experience less favorable treatment because of their race, those who identified as other than white / Caucasian were more likely to agree or strongly agree than white / Caucasian (17% of BIPOC versus 7.5% of white)

Finally, we asked respondents to provide their opinion on the need for racial bias training. To do so, we asked respondents to rank their point of view along a continuum of two opposite points, with "0" indicating that they agreed more with Statement A, "100" that they agreed more with Statement B, and "50" indicating that they were neutral on the topic.

> ***Statement A****: In general, the Bureau would benefit from increased training and other resources designed to prevent racial views from unfairly influencing officers' work.*
>
> ***Statement B:*** *In general, there is no great need in the Bureau for increased training or other resources designed to prevent racial views from unfairly influencing officers' work.*

Overall, respondents averaged a score of 66, meaning that they leaned slightly more toward "no great need for increased" racial bias training. But when we isolated the rankings by certain demographics, we found that:

Men averaged a score of 70 while women averaged a score of 57, meaning that men were more likely than women to believe there is ***no need*** for additional racial bias training.

Those who identified as "conservative" averaged a score of 79, while those who identified as "liberal" averaged as score of 48, meaning that liberals

[21] Findings across other demographic variables such as political view or age were similar across the relevant variable.

leaned more toward ***the need for more*** racial bias training (we discuss more differences based on political identification in the next section).

There was no marked difference between white respondents and persons of color, with those groupings averaging 67 and 65, respectively.

It is important to reiterate that these latter questions asked about respondents' own perceptions of less favorable treatment. These results suggest at least the personal *experience* of bias within the Bureau, and may be an area for further consideration for Bureau leadership.

Political Bias

The Bureau's handling of the protests was a focal point for allegations (one resulting in a lawsuit and significant settlement) that a conservative – or even hard-right – political orientation had improperly influenced the enforcement decisions of the agency and the behavior of individual officers. In 2021, the leak by PPB members of confidential information about an elected official's reported involvement in a hit and run traffic accident also exacerbated tensions about the Bureau's willingness to let political sentiments influence their handling of professional responsibilities. Accordingly, part of the project was designed to assess the reality of the Bureau's political culture and the possible influence of bias.

When it came to political points of view, our sample was fairly evenly divided, with 33% identifying as "very" or "somewhat conservative," 26% identifying as "very" or "somewhat liberal," 29% neither conservative or liberal. Approximately 12% preferred not to state their political viewpoint (N = 276).

We asked respondents to consider how political views impacted the work of their fellow Bureau members. When asked what proportion of Bureau officers "sometimes allow their work to be unfairly affected by their political views," the majority of all respondents collectively answered "none or close to none." But, when we analyzed the responses by their self-identified political views, the results were strikingly different. Of those who identified as "very" or "somewhat liberal," 29% responded that "more than a few but less than half" of Bureau officers allow their work to be unfairly affected by their political views,

versus a mere 7% of their “very” or “somewhat conservative” peers. In other words, the officers who identified as more liberal were also more likely tp believe that the political views of at least some of their peers might unfairly affect their work.

Q31. I would estimate that the proportion of Bureau officers who sometimes allow their work to be unfairly affected by their political views is . . .

	All Respondents	Identify as “Conservative”	Identify as “Liberal”
None or close to none	82.68%	93.02	58.46
More than a few but less than half	13.78%	6.98	29.23
Half or more of all officers	3.54%	0	12.31
	254	**86**	**65**

We also analyzed other survey questions using demographic factors such as race and gender and, interestingly, the dimension that seemed most polarizing in responses were the respondents’ self-described political leanings. While there was clearly common ground between the two groups in the perception that the Bureau is under-resourced (both financially and in terms of leadership support), the “conservative” group seemed to see the lack of resource as some kind of unfair punishment being meted out by the Mayor / City / Council for perceived bad behavior, while the “liberal” group simply noted that the lack of resource exists.

We used word clouds[22] to analyze our open-ended question, “what would you do if you were in charge for one day.” This first cloud, below, shows responses from participants who described themselves as very or somewhat conservative.

[22] We performed this analysis using a software tool that allowed us to import all open-ended responses and generated a “word cloud”, where the words that appear with most frequency in the text are shown in a bigger font, and more centrally in the image.

And on the next page is the cloud from those who describe themselves as very or somewhat liberal.

What struck us here was the prominence of references to the Mayor, Council, and Chief in the “conservative” cloud, and their comparative absence or unimportance in the “liberal” cloud. There’s also a strong sense in the conservative comments that there’s a need for better public relations and for more positive, supportive messages about the work they’re doing. This same notion doesn’t come through nearly as strongly in the comments by those who describe themselves as more liberal.

While this type of analysis is not scientifically rigorous, it at least reflects political attitudes (and attendant opinions about the Bureau's needs) that are more complex than some of the assumptions about their collective leanings.

Resistance to Change

This topic was added to the Report in response to another negative perception from external people and entities who have engaged with the Bureau in recent years, and found themselves frustrated by the agency's intractability with regard to reform.

Again, the survey refrained from tackling the matter in the form of a "head-on" question, and instead took a more concrete approach: did respondents believe that the Bureau's policies, procedures, and priorities actually needed change? We asked respondents to rank their point of view along a continuum of two opposite points, with "0" indicating that they agreed more with Statement A, "100" that they agreed more with Statement B, and "50" indicating that they were neutral on the topic.

> ***Statement A:*** *The policies, procedures, and priorities of the Portland Police Bureau are in need of substantial overhaul.*
>
> ***Statement B:*** *The policies, procedures, and priorities of the Portland Police Bureau are broadly fine as they stand today.*

Overall, respondents averaged a score of 44, indicating a slight lean toward the Bureau needing change. But when we viewed the results as a percent of total respondents, more agreed with the need for change: 53% of the 251 who responded rated between "0" and "49," while 33% rated between "51" and "100." These results indicate that officers lean more toward change than toward staying the same, though they do not measure how, or if, these officers are *resistant* to that change.

In our years of dealing with law enforcement agencies, more than one veteran officer has shared with us some version of this self-deprecating observation: "The two things cops hate most are the way things are, and change." Some of this is meant to reflect the world-weary skepticism that becomes an occupational hazard for many officers. It is an insight that resonates with our

experience across 20 years of monitoring the police, in contexts that often involve reform initiatives.

But discomfort with new ideas and innovations is hardly unique to law enforcement. Instead, it is a trait that manifests itself in a very broad range of environments, both professional and personal. We suspect that, for police departments in general and PPB in particular, the inherent obstacles to embrace of change are magnified when reforms are imposed non-collaboratively, or animated by an antagonism and disapproval that spurs defensiveness as a reflex.

It is important to note that we *did* hear from Bureau members who acknowledged that policing is in a time of inevitable – and necessary – transition. They also recognize specific ways that change could be beneficial, and we discuss these elsewhere in the Report.

Common Ground and the Seeds of Meaningful Reform

That there are conflicts between PPB's perspective and that of many activists, elected officials, journalists, monitors, and residents is the rare premise that all interested parties would readily accept. This Report obviously seeks to capture that dynamic and provide some useful analysis as to the reasons for it.

But perhaps the greater value comes in identifying those aspects of the Bureau's self-assessment that actually overlap – at least partially – with the concerns and criticisms they hear regularly from outsiders. In this section, we expand on some of the insights gleaned from the survey results discussed above. And our focus is also on the more expansive analyses that Bureau members of various ranks provided in our series of individual conversations, and that were reinforced by our own understanding of dynamics in the City. Across several main categories, we identified themes that made sense to us as both apt descriptions of problem areas and, importantly, areas in which concrete reform seemed attainable – in part because of the Bureau's seeming readiness to meet the process halfway.

"We have morale and leadership issues."

News headlines and personal anecdotes across the nation highlighted issues with law enforcement's low sense of morale. In the face of heightened criticism, opposition, and calls to defund the police, officers lost that *esprit de corps*, or feeling of personal pride and team fellowship. In our own work in various jurisdictions, officers whom we interviewed, many times overcome by emotion, spoke of the stress associated with being the focus of intense and sustained protests following the murder of George Floyd. While those protests are not a specific subject of our study here, we have an understanding of the intensity and duration of demonstrations in Portland, and the impact of that experience on officers.

Portland officers experienced especially low morale after weeks of protest, job fatigue, transitions in leadership, and loss of community support. Officers resigned from the Bureau or from their special assignments in large numbers. The Portland Police Association released a study reporting that morale among rank-and-file officers was increasingly low because officers did not feel valued and supported by their leadership and the City. And, in their exit interviews, many officers who had resigned noted that they felt unsupported and faced challenges or had conflict with poor leadership, leading to a lack of overall job satisfaction.

Morale is low. Officers are tired and exhausted. We need more personnel and support from within the community and the Mayor's Office.

Our project sought to better define the "morale problem" in the Bureau through interviews and survey research. And, as we detail in this section, our results align with much of the research regarding this topic: for Bureau members, low morale is less about a personal crisis and more about their own perceptions – often based on their as-lived experiences – of poor leadership and lack of community support.

Low Enthusiasm but Many Say They Will Stay

We first sought to determine job satisfaction by asking questions related to enthusiasm and future plans. Respondents generally reported that the Bureau is heading in the wrong direction and they have less enthusiasm for their job in recent years. And while some reported that they would stay in their current jobs until retirement, the rates of resignation and desire to stay on the job until retirement are concerning.

First, we found that the overwhelming majority of respondents registered the belief that the Bureau is not heading in the right direction.

Q16. I feel the Bureau is heading in the right direction.

Strongly agree	1.49%	4
Agree	7.81%	21
Neither agree nor disagree	23.05%	62
Disagree	29.74%	80
Strongly disagree	37.92%	102
		269

Similarly, most reported less enthusiasm for working for the Bureau than a year ago. This is not the first survey to report such sentiments. Nearly 73% of total respondents to our survey stated they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following question:

Q12. I am more enthusiastic about working for the Portland Police Bureau than I was a year ago.

Strongly agree	2.61%	7
Agree	7.46%	20
Neither agree nor disagree	17.16%	46
Disagree	28.73%	77
Strongly disagree	44.03%	118
		268

A small yet notable percentage (15% of 276 respondents) responded that they planned on leaving the Bureau in the next year, while the remainder reported they would remain in their position at the Bureau. Of the 15% who reported that they planned on leaving:

- 2% stated that they would retire
- 62% reported that they would seek a lateral transfer to another agency or a career change altogether
- 24% reported that they did not know what their plans might be after they left their position

This attrition rate is higher than the 2020-21 national average as reported by the Police Executive Research Forum; the PERF study found that the average national resignation rate was 4.91 per 100 officers (or 4.91%) and the national average retirement rate was 4.14%.

Others commented that they have been thinking of leaving the Bureau but had not yet decided.

We also asked respondents if they planned on working with the Bureau until retirement, and this result tracked with those reported above: 56% of 269 respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they would work for the Bureau until they were eligible to retire, while 36% stated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed. In other words, 36% reported that they did not plan on working at PPB until retirement. This finding, coupled with the above resignation rates,

points to a concerning phenomenon in PPB morale: whether or not officers actually act on their reported plans to resign or depart before retirement, their mindset is one of resignation, quitting, or leaving their roles as law enforcement professionals.

Poor Morale Stems from a Belief of Failed Bureau Leadership

When we began our inquiry, we often heard that "leadership" was to blame for officer morale (and the community's critical opinion of the Bureau, though we will discuss that later). Indeed, research of police departments has shown that low morale often stems from poor leadership, or the perception of poor leadership, including the feeling that agency members are unsupported as individuals and as a collective. When we asked the open-ended question, "If you were in charge of the Bureau for one day, what is one change you would make that would have the greatest impact," many respondents' comments were related to Bureau leadership.

Many of the biggest problems within the Bureau are directly related to poor leadership from the Chief on down the chain. Leadership skills are not taught or evaluated when people are promoted. This massive leadership deficit has led to our serious internal issues, and will ensure those problems remain.

Our survey sought to quantify these perceptions in a series of questions about leadership. Our results showed a definite perception that leadership is undermining Bureau effectiveness. And many of the open-ended comments were related to feeling a lack of support from both Bureau and City leadership, especially in the wake of potential prosecution of officers for excessive uses of force and ending special programs and teams.

Strong leadership boosts morale and in turn can bring more officers into our agency.

Overall, nearly 60% of respondents shared that they did not feel supported by the senior leadership of the Bureau. This, perhaps obviously, varied by the respondent's position in the Bureau. Those in Command Staff reported feeling more support from leadership than did the rank and file: nearly 70% of the 163 officers, sergeants, and detectives who responded reported that they did not feel supported by leadership, while 40% of the 23 responding lieutenants and above reported that they did not feel supported by leadership.

Be physically present at the Precincts to show patrol support and inform of Bureau direction.

There is a clear disconnection with the Chief's Office and the line staff, mostly because they operate remotely and have to be asked or begged to show up at a precinct. It's shameful leadership.

Q17. I feel supported by the senior leadership of the Bureau.

Strongly agree	3.35%	9
Agree	17.84%	48
Neither agree nor disagree	19.70%	53
Disagree	27.88%	75
Strongly disagree	31.23%	84
		269

Perceived Lack of Support from City Government Contributes to Low Morale

When asked about City government, a strikingly high number of respondents – nearly 98% – reported that city government has made their work more difficult, and open-ended responses talked at length about low morale coming from a City government that does not understand police, their work, and the challenges that they face. The majority of respondents commented that the City's Commission

form of government creates a challenging dynamic for the Bureau. Nearly 99% of respondents reported that the City government, the very individuals who lead the Bureau and make critical decisions, lack an understanding of "everyday policing." In our open-ended question field, officers remarked:

I would argue for city council members to do ride-alongs so they would understand what policing in this city actually looks like.

Not having the Chief be a politically appointed position subject to the whims of the Mayor's office.

We owe it to the greater community to distance our agency from the ever-changing political winds of city hall and focus on our primary mission which is to prevent/solve crime and the fear of crime in Portland. Just like I wouldn't want city hall telling an oncologist how best to treat cancer, we should resist city hall directing the Police Chief and PPB on how best to address crime and public safety in the city.

Further, many commented that the relationship between the Commission and the Bureau became especially strained in the past two years and that the Commission – specifically, the Mayor's Office – did not adequately support officers. On the contrary, respondents reported feeling "betrayed" and "thrown under the bus" by its own City government.

City leaders, elected officials, and community need to know officers feel betrayed by them over the past 18-24 months. Although it is dangerous to do, I would publicly have that discussion - this is partly why retention has become such an issue for this agency.

Q25. The Portland city government has made the work of the Bureau more difficult over the last year or two.

Strongly agree	90.53%	239
Agree	6.82%	18
Neither agree nor disagree	1.52%	4
Disagree	0.38%	1
Strongly disagree	0.76%	2
		264

Q26. The Portland city government lacks an understanding of the challenges involved with everyday policing.

Strongly agree	82.20%	217
Agree	16.29%	43
Neither agree nor disagree	1.14%	3
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	0.38%	1
		264

Community Criticism Impacts Morale

There is, of course, a third important factor to consider in exploring morale: people's sense of how others – the proverbial "community" – perceive them, their job, and their organization. There has been much research regarding an officer's sense of legitimacy and internal feelings of power in the community and his or her effectiveness and sense of morale.

One example of recent and relevant work (that included the input of Portland officers) is by Dr. Mary Wuestewald of the University of Arkansas. She hypothesizes that there is a relationship with officers sense of individual self-legitimacy[23] and their sense of civic and employee engagement. Essentially, if an officer feels a high level of self-legitimacy, she or he will also feel a high sense of employee engagement (job satisfaction) and civic engagement, defined as how much you like/support your community, desire to serve your public, and so forth. But if you remove the self-legitimacy, these same officers will show low motivation, low morale, low engagement, job dissatisfaction. And, most importantly, without self-legitimacy, officers also show low desire for civic engagement.

Our survey questions asked about these factors in a series of questions regarding police-community relationships. Our data suggests that officers may feel a lower sense of legitimacy in their community. Given the narrative and climate of the past two years that we have already discussed, it came as no surprise that Bureau personnel reported that they felt less respect and compliance from their community than they did two years ago.

[23] This and other research defines "self-legitimacy" broadly as "officers' confidence in their own authority and how they identify with their organization or community." It is about the officer's own self-recognition of his/her entitlement to power.

Q22. Community members are less likely to treat Bureau officers with respect than they were a year or two ago.

Strongly agree	50.76%	134
Agree	28.79%	76
Neither agree nor disagree	9.09%	24
Disagree	9.85%	26
Strongly disagree	1.52%	4
		264

Q24. Community members are less likely to comply with instructions from Bureau officers than they were a year or two ago.

Strongly agree	54.17%	143
Agree	28.79%	76
Neither agree nor disagree	13.26%	35
Disagree	3.03%	8
Strongly disagree	0.76%	2
		264

Portland officers report feeling less respect and compliance from their community. With this loss of legitimacy (or, even, power), comes a loss of morale; their desire to engage with the community is lost, too.

"We need more officers."

The Bureau's historically low staffing levels have been well-publicized. The exodus of officers from Portland in the past year and a half has been notable, even in the context of a national trend that has seen police officers in other large U.S. cities leaving the profession in large numbers since the protest movement following the murder of George Floyd in 2020. The vacancies left from those departures exacerbate Portland's downward staffing trend over the past 10 or more years, when the number of authorized positions did not keep pace with the City's population growth, even before the City cut 75 positions in 2020. And, as we discussed earlier, our survey results suggest this trend will continue as officers expressed their desire to leave PPB.

With many more officers expected to retire this year, there seems to be some agreement that the Bureau needs more personnel, and the City recently has taken steps to address that need, including authorizing funds to bring back some retired officers on a contract basis and to hire "Public Safety Specialists" to assist with tasks that don't require sworn officers. The Bureau has re-staffed its recruiting and hiring teams, and the Mayor has proposed funding sizeable hiring bonuses.

We were also impressed by the Bureau's designated recruitment Sergeant. The enthusiasm and optimism he brings to his role, as well as his understanding of the need for the Bureau to reflect the community it serves, seem like genuine attributes that are especially apt in this moment. And, as a longtime resident of the City himself, he clearly projects the personal investment in its well-being that critics say is too-often lacking in large urban departments.

Nonetheless, bringing on additional officers is a significant challenge, in Portland and nationwide. Protests, prosecutions, and ongoing calls to reimagine policing have prompted many of those traditionally drawn to law enforcement careers to reconsider their options, and frequent reports of low morale among Portland officers adds an element of difficulty to recruiting new or lateral officers to the Bureau. Moreover, given the 18 to 24-month lag time between a person's initial application and final swearing-in (including time for background investigations, the hiring process, and training at the State's DPSST Academy), the staffing shortage has no immediate solution, even if the City were flush with qualified applicants.

Finding and attracting those applicants, then, takes on newly critical importance. One key to meeting both the challenge of recruiting officers in today's climate and the task of adapting to Portland's changing demands of its Police Bureau lies in a fresh perspective on *who* the Bureau should be targeting with its recruiting efforts. Of course, the Bureau should continue its efforts to recruit more women and persons of color, which have had some success in producing a diverse demographic make-up. Still, only 17% of Bureau members are women;[24] 6% are Asian; 6% Hispanic; 4% Black; 3% biracial; and fewer than 1% are Native American or Pacific Islander. But

[24] By way of comparison, the national average of women in local law enforcement agencies is around 13%.

beyond gender, race, and ethnic diversity, the Bureau's recruitment efforts should emphasize attracting people with diverse life experiences.

In that regard, we heard promising talk from executives that the Bureau is making a concerted effort to recruit the types of people who see their role as peace officers differently than the more tenured officer might. We cannot underscore enough the importance of this effort to hire individuals with the character traits and social skills that translate into a problem-solving approach to policing instead of a more traditional enforcement approach. The Bureau's hiring preferences should tilt toward persons with established work histories, life experience, and higher levels of education. Traditional sources of new hires – criminal justice programs at college job fairs and military veterans – may be less dependable than in the past as sources of candidates best-suited for contemporary expectations in Portland.

The Bureau should also re-evaluate its hiring guidelines and its recruiting approach to consider candidates whose backgrounds would not traditionally suggest a career in law enforcement. One agency we have worked with has a recruitment and hiring process that is unique in many ways, with a willingness to take calculated risks on individuals who might not seem on paper to be excellent candidates, and with relatively few of the bright-line rules for eligibility (or automatic disqualification) that are typical among law enforcement agencies. Rather than automatically disqualifying an applicant who has a history of juvenile contacts with police, for example, the agency explores those issues more holistically during its extensive hiring process. Its emphasis on hiring older candidates with some relevant life experiences is partly based on the notion that maturation matters; moreover, early troubles or youthful rebelliousness can become assets for police work because of the recruits' enhanced ability to see and understand different perspectives. It strikes us that a similar approach could be beneficial in Portland, where the public's expectations for its police are also unique in many ways.

This approach also could assist with retention of officers, by creating a unique work culture in the Bureau and fostering the sentiment among officers that Portland is the only place they would want to serve.

The Bureau also should be innovative in its approach to its recruiting methods. The Sergeant in charge of recruiting and hiring spoke about his ideas for offering financial incentives to officers who successfully attract new hires; this seems like an initiative worth trying. The enthusiasm of existing employees is

appealing to recruits in any field, and a small monetary "reward" would give focus to that dynamic for the PPB. In our view, those eligible to participate should include professional Bureau staff and City employees of other Departments. Likewise, the Bureau should consider designating a recruiting squad of diverse officers, whose goal would be to make personal connections with potential recruits. The Bureau could include bios of these members on its website to encourage potential applicants to reach out to those officers with similar backgrounds and life experiences. Similarly, the Bureau should maximize its reach by advertising recruitment on social media platforms, such as TikTok and Instagram. While this has had mixed results in other jurisdictions that we have worked with and must be carefully managed, use of these platforms can result in a diverse mix of applicants that may otherwise not even be aware of this career choice.

When recruiters attend college job fairs, they should visit sociology, psychology, political science, social work, racial justice, and other similarly diverse departments, and not just criminal justice programs.

Recruiters should also consider innovative approaches to attracting more women to the Bureau, particularly women of color. While gender balance in law enforcement agencies is notoriously elusive, the widespread contemporary trendss toward reframing the profession could start to shift that balance. Recruiting efforts that emphasize the importance of relationship-building, securing the community's trust, and outreach to marginalized populations is a necessary change away from the stereotypically masculine, enforcement-driven approach to traditional policing. And one that could draw more women to the field.

After successfully recruiting promising applicants, the next step is identifying those who will be successful Portland police officers. The current hiring process includes an extensive background investigation (which includes an examination of a candidate's social media posts and associations),[25] completion of a psychological profile, and an oral board, during which prospective officers are questioned by a three-member interview panel. In

[25] In speaking with community members, we were struck by repeated references to social media postings by PPB members that allegedly reflected troubling affiliations. This was notable in a couple of ways: as reinforcement of the idea that an officer's private internet profile can influence public confidence in the agency, and of the value in gleaning insights from social media as part of the recruiting and hiring process.

each of these steps, the Bureau needs to do everything it can to ensure the people it hires have the attitude and interpersonal skills that will support the Bureau's values and the community's expectations. Beyond the obvious (eliminating anyone with ties to white supremacist groups, for example), the process should examine traits such as impulse control, judgment, honesty, integrity, personal biases, capacity to perform under stress, and ability to deal with supervision. In the context of the psychological screening, this goes beyond the typical personality assessment measures to a deeper evaluation specific to the policing environment.

The oral board process for hiring new officers should follow the lead of the Bureau's promotional process and be expanded to include a community representative as a fourth member of the interview panel. As civilians outside police culture, community members could provide insight and a fresh perspective on candidates, particularly on their ability to productively engage with the community. During their oral board interviews, applicants should be called to express their views on diversity, cultural competence, and community relationships. The Bureau should also consider additional, final steps at the end of the hiring process, including some time doing a ride-along with an officer with the idea that they would question the recruit and assess his or her attitudes and mindset. Finally, the Chief or a top executive should meet with the recruit to evaluate his or her suitability and fit with the Bureau's culture and values.

> RECOMMENDATION 14: The Bureau should continue to strive for a diverse recruitment and hiring program and should emphasize diversity of relevant life experiences, to include a reassessment of criteria that automatically excludes persons who otherwise might be excellent police officers.

> RECOMMENDATION 15: The Bureau should consider ways to employ innovative methods for recruiting new officers, including financial incentives for officers, professional Bureau staff, and City employees and creating a designated, diverse squad of recruiters who are motivated to find new ways to connect with potential applicants.

RECOMMENDATION 16: The Bureau should modify its interview process for prospective officers to include a community member on each oral board panel.

RECOMMENDATION 17: The Bureau should consider adding to its hiring process a required ride-along with a designated officer and a one-on-one interview with the Chief or a top executive.

Once officers have been selected and hired by the Bureau, it is crucial that the training environment support the Bureau's values and goals. The State of Oregon requires all officers to be trained at the State's 16-week Basic Academy in Salem run by the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. Portland officers then work for about two months with a Field Training Officer before attending the Bureau's 12-week Advanced Academy at its own training facility.

We have frequently interacted with Training Division personnel as part of our reviews of officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths, and have been impressed by their professionalism and willingness to engage with us on important tactical and training issues. We have observed some scenario-based training exercises, again focused on our role as reviewers of critical incidents, and found them to be relevant, valuable, and consistent with best practices. However, our experience with Training has been largely limited to tactical training relevant to our reviews of deadly force events. A more overarching review would be advisable to assess the extent to which the Bureau's training program could more meaningfully address the realities of policing in Portland.

It is our understanding that the Bureau will soon be hiring a civilian Academic Director for its Training Division. We have not learned much about this new position, or how the person selected will interact with existing Training staff. But it signals to us that the Bureau is headed in the right direction by recognizing and incorporating the potential value of a distinct perspective outside of the traditional rank structure.

RECOMMENDATION 18: The Bureau should move forward with its plan to employ a civilian Academic Director for its Training Division and should empower that individual to reassess existing training programs to ensure a student-centered approach to learning that meaningfully addresses the realities of policing in Portland.

RECOMMENDATION 19: The Academic Director should assess the Advanced Academy training curriculum and whether its overarching philosophy could be better aligned to community expectations for public safety in Portland. The Director should report to the public the outcome of this evaluation.

"We need to foster new community relationships and work to build trust."

When we spoke to individual officers at different rank levels, there was widespread acknowledgment of – and concern about – the state of police-community relations. The ideas about solutions were varied. One relatively senior member of the agency pointed out that the pandemic's effect on business closures in the downtown area meant that it was easy to forget the baseline of support that many merchants have long extended to PPB; those voices were not only drowned out by the protest narratives but also sidelined in terms of their own operations. Accordingly, this executive said that he was focused on promoting connections between young officers and a business community that was continuing its own process of recovery. And other Bureau representatives were careful to maintain that the most engaged and influential public critics of the Bureau had a platform that outstripped the actual popularity of their views in the City as whole.

Still, the issue of community trust and effective relationship-building was understood to be a priority. One frustrating dimension of this to some respondents is that there has been no shortage of official City initiatives that are intended to address this issue. A prominent example is the ongoing work of the "Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing," created in 2018 and connected to the Mayor's Office. That group, and its advisory counterpart the "Citizen Review Committee" (which has existed since 2001 and is focused

more on misconduct and accountability issues) have worked energetically and have addressed important topics. These include advisory work on body-worn camera protocols for PPB, and a review with recommendations as to force deployment by PPB during the months of protest.

While PPB interfaces with those groups and is influenced by their efforts, we also got the sense that the level of *collaboration* is sometimes disappointing from the Bureau's perspective, in terms of PPB's level of input and opportunity to contribute. And even alterations to that dynamic that were positive in the Bureau's view would still leave ample room for other types of engagement and relationship building.

One potential way to strengthen perceptions of responsiveness and engagement with the community is on the "back end" of the dialogue/input process. We spoke with longtime residents who said that, while there are multiple ways to make suggestions for public safety reform ideas, they are not aware of the Bureau implementing their recommendations, creating a sense that the process, while intended to be collaborative, is not effecting the real changes they suggest.

As one supervisor with whom we spoke described it, the Bureau's efforts at community outreach are "a mile wide and an inch deep." He advocated for a much more concentrated approach from within PPB that would empower supervisors to take leadership roles in specific neighborhoods of the City, cultivate relationships, and develop tailored enforcement strategies that were more responsive to, and informed by, influential leaders within the communities themselves.

A related concept is the identification of, and connection with, individuals who are recognized and respected as representatives of the groups directly affected by the specific public safety trends. Interestingly, multiple officers suggested that accomplishing this may mean appealing to new generations of residents and activists, and going beyond traditional sources and organizations.

"Coffee with a Cop" and similar outreach programs assuredly have their place, and we encourage the Bureau to emphasize positive interactions with the public whenever possible. In our experience, though, it can too often amount to "preaching to the choir" rather than influencing people or groups who are wary or outside of the civic mainstream. It takes concerted effort, and some

measure of humility, for law enforcement to develop effective, trusting relationships with a range of figures from diverse backgrounds and societal roles. But there are cities that have modelled successful programs in this regard. PPB should work to *develop* initiatives that would help achieve the paradigm of better connections that it purports to seek.

Some of the relevant infrastructure is already in place. PPB has a sworn officer whose full-time assignment for the last few years has been to serve as the agency's "Community Engagement Strategist." In that role, and previously, she has worked to develop relationships with representatives from a number of distinctive groups within the City. She also coordinates the meetings of the Bureau's several different "Community and Culturally Specific Advisory Councils," which offer input that reflects the diversity of experiences, priorities, and perspectives that Portland encompasses.[26]

This officer's enthusiasm for the potential of such groups was impressive, as were the specific examples she cited of constructive influence and meaningful interaction.[27] But she acknowledged that there is much room to build upon her own years of establishing relationships and investing in the kinds of in-depth, sometimes challenging conversations that produce trust and influence.

Though realistic about the most recent difficulties that the Bureau and City have lived through, this officer also recognized them as an opportunity to shift toward a model of community engagement that has greater depth and more consistent "follow-through." Importantly, she expressed a strong belief in the receptivity of community partners to participation in such a dynamic. The willingness of both PPB *and* other stakeholders to collaborate on a meaningful, consistent way is, in our view, a key element in the success of any community engagement initiative. Accordingly, we encourage the Bureau and City to cultivate these opportunities, and to make the most of them when they arise.

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[26] These groups include the Slavic, Latino, African American, Muslim, and Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Councils, and the Alliance for Safer Communities (which focuses on LGBTQ+ issues).

[27] This included the Latino Advisory Council's contributions to the training that is offered to the Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team, altering a particular scenario to more accurately reflect likely responses within the Latino culture.

RECOMMENDATION 20: The Bureau should work to enhance its relationship with existing advisory groups and look for opportunities to educate and collaborate as well as respond to initiatives in more comprehensive and accountable ways.

RECOMMENDATION 21: The Bureau should dedicate more resources to reinforcing effective strategies for relationship-building within specific Portland communities – a path that requires sustained and repeated outreach over time.

RECOMMENDATION 22: The Bureau should pursue programs that build community bridges at the neighborhood level, including the use of localized patrol teams and the organized cultivation of relationships with a range of community representatives.

RECOMMENDATION 23: PPB should work to ensure the effective approaches of its current "Community Engagement" officer are reinforced by providing that position with the requisite authority and resources, and by committing to the development of established directives and strategic plans that will promote the longer-term sustainability of the unit.

One initiative that would demonstrate the Bureau's commitment to developing community relationships while also emphasizing to new officers the importance of these connections is an Academy-based service program that would promote relationship building at the very outset of officers' careers, even before they begin work in a law enforcement capacity.

Too often, training programs that emphasize "community policing" amount to little more than classroom talk. That has some merit, but few agencies actually manage to promote these values in concrete, real-world ways. There are different ways to accomplish this, and PPB has opportunities both before and after officers attend the mandatory statewide Academy run by Oregon's Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

One idea is to have newly-hired recruits work with community-based programs that provide social services to diverse neighborhoods while they are awaiting assignment to a DPSST Academy class. Those recruits could return and work with the same organization following their State Academy and prior to attendance at the Bureau's Advanced Academy. Another idea is to have each

Academy class work with a community-based organization to take on a sort of "legacy project" that has students serve alongside community members to make a lasting impact in a particular neighborhood. Another would be to pair each recruit with a "community sponsor" – a clergy member, small business owner, or someone working in economic development – to meet regularly (for lunch every other week, for example) and serve as a connection or point of contact in a given neighborhood.

The point to any of these programs – or something similar that suits Portland's needs – is to devote some training time for students to work constructively with community members in diverse neighborhoods. The benefits are numerous. First, the allocation of precious time to such a program would reinforce the value the Bureau places on community relationship-building and demonstrate to young officers the importance of those relationships, some of which may last throughout their careers. It would encourage them to begin thinking of ways to integrate broader problem-solving strategies at the outset of their law enforcement service and in a non-enforcement capacity.

Another benefit of this type of service or relationship-based program is to create opportunities for the newly hired to connect with the wide range of backgrounds and life experiences that comprise the City's population. The chance to interact in neutral settings is a critical step in addressing the implicit biases that people naturally possess – but that are uniquely worrisome in the law enforcement context. It is true that the Bureau teaches officers about implicit or unconscious bias and how such biases can result in disparate treatment. While recognition of this phenomena is an important first step, the reduction of implicit bias cannot be remedied in a classroom setting. Instead, a first step in addressing these biases is through encounters and relationships with members of other communities in a constructive environment, rather than having the new officers' first experience with Portlanders being in an enforcement role.

This is not an entirely new concept for the Bureau. We heard about pre-pandemic programs where officers worked as counselors in a summer camp for low-income young people run by a community-based foundation. There was never a shortage of officers volunteering for these posts, and the reported positive benefits, for both the officers and the campers, who did not learn their counselors were officers until the camp graduation, align with the goals of a broader program we recommend for all new Bureau officers.

Indeed, we even saw a positive response to real community engagement in our survey of Bureau personnel. When asked to rank the outcome of community engagement on a sliding scale between "damaging for the Bureau" (score of 0) or "beneficial for the Bureau" (score of 100), Bureau personnel overall leaned more toward it being "beneficial," with an average score of 64. Bureau personnel commented that requiring increased community engagement from Bureau officers would be beneficial because, among other things, it would help to defuse tensions in the City.

> RECOMMENDATION 24: The Bureau should develop ways to incorporate into its Academy training a community-based program focused on non-law enforcement social service work aimed at reinforcing the importance of building relationships within Portland's diverse communities.

"We welcome new approaches to public safety."

One area of broad agreement between community and Bureau members we spoke to relates to the wide range of problems society has come to rely on law enforcement to address and whether some of those issues would more appropriately be diverted to others to handle – in short, what has been referred to in the national dialogue as "reimagining policing."

In Portland, this has largely taken form in Portland Street Response, a program in which a paramedic and mental health clinician respond to non-emergency calls regarding those experiencing houselessness or who are in the midst of a mental or behavioral health crisis. The initiative was launched as a limited pilot program in late 2019, and proponents – buoyed by positive results of a Portland State University study – have urged the City to expand its funding so that it can operate throughout the City, across all shifts.

While the officers' labor association formally opposed Portland Street Response when it was first proposed in 2019 and maintains its resistance to certain aspects of the program because of its concern that Street Response staff will take on duties that require a law enforcement response, Bureau members with whom we spoke and those who responded to our survey

substantially agreed with the idea that the Bureau should focus on criminal behavior and let others address mental or behavioral health concerns.

To assess their perception of the Portland Street Response approach, we asked respondents to our survey to place themselves along a continuum of two opposite points, with “0” indicating that they agreed more with Statement A, “100” that they agreed more with Statement B, and “50” indicating that they were neutral on the topic.

> ***Statement A****: In general, Bureau officers are trained to handle all types of calls for service and should continue to be the first responders to all calls.*
>
> ***Statement B****: In general, City personnel with special training in mental health matters, not sworn officers, should be sent to calls involving people in mental health crisis.*

Overall, respondents averaged a score of 66, meaning that they leaned slightly more toward Statement B, which describes the Portland Street Response approach of sending specialized practitioners to mental health calls. And when we look beyond averages to actual responses, we found that half of respondents ranked themselves above 50, and nearly 40 respondents selected “100,” indicating that they align strongly with Statement B.

With the creation of the Community Safety Director position in the spring of last year, the City acknowledged the idea that public safety encompasses more than just a law enforcement response, but is instead a City-wide concern that crosses the boundaries of various bureaus. There can be little doubt that public safety intersects with public health in a number of ways, as police regularly deal with the fallout from community problems like substance abuse, inadequate housing, educational disparities, and mental health crises. Police should be just one part of the equation to addressing and solving these problems.

Ideally, the reconsideration of approaches to these fundamental problems is not a “zero sum game.” The officers who recognize that other options make more sense in many of these contexts also see new programs not as threats, but as opportunities for the Bureau to better respond to aspects of its own core

mission. A collaborative mindset could very well redound to the benefit of the City across multiple fronts.[28]

> RECOMMENDATION 25: Bureau leadership should continue to support a collaborative approach to public health and public safety through its Community Safety Director, and should help the City define how PPB resources can be deployed in focused ways to address issues (including violent crime) that require the unique skills of law enforcement.

"We need to communicate more effectively with the public."

In an era of transition for police agencies across the country, many jurisdictions are struggling when it comes to adjusting their communication strategies to meet new circumstances and expectations. There are several components to this phenomenon.

One is that the "default setting" has shifted away from longstanding presumptions that all law enforcement pronouncements should be accepted at face value. It is a pendulum swing that has proven to be challenging for agencies. Used to setting the tone of coverage and benefitting from publicity in various ways, many departments have struggled in adapting to a dynamic in which questions are more challenging and insistent than ever, and misinformation is interpreted as bad faith. The proliferation of social media outlets has added to the sense that the police are behind the curve in their strategies for sharing information and connecting with the public in accurate, constructive ways.

Accordingly, at a time when clear, effective messaging has never been more important, many departments find themselves losing ground in spite of – or *because* of – their approach and execution in the various facets of contemporary information-sharing. The Portland Police Bureau is far from

[28] One of the local activists with whom we spoke made an interesting observation about the Fire Department – namely, that part of the relative popularity it enjoys is a function of its clear, specific responsibility. Not only is emergency response generally appreciated, but the focus minimizes the importance of agency "culture" and the political or racial viewpoints of individual firefighters.

immune in this regard. On the contrary, we heard internal critiques that described multiple flaws: from frustrating limits on their ability to "set the record straight," to a reluctance or inability to showcase the officers, programs, and accomplishments that might alter public opinion for the better.

In this section, we describe the current PPB structure, delineate its shortcomings as related to us by both internal and external voices, and offer suggestions for improvement.

Current Structure

At least some communication challenges may come from the current structure of the City's decentralized communication teams, as well as the size and expertise of the Bureau's own internal communication team. But the larger issue may be with the challenge of balancing persuasive expression of the PPB's "story" against the need for both the perception and reality of accurate, transparent communication.

The City of Portland has what we understand to be a decentralized public information and communication structure, with each Bureau and Council office having its own Public Information Officer (PIO) and/or communication team. This structure has presented challenges in both outward-facing communications to community as well as communication and/or "messaging" strategy internally.[29] Inefficiencies born of this decentralization have influenced the public's trust in the City's communication, and the Police Bureau often bears the brunt of this negative impression.

For its part, the Police Bureau's Communication Team is comprised of one Lieutenant acting as a PIO and three support staff. Our understanding is that the small size and limited experience of this unit create obstacles to its effectiveness, especially since the work of the PPB generates significantly more requests from both the media and other branches of City government than do its peer Bureaus in the City. This team is arguably understaffed for the task of responding effectively to well over a hundred different requests per month. Additionally, our understanding is that the role has lacked continuity in

[29] As mentioned above, we experienced our own difficulty in navigating the City's bureaucratic landscape: it took us months of halting inquiry to connect with the "right" communication team in an effort to coordinate dissemination of a community version of the survey we gave to the Bureau.

recent years, and that the turnover is not ameliorated by a commitment to effective "onboarding" of new personnel. The lack of an overarching – and widely understood – philosophy of communication furthers this impediment to effective performance.

While more resources would help (and, as discussed below, are apparently in the offing as part of a re-structuring), there are other, content-based concerns that are driving dissatisfaction from multiple directions. Relying on a badge-holding member of the agency as the Public Information Officer is standard practice across law enforcement, and for good reasons. These include subject matter expertise and awareness of how best to navigate investigative sensitivities while sharing available information. Interestingly, the authority conveyed by a uniformed spokesperson has also long been considered an asset. But more recent paradigm shifts have cast those qualities in a new light that warrants consideration.

In the current climate, it seems just as likely that a member officer serving as PIO will produce as much skepticism as confidence about the information being conveyed. And these questions about objectivity are exacerbated when information is withheld or – worse – inaccurate. As recently as a December officer-involved shooting, initial reports about the injuries suffered by a woman in the incident proved to be inaccurate and were retracted. And in mid-January, an offensive meme celebrating the use of force on protestors included in a 2018 Rapid Response Team training presentation was made public, only after it became clear the material would be released by plaintiffs in litigation against the City and the Bureau. Both incidents point to missed opportunities for transparent communication and self-assessment and were critical missteps that feed into the skepticism of the Department's critics.

To some of the people within the agency to whom we spoke, this perception is all the more frustrating in light of their assertion that the PPB does not go far enough in addressing some of the pervasive (and in their view, unjustified) *anti*-police narratives that have taken hold. We heard officers assert that the Mayor's Office imposes limits on the Bureau's ability to push back at some of the criticism and misinformation. This leaves the field open for the officer's labor association to fill, and their established identity as advocates only complicates the situation.

Interestingly, we heard from more than one Bureau member who expressed the further idea that PPB does many things that are consistent with

progressive policing initiatives and contemporary best practices – but does not prioritize the dissemination of those programs. While the source of this reticence was not clear to the people who shared this view, their own desire to rectify it was. Taking for granted that the public is aware of PPB's efforts – and the responsiveness of those efforts to contemporary concerns – is no longer a luxury that the Bureau can afford.

As for the months of protest activity, they were eventful enough to confirm all manner of prior perceptions, and the arena of public communication was prominent among them. Court orders protecting journalists in the context of demonstrations and dispersal operations were viewed as sadly necessary to overcome PPB disregard of media rights and the First Amendment. But to multiple officers with whom we spoke, the orders (however intentioned) served primarily as invitations for canny protesters to insulate themselves from enforcement by claiming reporter status. A similar divide marked the court-issued ban against recording of protest activity that PPB had undertaken on a widespread basis. It was characterized by the judge as illegal surveillance, while Bureau members saw it as operationally important in addressing the violence and vandalism that they experienced in the streets.

Sifting through these competing versions of events is beyond the scope of our project.[30] But the wildly divergent narratives increase our sense that the Bureau should be open to new approaches in its communication strategy. These should include a commitment to as much transparency as legally possible in contexts such as high-profile incidents and citizen complaints, better coordination with the rest of City government, and the cultivation of a coherent strategy for communication that transcends any one spokesperson.

Pending Changes – and the Need for More

The Bureau reported that it is making improvements to its communication strategy, including creating media dashboards with daily information updates, pushing more content to social media, and planning a "media academy" to train media on how to better understand and report on police matters.

[30] It is telling, at least to some extent, that the federal court found repeatedly in favor of the protesters' positions in these disputes.

While these are commendable improvements, they are not “new” strategies; other agencies have successfully had these in place for many years because they have larger media departments staffed with one or more professionals who create effective public relations strategies, tools, and plans. That there is precedent for these approaches being beneficial should be encouraging to the Bureau, while their late arrival in Portland is perhaps another reinforcement of the idea that focused attention is warranted.

The solution may be somewhere in the middle: keep, but improve, the Police Bureau’s communication team and also streamline communications City-wide. This plan is in process both at the Bureau and City levels.

The City is actively working to create a more effective Public Safety communication structure including budgeting for professional staffing. The goal is to create overall greater coordination among Public Safety bureaus’ communications. A “Public Safety Communications Manager” will manage all Public Safety-related communications out of each Bureau and communicate with Council offices. A social media manager will coordinate the City’s public safety-related information. While these positions are funded, the job descriptions are still being crafted.

As they continue to refine job descriptions, we encourage the City to continue collaborating with the Police Bureau to provide the Bureau the staffing and expertise needed to more effectively communicate with the public. And both entities should combine on a vision for balancing the expertise and guidance of a sworn officer with overt gestures in the direction of credible, objective dissemination of facts. We also recommend that the new staff immediately work with the Bureau to create a proactive media strategy, including, but not limited to, what information can legally be released, who should release it, and how to ensure both accuracy and timeliness. Finally, we recommend that the Bureau consider a continuity/transition plan to create a more effective internal communications team.

> RECOMMENDATION 26: The City should continue its efforts to create a more effective Public Safety communication structure, with greater coordination among bureaus and ongoing collaboration with the Police Bureau to ensure it is appropriately funded and staffed to be able to more effectively communicate with the public.

Moving Forward: Models for Collaborative Policing

Promising Initiatives

In June of this year, the Mayor and Police Chief announced a new enforcement protocol in which officers would no longer prioritize traffic stops for low-level violations (such as broken taillights) in the absence of an immediate threat to safety. At the same time, the officials announced a new approach to consent searches that would require officers to record and document their request, as well as to provide the subject an overt explanation of the right to refuse. The goals were multi-faceted. One was to streamline officer attention at a time when staffing shortages and high rates of violence increased the importance of focus. But another was to address the reality that traffic stops were one of the more glaring arenas in which Black people were disproportionately affected. Moreover, the new requirements regarding consent were a response to longstanding concerns that the "willingness" to surrender Fourth Amendment rights was too often a function of coercion, misinformation, or even after-the-fact misrepresentation.

When the first statistical results of the new approach were released, they covered a three-month span from July through September. Many of the numbers, at least in terms of racial proportionality, seemed unremarkable: Black motorists were still being stopped at a rate that significantly exceeded their percentage of the population, and was just fractionally less than in previous recent quarters.

But another aspect of the same data set was quite noteworthy: the *total* number of stops had gone down by well over half since the beginning of the year. This constituted an inherent reduction in encounters that have been a source of stress, resentment, and perceptions of discrimination in Portland

(and many other jurisdictions) – and whose safety benefits may well be outstripped by the tensions they engender or reinforce.[31]

To us, this initiative (particularly in conjunction with the new strictures on obtaining consent) seems to be worth affirming, even if the disparity trendlines remain concerning. It is clear, understandable, and directly responsive both to staffing realities and to the inequity dynamics that have proven so difficult to disrupt. We will be curious to see how the statistics play out over time – as well as when and whether the City and PPB will make additional adjustments in response to evolving circumstances. In the meantime, we applaud the attempt as a step in the right direction, and encourage the Bureau to periodically evaluate progress and make other adjustments to policing strategies as needed.

> RECOMMENDATION 27: The Bureau should periodically evaluate how modifications to policing strategies, such as focusing traffic enforcement on moving violations, impact the current racial disparities, and report on this progress.

A similar and encouraging shift to a new paradigm is reflected in the new "Focused Intervention Team" program. This is the third version in recent years of a special assignment group of officers whose mandate is to address street violence. The Gang Enforcement team was the subject of the 2018 audit described above, and it was eventually disbanded due to concerns about impacts on young Black residents of the City that arose from the team's strategies and practices. Its successor was the Gun Violence Reduction Team, which eventually generated some of the same criticisms in spite of the different name. As we said before, the dissolution of these units was seen as fundamentally wrongheaded by PPB members who had worked in them, believed in their mission, and argued with sincerity that interruption of their efforts had contributed to the extreme rise in shootings within the City.

[31] We are familiar with the counterargument that "pro-active" policing, and routine stops that become a platform for investigation of more serious criminal activity, are tools that contribute to public safety in ways that deserve understanding and deference. But while this makes intuitive sense, the costs of such practices have too often been overlooked, particularly in the absence of compelling evidence about effectiveness and "hit" rates when it comes to searches and subsequent arrests and convictions.

Against this backdrop, the Focused Intervention Team (FIT) is an idea that merits especially close attention. To the City's credit, it has recognized that the Bureau's obvious and central role in addressing the violence levels that all agree are unacceptable. But instead of a simple re-branding that could well have encountered the same frustrating pushback, the new team will pursue different strategies in pursuit of the same objectives. And they will do so with the input and oversight of a community group that meets regularly for the express purpose of assisting the team's mission and monitoring its progress.

The multigenerational oversight group is comprised of eight residents with a range of ties to Portland's diverse communities; they include a pastor, a social worker, and a former gang member and current activist and youth mentor. Their monthly public meetings will add to the transparency and accountability that have long been lacking in aspects of the PPB's operations.

For its part, the Bureau has been selective about the team it is putting together – in part because of the sluggish initial response to the idea among the rank and file. But progress accelerated in the latter months of 2021, and at the time of this writing, the team is set to begin its work imminently. We hope it enjoys remarkable success, both as a model for constructive partnerships and more importantly as an antidote to the traumatic levels of violence the City has suffered.

Community Support

At the onset of our work, our plan was to disseminate nearly identical surveys to the Portland community and to Bureau members in an attempt to quantify the gap between the perceptions of policing in the City held by residents on the one hand, and officers on the other. Unfortunately, we were not able to actualize the plan to offer this parallel version of our survey to the community under the City's operative deadlines.[32] We are consequently limited in our ability to draw detailed, evidence-based conclusions with regard to public sentiment about policing in the City – though there are certain elements of

[32] We are nonetheless grateful to those who offered their assistance and support as we attempted to identify and utilize the necessary infrastructure for releasing the survey under the City's auspices. including various Public Information Officers, as well as representatives from the City's Offices of Management & Finance and Community & Civic Life.

resident sentiment that are broadly recognized and that we discuss below. At the same time, we hope that the City Budget Office will consider incorporating some of our prepared questions and themes into the public safety section of its next "Portland Insights Survey," which we understand will be occurring later this year.

In the absence of our own independent data, we did familiarize ourselves with relevant recent surveys conducted by others that captured public sentiment in several significant topic areas. That the Bureau has passionate critics within the community is unmistakable. As we have discussed, we heard concerns over a history of racism, biased policing overall and specifically during protests, a desire to "defund" and, later, to "reimagine" public safety from the most active community members. Members of the Portland community, including the ACLU, have even recently accused the Bureau of engaging in a pattern of disinformation, which further deteriorates trust between the community and the Bureau. These perspectives (and their rationales) have been and should continue to be a component of the City's thinking. This is especially true with regard to their calls for heightened accountability and their emphasis on new models for addressing issues involving the unhoused community and dealing with individuals in mental health crises.

But as PPB members consistently maintained to us, the Bureau and the community *as a whole* are not at such odds. Moreover, and importantly, there seems to be significant common ground regarding support for particular reform initiatives and larger re-considerations of the Bureau's approaches.

In 2016 and again in 2019, DHM Research, a research company local to Portland, conducted a large "Portland Insights" survey specific to residents' perceptions of public safety and policing in Portland. During this period, residents' satisfaction with police interactions, both voluntary and involuntary interactions, went up overall. But, as we have also heard from advocates, so did concerns over how PPB responded to mental health issues, with a larger percentage reporting that PPB does a "poor" or "very poor" job in that arena.

In 2019, the majority of Portland residents surveyed reported that they thought they would be "treated fairly by the Portland Police" (73%) and that they would both call police if they saw a crime (87%) and work with the police to solve crimes (86%). A small majority also seemingly trusted their law enforcement. 57% agreed that "when a Portland Police officer makes a request, you should

do what he/she says, even if you disagree with it." And 56% reported that "the Portland Police are trustworthy."

The 2019 survey in particular (which garnered some 9,000 responses) provided some interesting insight into variation of opinions based on demographics. When asked how the Police Bureau could improve police services, responses differed between Black and white respondents. Overall, Black respondents chose offering programs that invite community members to discuss local concerns with police as their highest priority. White respondents chose increased police personnel in their neighborhoods as the highest priority. The report found that young Portlanders' (age 16-29) top suggestions for police services improvements were offering more community programs and improving communication about current police activities. These differing perspectives by demographic group are notable – but also far from mutually exclusive, and seemingly quite attainable.

Of course, these survey results pre-date the COVID-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd and subsequent months of protest, and the spike in homicides and other violence in the City. Issues of policing and public safety have been focal points to a seemingly unprecedented extent. Ideally, results of the City's 2022 "Portland Insights" survey will capture some of the specific dimensions of evolving community sentiment.

> RECOMMENDATION 28: We encourage the City to incorporate questions into its next "Portland Insights" survey that would track community perceptions of PPB culture and practices, particularly with regard to racial and political bias, and resistance to change and other reform efforts.

More recent surveys, commissioned by a private advocacy group in the City but conducted by two independent polling firms, provided backing for Bureau members' contention that a baseline for support of their work continues to exist in Portland.[33] At the same time, they captured the widespread interest in new public safety strategies – including some of the City Council's pending

[33] The poll's sponsoring group, People for Portland, has staked out positions on the City's current social challenges that have influenced the perceptions of some Portland observers as to the polling activity's objectivity and, consequently, its legitimacy. At the same time, we are familiar with the pollsters commissioned for the projects we cite here; they have a well-established national reputation.

initiatives. These include a new body-worn camera program, the hiring of new officers to address PPB staffing shortages, and continued support for the Portland Street Response and similar innovations.

An additional, and fairly unequivocal, reflection of community sentiment was the overwhelming support for the November 2020 ballot measure calling for a new, more rigorous model of independent oversight of the Bureau. Calls for increased accountability similarly dominated our more recent exchanges with members of Portland's public.

The proposed model is an ambitious one, and implementation has been painstaking to date. The City government is taking a thoughtful and measured approach, and spent months developing a 20 member "ReThink Police Accountability Commission" that will itself take a year or more to craft a sustainable and effective new version of oversight that fulfills the voters' goals.

We hope that constructive interaction with members of the PPB – including the labor association – will be a part of that process. For the City and its new commission, there can be real value in non-confrontational efforts to understand the police perspective on oversight, and the sincere concerns that officers have about being vulnerable to the judgments of outside entities. Building a system that Bureau members themselves recognize as fair, credible, and constructive is admittedly difficult – police officers can be, in Portland and elsewhere, quite hard to impress in that regard. But the attempt is worthwhile, especially if the goals of outside oversight include the fostering of a higher functioning, more responsive police agency.

For the Bureau itself, accepting the reality of a new paradigm and working to make it effective – rather than maintaining a posture of dismissal and resistance – is a necessary step forward that all levels of the agency should embrace. Change is coming, if not long overdue, and the law enforcement agencies that flourish in the new environment will be the ones that bring their expertise into a collaborative relationship with a range of community stakeholders.

Good faith participation in reform efforts is a start. We hope that the important examples offered by the new traffic stop protocol and the FIT program will become representative of a promising new phase of the Bureau's history in Portland.

Recommendations

1: Bureau leadership should at appropriate times express formal contrition for prior episodes of racially discriminatory conduct.

2: New officers should be exposed to the prior discriminatory and racially charged conduct of Bureau officers in recent history and express messaging that such conduct will no longer be tolerated.

3: The Bureau should continue to produce updated statistical dashboards relevant to racial disparity issues to increase transparency and show changes over time, and use these dashboards as part of regular communications with the community.

4: In its regular use of force analysis, the Bureau should identify any patterns of practice that may result in disparate uses of force specifically on persons of color.

5: The Bureau should regularly analyze use of force data, broken down by neighborhood or precinct and officer, to determine if there are trends or patterns of practice that might indicate a need for specific additional training, counseling, or discipline.

6: The Bureau should modify its directive on political activity by members to align its prohibitions with the parameters of Oregon election law.

7: The Bureau should ensure that its background investigators thoroughly examine all applicants' social media posts and should eliminate from hiring consideration anyone found to have links to extremist groups or to have posted any communications associating themselves with racist viewpoints.

8: Consistent with state law, the Bureau should modify its directives to make clear that membership or participation in hate groups, racial supremacist organizations or militant groups or posting on social media any communications associated with racist viewpoints is a violation of Bureau policy.

9: The Bureau should revise its disciplinary guidelines so that officers who associate with hate groups, racial supremacist organizations or militant groups, or display, make, or post on social media any statements or displays of racism or racial supremacy will be potentially subject to discharge.

10: The Bureau and/or the Independent Police Review Division should thoroughly investigate, to the extent permissible by law, all allegations that a Bureau member is associated with an extremist group or has posted on social media any communications associated with racist viewpoints.

11: The Bureau should seek out opportunities to offer constructive contributions to the City's pending process of developing a new oversight model.

12: The Bureau and/or the Independent Police Review Division should create a process for tracking the response to and implementation of recommendations for reform made by outside entities, and should regularly report to the public about progress on these measures.

13: Any body-worn camera policy must be consistent with best investigative practices, including obtaining a "pure statement" from officers in force and misconduct investigations prior to showing them the audio/video account.

14: The Bureau should continue to strive for a diverse recruitment and hiring program and should emphasize diversity of relevant life experiences, to include a reassessment of criteria that automatically excludes persons who otherwise might be excellent police officers.

15: The Bureau should consider ways to employ innovative methods for recruiting new officers, including financial incentives for officers, professional Bureau staff, and City employees and creating a designated, diverse squad of recruiters who are motivated to find new ways to connect with potential applicants.

16: The Bureau should modify its interview process for prospective officers to include a community member on each oral board panel.

17: The Bureau should consider adding to its hiring process a required ride-along with a designated officer and a one-on-one interview with the Chief or a top executive.

18: The Bureau should move forward with its plan to employ a civilian Academic Director for its Training Division and should empower that individual to reassess existing training programs to ensure a student-centered approach to learning that meaningfully addresses the realities of policing in Portland.

19: The Academic Director should assess the Advanced Academy training curriculum and whether its overarching philosophy could be better aligned to community expectations for public safety in Portland. The Director should report to the public the outcome of this evaluation.

20: The Bureau should work to enhance its relationship with existing advisory groups and look for opportunities to educate and collaborate as well as respond to initiatives in more comprehensive and accountable ways.

21: The Bureau should dedicate more resources to reinforcing effective strategies for relationship-building within specific Portland communities – a path that requires sustained and repeated outreach over time.

22: The Bureau should pursue programs that build community bridges at the neighborhood level, including the use of localized patrol teams and the organized cultivation of relationships with a range of community representatives.

23: PPB should work to ensure the effective approaches of its current "Community Engagement" officer are reinforced by providing that position with the requisite authority and resources, and by committing to the development of established directives and strategic plans that will promote the longer-term sustainability of the unit.

24: The Bureau should develop ways to incorporate into its Academy training a community-based program focused on non-law enforcement social service work aimed at reinforcing the importance of building relationships within Portland's diverse communities.

25: Bureau leadership should continue to support a collaborative approach to public health and public safety through its Community Safety Director, and should help the City define how PPB resources can be deployed in focused ways to address issues (including violent crime) that require the unique skills of law enforcement.

26: The City should continue its efforts to create a more effective Public Safety communication structure, with greater coordination among bureaus and ongoing collaboration with the Police Bureau to ensure it is appropriately funded and staffed to be able to more effectively communicate with the public.

27: The Bureau should periodically evaluate how modifications to policing strategies, such as focusing traffic enforcement on moving violations, impact the current racial disparities, and report on this progress.

28: We encourage the City to incorporate questions into its next "Portland Insights" survey that would track community perceptions of PPB culture and practices, particularly with regard to racial and political bias, and resistance to change and other reform efforts.