



## COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

### **Human Rights Commission**

#### **Recommendation Number: (20241125-004): Recommendation to Ensure Full Compliance with the Austin Police Oversight Act and Prioritize Transparency, Accountability, and Efficiency in the Austin Police Department**

**WHEREAS**, the voters of Austin overwhelmingly approved the Austin Police Oversight Act (APOA), signaling a strong mandate for transparency, accountability, and oversight in the operations of the Austin Police Department (APD);

**WHEREAS**, the APOA explicitly requires police contracts to comply fully with its provisions, including access to the 'G-files' and ensuring the integrity of independent police oversight investigations;

**WHEREAS**, recent negotiations and the subsequent five-year, \$218 million police contract with the Austin Police Association (APA) have raised significant concerns among community advocates, elected officials, and stakeholders regarding the potential undermining of voter-approved oversight measures;

**WHEREAS**, community members and organizations have expressed concerns that vague or conflicting language in the contract could leave open avenues to reintroduce the so-called "G-file," thus limiting transparency and accountability in addressing police misconduct;

**WHEREAS**, the APD faces over 300 vacancies, and the significant financial commitment of the new contract—featuring a 28% pay increase over five years—must be matched by measurable improvements in officer retention, response times, and overall humane conduct;

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin's budgetary priorities, including critical social services such as housing, homelessness support, mental health programs, and public safety beyond policing, must be balanced to reflect the values and needs of all Austinites;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Human Rights Commission of the City of Austin recommends the following:

- 1. Ensure Full Compliance with the Austin Police Oversight Act in all negotiations with APD:**  
The City of Austin must guarantee that all provisions of the APOA, including the protection of independent oversight authority, are strictly adhered to in current and future police contracts. Any ambiguities in contract language must be resolved in favor of transparency and accountability.

2. **Establish Clear Metrics for Accountability and Efficiency:**

The significant increase in APD funding must result in tangible improvements, including but not limited to:

- Reducing officer vacancy rates and improving recruitment and retention.
- Demonstrating measurable improvements in response times across all districts.
- Ensuring humane, community-oriented policing practices that respect human rights and build trust.

3. **Conduct Regular Oversight and Public Reporting:**

The City must establish a framework for quarterly public reporting on APD's progress toward meeting the APOA's mandates and contract performance metrics. This reporting should include data on response times, disciplinary actions, and use of force incidents.

4. **Protect Funding for Vital Community Services:**

The City Council must ensure that the financial commitment to APD does not come at the expense of essential social services and other community investments. Transparent budgeting practices and stakeholder engagement are necessary to maintain balance.

5. **Address Community Concerns:**


The City should commit to ongoing engagement with community stakeholders to address concerns about contract implementation and its alignment with Austin's values of equity and justice.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Human Rights Commission urges the City Council to prioritize the trust and well-being of all Austinites by upholding the spirit and letter of the Austin Police Oversight Act in all agreements with the Austin Police Association, ensuring that public safety aligns with human rights, transparency, and community accountability.

Date of Approval: November 25, 2024

Record of the vote: The recommendation was approved on Commissioner Clemmons' motion, Commissioner Bryant's second on an 8-0 vote. Commissioners Aslam and Kirsh Pozen were absent.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_



Eric Anderson, Staff Liaison, Office of the City Clerk