



BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT TEXTING OFFENCES AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION BY THE POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Approved* by the Police Accountability Board on July 10, 2024

PRESENTED TO THE CITY OF BERKELEY - PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE ON: FEB. 25th, 2025

Text Messages Sent by DTTF, 2019-2020

I like that way of thinking. I'm gonna come with a bike force board game. You do shit around the city to go forward. I'll come up with a cool award for the winner. Maybe like a week long challenge. Famous people arrested you get extra points.

Shedoudy's Obama phone fucked up the video.

I was thinking whoever gets the least arrests today does the waxing.

Hows Operation 100 going

81 arrests! We can do 19 by Friday for sure!

Stern is gonna come back with a new strain that wipes out the homeless pop. We will just ride by the bodies!

“What is clear from a plain reading of the texts is that the behavior was unprofessional...and this episode further demonstrates the need to implement reforms.”

Arreguin, J. (2023, July 21). Statement to *Berkeleyside*. *Berkeleyside*.
<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2023/07/21/berkeley-bike-squad-investigation-criticized>

Figure 2. Downtown Task Force Arrest Numbers by Month

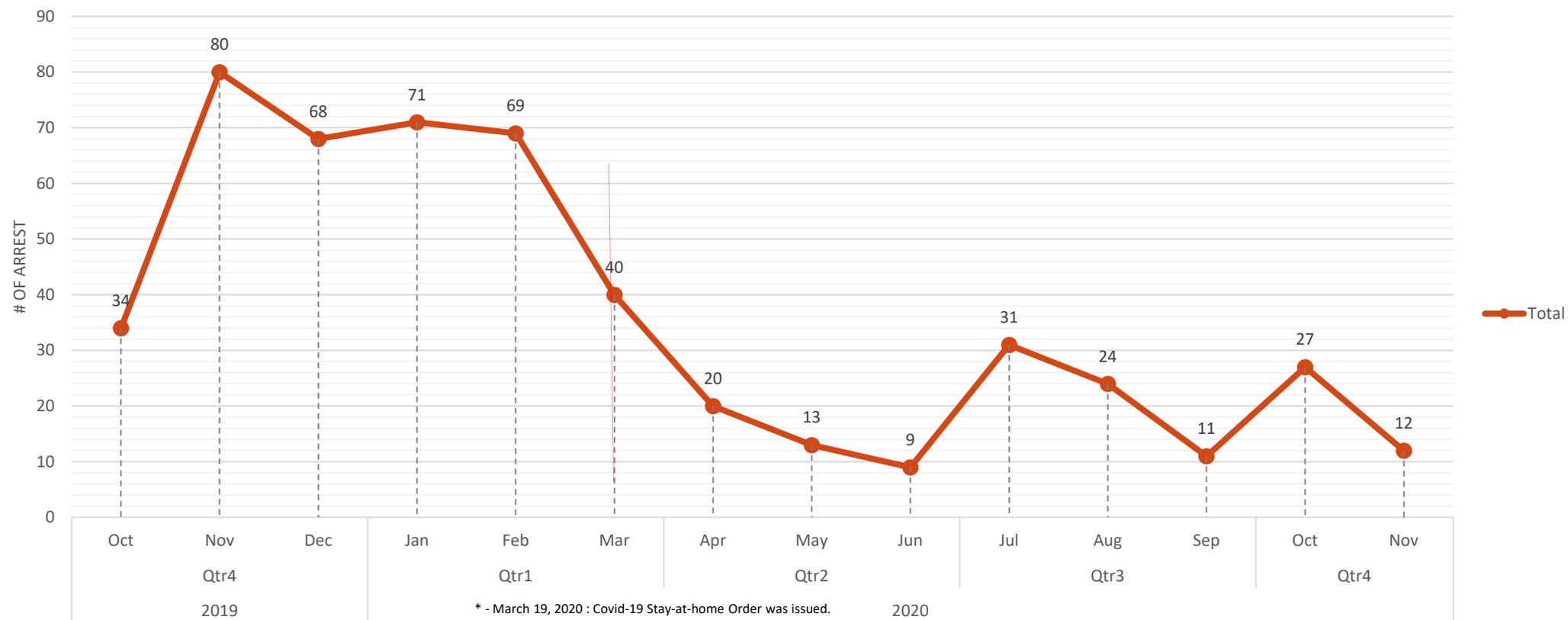
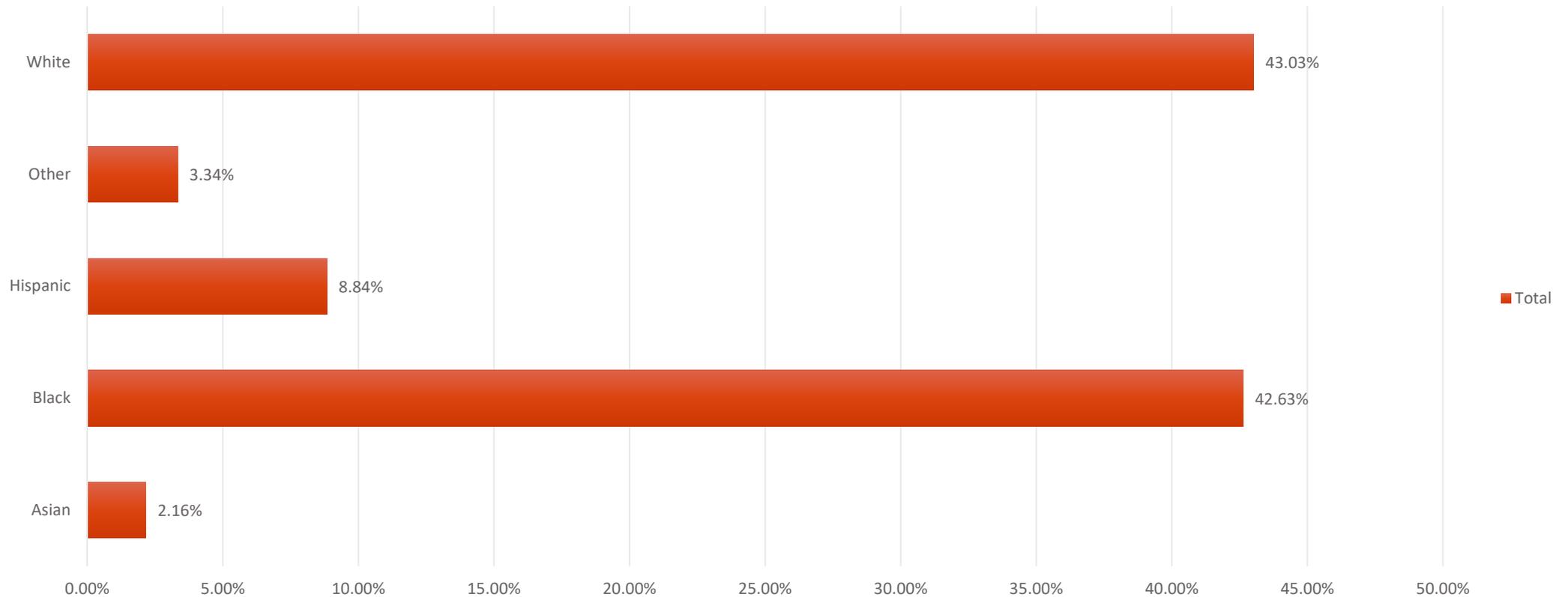


Figure 3. Racial Make-up of Individuals Arrested by Downtown Task Force, October 2019-November 2020

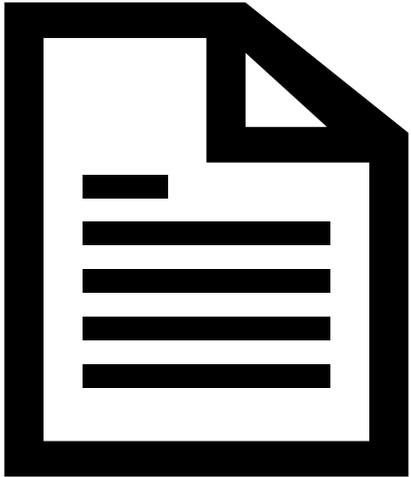


ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

- Unclear discretion in enforcing stay-away orders despite many arrests.
- DTF officers frequently used personal cell phones for work.
- Overtime use was highly discretionary.
- Officers lacked policy knowledge, including misconduct reporting.
- Officers dismissed texts as jokes, rejecting claims of racism, disdain for the unhoused, or arrest quotas.



Recommendations for Policy Modifications*



- Create a standalone policy banning formal and informal arrest quotas.
- Ensure fair enforcement of stay-away orders per state law.
- Revise BPD policies on fair and impartial policing; standards of conduct; employee speech and social networking; personal devices; and overtime compensation requests.

*in collaboration with the BPD

Recommendations for City Council Action

- Recommend adopting a strong resolution holding sworn officers accountable for misconduct on or off duty.

Research shows lack of accountability can spread misconduct.

In 2023–2024, the Council prioritized lobbying for greater peace officer accountability.

Recommendations for City Council Action, Cont'd

- Resolution affirming the PAB's authority to access records.
Policies evolve through daily practice, not just formal policy.
Oversight is crucial, as delays in DTF interviews demonstrate.
Ensuring accountability is both aligned with Berkeley's values and is cost-effective.

Sources

- Police Accountability Board. (2024, August 29). *Berkeley Police Department texting offences: An independent investigation by the Police Accountability Board*. City of Berkeley.
https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-08-29%20BPD%20Texting%20Offenses_PAB%20Investigation%20Report_Final.pdf
- Office of the Director of Police Accountability. (2024, August 29). *Companion report to Berkeley Police Department texting allegations: An independent investigation by the Police Accountability Board*. City of Berkeley.
https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3.%202024-08-29%20ODPA%20Companion%20Report_FINAL.pdf

Contact

Hansel Alejandro Aguilar

Director of Police Accountability

Office of the Director of Police Accountability

1900 Addison St. – 3rd floor

Berkeley, CA 94704

O: 510-981-4950

E: dpa@berkeleyca.gov

Joshua Cayetano

Chair

Police Accountability Board

1900 Addison St. – 3rd floor

Berkeley, CA 94704

O: 510-981-4950

E: JCayetano@berkeleyca.gov