

Portland Police Bureau Training Advisory Council

Date: February 3, 2021

From: Shawn Campbell
Chair, Training Advisory Council

To: The Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing
Chief of Police Chuck Lovell
Mayor Ted Wheeler

Subject: Core Patrol Services Reform

On behalf of the Portland Police Bureau's (PPB) Training Advisory Council (TAC), I am writing to you today to convey our thoughts and assertions regarding the Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing's (PCCEP) review of the PPB's core patrol services. The TAC views this as an important opportunity for community input regarding a key part of our public safety system. Our statements below are based upon the work that the TAC has done over the years; for each of the recommendations, we cite our resolutions, reports, and recommendations that form the basis of what we state.

We fully believe that significant and effective improvement is possible. However, it will require leadership that sets clear goals, involves the community in decisions, and rolls up its sleeves to provide whatever support is needed rather than settling for what is expedient. We look forward to providing further input regarding needed changes and strategies for implementing these changes. If you need to contact the TAC or myself regarding this matter, you can do so via email at ppbtac@gmail.com.

Yours Truly,

Shawn Campbell
TAC Chair

About the Training Advisory Council:

The TAC was created in 2012 as a police bureau advisory body by city resolution 36912. The TAC is a citizen's group with the mission of providing ongoing advice to the Chief of Police and the bureau's Training Division in order to continuously improve training standards, practices, and outcomes through the examination of training philosophy, content, delivery, tactics, policy, equipment, and facilities. The TAC is also tasked by Section 86 of the DOJ settlement agreement with the City of Portland to identify and report to the Chief of Police any patterns in the bureau's use of force. Website: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/61449>

1. Utilizing Proper Change Management Strategies

(CMR) Change Management Resolution – July 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/763831>

(OPW) Overview of Police Work Report – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765707>

The TAC is opposed to ill-thought-out reactive reforms based upon untested assumptions and personal viewpoints. The TAC supports reforms that are built upon an evidence-based foundation of appropriately utilized data and analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, and which are implemented utilizing a comprehensive change management strategy.

It must be recognized that inequities exist within our public safety system, and that reform is needed to ensure the equitable treatment of all communities regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, creed, income, or other factor. However, too often over the past year the push for reform has been driven by misinformation, fear, desire for political gain, and a rush for quick fixes, often leading to negative consequences that might have been foreseen with adequate consideration. It is important to remember that the communities most impacted by our current public safety system are also more likely to experience crimes, meaning they are also most in need of the core patrol services that the system should be designed to provide (*OPW, slide 15 and 16*). Poorly planned and implemented reforms, such as the cutting of services prior to having viable functioning alternatives put into place, can result in an outsized negative effect on the very communities such reforms are meant to help.

While there is a risk inherent in any type of public safety reform, requiring a certain willingness to figure things out as we go, this risk can be significantly limited by putting into practice effective change management strategies; including using available data and analysis to form a shared full view of current conditions, collaborating in the creation of realistic goals and timeframes, and utilizing a stepwise implementation process to allow for the analysis and adjustment of both new and existing programs over time (*CMR*).

2. Maintaining the Success of De-Escalation Training and Directives

(FUT) Changes in Force Utilization Over Time Report – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765706>

(OPW) Overview of Police Work Report – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765707>

(PUF) Patterns in Use of Force Report – July 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/763834>

The TAC is opposed to further cuts to the number of sworn officers without viable functioning alternatives being first put into place. While the TAC is supportive of public safety alternatives to sworn officers, it does not support cuts that would affect the Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) or

otherwise limit the ability of officers to utilize the enhanced de-escalation tactics put into place by the PPB since the inception of the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement in 2012.

When looking at possible reforms, it is important to recognize the success of past endeavors. Following the Settlement Agreement, the PPB began implementing significant reforms meant to lower the use of force by officers providing core patrol services; including new directives regarding when and how to use force, the creation of the Behavioral Health Unit (BHU), new training focused on de-escalation, and the improved collection and analysis of use of force data. A series of recent reports by the TAC highlight the positive results of these reforms; including a 31% drop in the use of force by the PPB over the past five years (*FUT*), and a drop of 75% or more for most individual types of force over the past decade, with many types seeing an over 90% decline (*PUF, page 6*). It should be noted that these analyses are of uses of force while providing core patrol services and do not include uses of force related to crowd control events and other special circumstances. These under-reported figures highlight that not only is change possible, but that reforms to policy and training can result in significant positive change if given time.

A significant part of the PPB's success in lowering its use of force is the training and utilization of tactics involving multiple officers being on scene. Having a greater number of officers on scene allows them to more effectively and safely create the time and space needed to successfully de-escalate situations. As well, it allows for the utilization of lower levels of force in situations where the use of force is unavoidable. However, if multiple officers are not available to respond in a timely manner, such de-escalation tactics cannot be effectively utilized, resulting in a higher likelihood of force being used. In 2019, the PPB had 1.41 sworn officers per thousand Portland residents, down 18% compared to a decade ago. In 2020; due to cut positions, retirements, and transfers; the ratio is expected to fall further to 1.30 sworn officers per thousand Portland residents, down 25% compared to a decade ago (*OPW, slides 11 and 12*).

3. Training Targeting Inequities and Officer Bias

(EIT) Emotional Intelligence Training Recommendation – September 2019

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/745937>

(EQS) Equity Staffing Resolution – November 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765709>

(OWP) Officer Wellness Programs Recommendation – May 2019

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/745938>

(PJI) Procedural Justice and Implicit Bias Courses Feedback – August 2019

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/699311>

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/699316>

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/709399>

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/742533>

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/751927>

(PUF) Patterns in Use of Force Report – July 2020
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/763834>

The TAC fully supports training developed by the PPB over the past three years to reduce issues of officer bias, which is a factor that can and does contribute to inequities in our public safety system, especially in the providing of core patrol services. Specifically, this includes training regarding implicit bias, procedural justice, emotional intelligence, and officer wellness. The TAC believes that, given time, when these aspects of training are fully integrated into the totality of PPB training, there will be reductions in the inequities currently inherent in our public safety system.

There is no question that officer bias plays a role in these inequities. For example, when looking at use of force compared to custodies, a measure meant to account for disparities caused by factors not directly attributable to officer bias, disparities still exist, remaining consistent despite significant drops in the overall amount of force used by the PPB over time (***PUF, pages 13-23***). Such disparities can only be attributed to the actions of the officers and subjects involved. While the actions of subjects interacting with police certainly play a role in outcomes, the PPB only has control over the actions of its officers, and therefore has an obligation to train its officers to recognize and limit negative outcomes in its interactions as much as possible.

To the PPB's credit, over the past three years the bureau has focused on developing training and directives to mitigate and limit the effects of officer bias; this change is one of the central pillars of 21st century policing. Steps in this regard include the development of implicit bias and procedural justice training (***PJI***), emotional intelligence training (***EIT***), and comprehensive officer wellness programs (***OWP***). Furthermore, the PPB has also committed to hiring an Equity Training Specialist and Equity Analyst whose primary roles are to integrate equity into all parts of PPB's training and identify directives and practices leading to inequitable outcomes both within the PPB and regarding its interactions with the public (***EQS***). Though still in the early stages, and therefore needing more time to mature and show results, these steps are viewed by the TAC as being quite promising.

The TAC clearly recognizes that officer bias is not the only factor causing these inequities; many of those factors are outside the PPB's control, and that focusing solely on issues within the PPB might mitigate but cannot solve larger social issues. The fact that inequities exist in our public safety system is indisputable, with data pertaining to custodies, stops, and use of force all showing certain communities interacting with the PPB at much higher levels than what their relative share of the general population would suggest. But while officer bias most certainly plays a role in the creation of these inequities, treating it as the sole or even the most significant factor oversimplifies a crucial problem in our society. Long standing socio-economic inequities, biases of the general public, biases within the justice system, and officer biases all play a role in these disparities, though the share of blame held by each of these factors is unknown (***PUF, pages 24-27***).

4. Public Safety Support Specialist Program

(OPW) Overview of Police Work Report – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765707>

(PSE) Public Safety Support Specialist Program Expansion Recommendation – July 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/763833>

(PST) Public Safety Support Specialist Program Training Recommendation – November 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/780183>

The TAC fully supports expansion of the PPB's Public Safety Support Specialist program (PS3) in order to create a new branch of the PPB specifically trained for and tasked with handling core patrol service calls for service not involving a crime. In addition, the TAC fully supports a transition over time to a recruitment and training system where the PS3 program is utilized as an apprenticeship program for future sworn officers.

In 2019, PPB responded to 363,447 calls for service, of which 16% resulted in a reported crime (79% of which were property crimes), 6% resulted in a subject being taken into custody, and 0.2% resulted in a use of force (*OPW, slide 7*). Over the past decade, citizen initiated dispatched calls for service (via the Bureau of Emergency Communications) have risen significantly, with the growth largely driven by more low priority calls. As a result, the PPB's ability to put into practice the tenets of community policing and apply adequate resources to solving crimes has declined (*OPW, slides 9, 11, and 12*). The work of police has become increasingly focused on handling personal disputes, situations which frighten or inconvenience community members, and other issues that do not rise to the level of a crime, a trend exacerbated by our community's failure to provide access to needed services to the most vulnerable members of our population. Increasingly we are expecting officers to be experts in handling every conceivable situation, and thus are setting them up to fail.

The TAC views the expansion of the PS3 program as an important part of solving these issues. By expanding the PS3 program, the PPB can respond to non-emergency calls for service and other time-consuming low-level tasks in a more cost-effective manner, freeing officers and other resources to better focus on what is considered traditional police work (*PSE*). By developing training and protocols regarding the interactions between sworn officers, PS3s, and the Portland Street Response (PSR) teams, it would be possible to create distinct tools within the same toolbox, working in concert and combining their specific skillsets as needed (*PST*).

In addition, the TAC believes it would be beneficial for the PPB to inaugurate a training system where all sworn officers serve for a time as PS3s, creating opportunities for recruits to fully develop important soft skills prior to being given the authority to cite, arrest, and utilize force. However, the PS3 program should also be kept as a separate career path for those interested in working in public safety while not serving as sworn officers. Overall, the PS3 program is viewed as an important avenue to improving diversity within the PPB (*PSE*).

5. Officer Recruit Education Requirements

(OER) Officer Education Requirement Recommendation – March 2021

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/780317>

The TAC supports re-raising the minimum education requirement for new sworn officer recruits from a high school diploma or GED to an Associate's college degree or term of military service. The TAC does support recruits with only a high school diploma or GED training to be sworn officers if they first complete a term of service as a PS3. Furthermore, the TAC recommends that the PPB work with local universities and community colleges to develop an updated criminal justice or community policing degree.

In July of 2019, the PPB officially lowered its minimum education requirement for sworn officer recruits from an Associate's college degree or term of military service to a high school diploma or GED, though the minimum age requirement was maintained at twenty-one. This was done to alleviate increasing difficulties in recruiting new officer candidates. Though the combination of the short amount of time the new policy has been in place and the events of 2020 have made an analysis of the effects of the change difficult, early indications suggest issues regarding officer writing skills. Concerns also exist that recruits with only a high school diploma and not much lived experience may not have acquired the skills that would help them navigate interactions with a wide variety of people in varying emotional states. While the TAC believes it is in the community's best interest to return the minimum education requirement to the previous standard, it also recognizes that having an insufficient recruitment pool is also detrimental. Towards this, the TAC believes serving as a PS3 for a period of time would provide hands on experience similar to a secondary education (*OER*).

6. Comprehensive Officer Wellness Programs

(OWP) Officer Wellness Programs Recommendation – May 2019

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/745938>

(OWT) Officer Wellness Training Feedback – December 2019

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/742533>

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/756740>

The TAC strongly supports the maintaining of and expansion of existing officer wellness programs and trainings which specifically target the improvement of the physical, mental, and emotional health of the PPB's sworn and non-sworn personnel. Such programs have been shown to not only improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency, but to also improve interactions with the public and lower the utilization of force. Consistently putting officers in difficult or traumatic situations without providing the tools needed to cope and heal is viewed as setting them up to fail.

When considering any type of public safety reform, it must be recognized that those serving in positions where there is a high incidence of trauma are at greater risk for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as other mental health issues. Furthermore, it must be recognized that

even the grind of non-traumatic lower-level calls for service can result in compassion fatigue. Such issues not only affect police officers, but also firefighters, paramedics, and 911 operators. The implications of not addressing these issues are well understood by experts, and officer wellness programs should be recognized as an important pillar of 21st century policing. Officer retention, the use of force, complaints issues against officers, the use of sick days, officer injuries, officer recruitment, and issues of implicit bias can all be tied directly to the effects of unmanaged or mismanaged stress (*OWP*).

To the credit of the PPB, this has become widely recognized over the past few years, with the officers themselves being the biggest proponents of such reforms. Both programs and training are being put in place to not only improve officer wellness, but to also shift the culture of the PPB regarding the importance of physical, mental, and emotional health (*OWT*). Continuing to invest in this area will undoubtedly result in further dividends.

7. Concerns Regarding the Use of Deadly Force

(FUT) Changes in Force Utilization Over Time Report – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765706>

(OPW) Overview of Police Work Report – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765707>

(PUF) Patterns in Use of Force Report – July 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/763834>

The TAC fully believes in the need to develop better strategies to limit the use of deadly force. Though overall the use of deadly force is limited, averaging 4.8 incidents per year over the past decade, it has an outsized effect on not only the individuals and officers involved, but also their families and loved ones, and the wider communities of Portland. Counter to the hopes of the 2012 Department of Justice Settlement Agreement, though overall uses of force have declined dramatically (*See section 2*), the use of deadly force has remained largely the same over the same time period (*FUT, OPW, PUF*). While often the use of deadly force represents a cascading failure of many systems, the PPB shares a responsibility to find and implement tactics and strategies to prevent and limit such incidents.

8. Improving the Strategic Utilization of Data

(PUF) Patterns in Use of Force Report – July 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/763834>

The TAC fully supports the utilization of data and analyses to not only identify, monitor, and better understand troubling trends in relation to core patrol services, but also utilizing them to proactively prevent or actively mitigate such trends. However, to enable such data utilization, the city must invest in cost-efficient ways of collecting and analyzing it and must overcome resistance within the PPB to such uses of data and analyses. It is also important to avoid the

negative effects of community leaders pre-emptively and assigning causality to such data based upon their own views and assumptions rather than the logic of analysis.

An example of this is highlighted in the TAC's Patterns in Use of Force Report where data shows that 13 officers are responsible for 25% of the force interactions occurring in the Central Precinct (*PUF, pages 29-36*). While the immediate reactive response of many when seeing such a statistic may be to demand these officers be identified and disciplined, such a view based upon just this single statistic is incomplete. Are these officers being put into situations more likely to result in force for reasons beyond their control? Are they working in patrol areas where higher usages of force are reported for all officers? Do they have specific training or experience making them better able to safely utilize force when it is deemed necessary? However, just as we cannot assume the worst based upon a single statistic, neither can we automatically assume the best possible explanation either. Repeated force interactions, even if all said interactions are within policy, can suggest issues not readily identifiable by looking at individual reports in order to identify things such as an officer's poor usage of interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, and de-escalation strategies. The point is that when seeing such a statistic, the first inclination should not be to make assumptions beyond identifying the need to investigate in more depth.

Holding individual officers accountable via remediation or discipline when their actions are found to be out of policy is important. However, preventing such actions is more important. There is a tendency, by both advocacy groups and the PPB, to focus on the actions of individual officers at single points in time when discussing public safety deficiencies, including relying heavily on individual narratives to support or counter the need for more systematic reform. While such narratives are important pieces of data, it should be noted that only by collectively looking at data over time can the PPB create policies which prevent issues over which it has direct control and better mitigate the effects of issues over which it has little to no control. There is truth in the adage that the plural of anecdote is not evidence.

9. Data Transparency

(DDI) Demographic Data Inclusion Recommendation – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765708>

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/745939>

(FUT) Changes in Force Utilization Over Time Report – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765706>

(OPW) Overview of Police Work Report – September 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/765707>

(POD) PPB Open Data Portal

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/71673>

(PUF) Patterns in Use of Force Report – July 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/763834>

The TAC supports making data regarding the activities of officers, especially as it relates to core patrol services, more available to the public. By making more data available, the PPB can improve its transparency and aid the public in better understanding the complexities of public safety reform.

Thanks to the 2012 Department of Justice Settlement Agreement, the PPB has made significant strides in releasing information on the utilization of force by officers, including summary reports and providing access to the raw data behind those reports. This level of transparency has not only allowed for analysis by external parties (*PUF*) but has also very likely been an important factor in driving reforms which have resulted in a significant decrease in the PPB's use of force over time (*FUT*) and the start of reforms to end inequities in the use of force (*see sections 2 and 3 of this document*). However, though the PPB does provide a wide variety of statistics regarding uses of force, dispatched calls, reported crimes, and police stops (*OPW and PUD*), some important data points are missing. These include more detailed information that could provide a greater amount of needed context (*PUF, pages 6-13*), including both comparisons to internal (*OPW*) and external (*DDI*) datasets. In addition, there is little to no attempt to create connections among the datasets being made available, and there is no detailed data provided regarding custodies.

10. External Factors Affecting Core Patrol Services

(FPR) Five Pillars of Public Safety Structural Reform – July 2020

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/763832>

The TAC believes that while focusing on reforms to core patrol services is an important part of overall public safety reform, correcting the current issues in PPB's core patrol services will require not just looking beyond said services, but also at the wider responsibilities beyond the bureau. The PPB is just one part of a public safety system which includes the City of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) and the Multnomah County and State of Oregon criminal justice systems. Issues with each of these parts often feed upon and propagate each other, fueling many of the overall issues of inequity currently inherent throughout the system. To properly address such issues, reform is needed at all levels, including the establishment of restorative justice programs as an alternative to the traditional justice system, establishing enhanced protocols for BOEC to help limit the growth in less urgent calls for service, and utilizing public resource specialists to perform follow up work with those needing help gaining access to services outside of the public safety system. Furthermore, the effect of wider issues on the public safety system such as socio-economic inequities, the houselessness issue, and the lack of mental health resources; must be fully recognized (*FPR*).