

CREATING UNIFORM ACCOUNTABILITY

BUILDING LASTING, INDEPENDENT POLICE REFORM IN SEATTLE



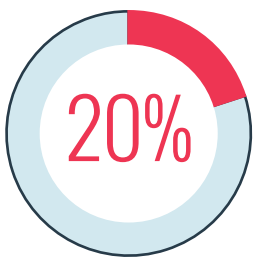
COUNCILMEMBER M. LORENA GONZÁLEZ

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The Need for Reform

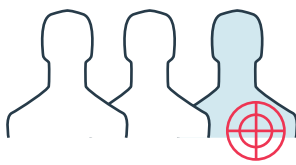
In 2010, there were a number of highly publicized use of force incidents on residents, many of them people of color. Dozens of community organizations wrote a letter to the US Department of Justice (DOJ) requesting a formal investigation, which was conducted in 2011. The DOJ reported that the Seattle Police Department (SPD) was engaging in unconstitutional policing and needed to reform three main areas:

Excessive Use of Force



20% of all uses of force were unnecessary. Officers also escalated minor situations.

Biased Policing



Potential biases in stopping people of color for questioning and disproportionate uses of force against them, all eroding community trust.

Lack of Supervision & Accountability



SPD and others did not properly monitor or investigate uses of force.

Creating Lasting & Meaningful Change

The DOJ's findings led to the City entering into a Settlement Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with DOJ, also known as the Consent Decree. That Consent Decree has guided police reform for the past four years and counting. While much progress has been made, **three critical independent institutions are needed** to ensure that the **fundamental principles of reforms** are lasting and truly meaningful.

✓ Principles Become

🏛️ Independent Institutions

✓ Principle

Community Voice at the Table

The community needs a strong, active role in police oversight to foster lasting trust.

🏛️ Independent Institution

Community Police Commission

This Community Police Commission (CPC) has developed reform recommendations and advocates for community interests and perspectives. Making the CPC permanent and giving it a meaningful role in police reform will ensure that the community's voice will not only be heard but will always influence police reform.

✓ Principle

Independent Review of Systemic Issues

Meaningful police oversight and reform needs to be independent, sufficiently funded and ongoing.

🏛️ Independent Institution

Office of the Inspector General

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) would be an independent auditor and monitor of the police department to provide systemic oversight of every SPD function with a priority on systems impacting civil rights. Councilmember González is leading the effort to create this new and independent office.

✓ Principle

Meaningful Officer Accountability

Fair, effective and efficient investigations of officer misconduct are one of the cornerstones needed to build public trust.

🏛️ Independent Institution

Office of Professional Accountability

A civilian-led Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) investigates individual complaints about the police. Its independence will be strengthened by having additional civilian staff including investigators and complaint navigators.

Who Is Involved in Reform



The Community

People and local organizations have been and will continue to be the backbone of reform. The Community Police Commission is a conduit of this voice, and the legislative process, led by Councilmember González as chair of the Safe Communities committee, will continue to engage community in public hearings.



The Federal Government

The DOJ conducted the initial investigation and the Court oversees implementation of the Consent Decree. The Court will determine if the City's police reform legislation complies with the purpose and intent of the Consent Decree.



The City

The Mayor's Office, the City Attorney, and Council have engaged with the Community Police Commission and Federal Court to develop accountability recommendations.

Timeline: Police Reform in Seattle

In October 2016, the Community and the Mayor's Office submitted draft legislation to the Federal Court, which gave its preliminary approval. Now the legislation will come to the City Council for public discussion and finalization in the Gender Equity, Safe Communities, and New Americans Committee chaired by Councilmember M. Lorena González.

2009 - 2010 & Prior

A number of highly-publicized use of force cases came to light.

March 2011

DOJ launches investigation into SPD.

August 2012

The Consent Decree goes into effect, kicking off the court-monitored reform process.




April 2014 - July 2015

The CPC and Mayor's Office make recommendations for reform but are told to go back to the drawing board by the federal court overseeing the process.

Early 2017

The Mayor's Office submits proposed police accountability legislation to Council.

Early - Mid 2017

Councilmember González  leads study missions to three other cities with an Inspector General (IG)  to explore best practices related to an IG  and reform in general.

December 2010

34 community organizations implore the US Department of Justice (DOJ) to conduct a formal investigation of SPD.

December 2011

DOJ announces its findings: SPD is unconstitutionally using unnecessary and / or excessive force as well as potentially employing other bad practices like biased policing within poor accountability systems.



March 2013

The Community Police Commission (CPC) is created, developing reform recommendations and representing community interests and perspectives.

October 2016 - January 2017

The Mayor's Office and CPC make another set of recommendations that are submitted to the federal court. They receive preliminary approval, paving the way for creating legislation.

Early - Mid 2017

Councilmember González  chair of the Safe Communities Committee, leads the process of shaping and finalizing police accountability legislation that will define the powers and establish the independence of the three main accountability entities: CPC, OIG, and OPA. 


Early - Mid 2017

The public provides input at the Safe Communities Committee, including two special evening community meetings.

 Past Event



Councilmember González

 Current / Future Event



Independent Institution