



Police Review Commission

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CONSENT CALENDAR  
May 25, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Police Review Commission  
Submitted by: Ismail Ramsey, Chairperson, Police Review Commission  
Subject: Police Review Commission online poll

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Police Review Commission to conduct an online poll regarding awareness of the Commission and experience with its complaint process.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Police Review Commission (PRC) is interested in learning about what the public knows about the PRC and, in particular, about the ability to file complaints of alleged misconduct by Berkeley police officers or policy complaints questioning a particular departmental policy, practice, or procedure. The idea for a poll stemmed from the PRC's Outreach Subcommittee, which thought that the data gathered would help the coming Police Accountability Board target its outreach efforts. The PRC believes the survey results will be useful for the new oversight body as it plans its community engagement activities.

BACKGROUND

The PRC was created in 1973 to provide for community participation in setting and reviewing police department policies, practices, and procedures, and to provide a means for prompt, impartial, and fair investigation of complaints brought by individuals against the Berkeley Police Department.

The number of individual and policy complaints filed with the PRC has fallen steadily over the past 20 years, averaging 20 per year from 2011 to 2020, compared to 42 from 2001 to 2010. The reason for the decline is unclear, but could be due to factors such as lack of knowledge about the PRC complaint process, or general satisfaction with the police.

Obtaining information about the public's awareness of the PRC, as well as understanding why they have not filed a complaint, even if they know about their ability to have an entity separate from the Police Department investigate it, will help shed

some light on what type of outreach efforts are needed. While the PRC will soon cease to exist, the Police Accountability Board, as a successor agency that will also accept complaints, could benefit from an understanding of what the public knows about civilian oversight in Berkeley and the public's views of its effectiveness.

The poll, a copy of which is attached, will be issued via SurveyMonkey. It is brief and focused, and will be circulated for three weeks. The link to the poll will be shared broadly as possible. It will be sent to individuals and to community, non-profit, political advocacy, and faith-based organizations, among others, who will be asked to respond to and share the poll. Respondents will remain anonymous.

The PRC voted unanimously to approve the idea of the poll and seek Council's approval at its April 14, 2021 meeting.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No identifiable environmental effects or opportunities are associated with the subject of this report.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

According to the Commissioners' Manual, Council approval is needed for a commission to communicate in an official manner outside of commission meetings, including polling of the public.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

#### CITY MANAGER

The City Manager concurs with the content and recommendations of the Commission's Report.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Katherine J. Lee, Police Review Commission Officer, Police Review Commission, 510-981-4960.

Attachments:

1: Poll

## BERKELEY'S POLICE REVIEW COMMISSION WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

The Berkeley Police Review Commission (PRC) is responsible for providing oversight to the Berkeley Police Department (BPD), reviewing personnel complaints filed by people against BPD officers, and reviewing policy complaints filed by people regarding a BPD policy, practice, or procedure.

The value of the PRC depends in large part on community feedback. We want to hear from you regarding any aspect of the complaint process and regardless of whether you personally have filed a complaint. Your feedback will be important as the PRC transitions to the new Police Accountability Board this summer.

We would really appreciate it if you could answer these brief questions (check the response that best fits your experience) and send us your general feedback and experiences. Your feedback will be anonymous.

1. How familiar are you with the Berkeley Police Review Commission?

- I'm very familiar with it.
- I'm somewhat familiar with it.
- I have heard of it, but don't know much about it.
- I do not know about it/never heard of it.

Next

BERKELEY'S POLICE REVIEW COMMISSION WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

2. Have you ever filed a complaint with the PRC?

- Yes (skip to Question #4)
- No (proceed to Question #3)

3. If you answered 'No' to Question #2, why not? (check all that apply, then skip to Question #7)

- I didn't know about the PRC.
- I don't have any complaints.
- It was a minor issue and not worth the effort.
- I couldn't take time off work.
- I missed the deadline for filing.
- I thought nothing would come of it.
- I felt intimidated by the PRC complaint process.
- I feared retaliation.

Other (please specify)

[Empty text box for specifying other reasons]

4. If you answered "Yes" to Question #2, were you satisfied with the complaint process?

- Yes
- No

5. If you were satisfied with the complaint process, please tell us why.

[Empty text box for explaining satisfaction]

6. If you were not satisfied with the complaint process, please tell us why. What would you change?

[Empty text box for explaining dissatisfaction]

## BERKELEY'S POLICE REVIEW COMMISSION WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

7. The PRC also issues commendations to officers for extraordinary service. Are you aware that you can ask the Commission to commend an officer?

Yes

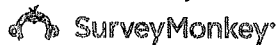
No

8. Any other feedback?  
(Final question - you're done. Thank you!)

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Done.

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See how easy it is to [create a survey](#).

