

Seattle  
Community  
Police Commission

2023  
Annual Report



# What we mean when we say Community

Adhering to a strict definition of “Community” can be an ineffective way of centering the people we serve. It is important that we acknowledge that Community is a malleable term that historically means different things to different people. While racial, gender, or physical identity can define some communities, religion, housing status, political affiliation, or nationality may be more meaningful identities for others. With that in mind, the Commission acknowledges that the communities it serves are those that have been the most impacted by the institution of policing.

Throughout this report you will see the word “Community” capitalized. This is purposeful, as it is one of the small but significant ways that this government office can shift power to those we serve. Although titles and names of institutional actors are capitalized, government institutions neglect to offer the same reverence to people in Community. By capitalizing Community, we seek to demonstrate that the Commission respects no voice or feedback more than it respects that of the Community.

It’s in our name  
and it’s who we serve.



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## 2023 at CPC: A note from our Co-Chairs

### Dear Community Members,

We are proud to share the highlights of a transformative year for the Community Police Commission (CPC).

2023 marked a year of reset and growth for the CPC. One notable accomplishment involved advancing the goals of our communities through crucial updates to Seattle's 2017 Accountability Ordinance. The CPC also contributed to important Community discussions surrounding [Jaahnavi Kandula's tragic death](#) and police use of force, focusing close attention to accountability.

In September 2023, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) was largely [deemed compliant](#) with the federal Consent Decree. This marked a pivotal moment in our ongoing efforts to help ensure constitutional policing. As CPC Co-Chairs, we [filed motions](#) with the federal court overseeing the Consent Decree, ensuring that Community voices and perspectives were represented.

CPC made strides in working to strengthen its staff team through adding a new position. Establishing and funding the Deputy Director position was a significant step forward and will enhance our capacity to serve the Community effectively. Additionally, we expanded the CPC's advocacy and representation at the state level.

We worked to strengthen relationships with our accountability partners in the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Office of Police Accountability (OPA), as well as with the SPD. We organized and facilitated an in-person new commissioner orientation, which provided comprehensive training on the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), the Public Records Act (PRA), the accountability system, and SPD policies and practices. The CPC provided valuable input into the negotiation process of the Seattle Police Management Association (SPMA) contract, ensuring alignment with CPC and Community objectives and priorities.



Over the summer, we presented our [mid-year report](#) to the City Council, highlighting our progress and ongoing efforts. This report demonstrated our commitment to transparency and accountability by showcasing our achievements and the challenges we are addressing.

Our dedicated staff team attended several conferences, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), and the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE). These opportunities provided valuable learning and networking experiences that enriched our work and perspectives.

Reflecting on the year, we always remained laser focused on our commitment to working together to achieve our common goal: ensuring that Seattle's police accountability system is effective, transparent, and trustworthy. Our focus on community engagement, transparency, and accountability guided us through this transformative year.

Our commitment to police accountability and community engagement remains steadfast. We work to ensure that our actions and initiatives reflect the needs and voices of the communities we serve.

Looking towards the future, we are confident that the CPC will continue building upon these successes to drive meaningful change and foster stronger relationships between the police and the Community.

Thank you for your continued support and trust in the CPC. Together, we can achieve our vision of a just and accountable policing system for all.

**In Community,  
2023 Co-Chairs  
Community Police Commission**

**Rev. Harriett Walden**  
**Joel Merkel**  
**Rev. Patricia Hunter**



# Who we are & what we do

Building up to 2010, a series of serious incidents involving police violence against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) culminated in August 2010 with a Seattle police officer shooting and killing First Nations woodcarver John T. Williams. These events ignited public concern about bias and the use of excessive force in the SPD.

After a federal investigation, the City of Seattle signed a settlement agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to reform SPD practices. Those two documents are referred to as the Consent Decree. The Consent Decree is overseen by a federal judge and appointed police monitor who are charged with ensuring SPD's unconstitutional policing practices are corrected.

The Community Police Commission (CPC) was mandated under the Consent Decree to provide Community input on needed reforms. The City of Seattle established the CPC by ordinance, which began its work in 2013. Four years later, under the City's landmark 2017 Accountability Ordinance, CPC was made permanent, and its scope of responsibilities and authority was broadened. While it continues to be responsible for its obligations related to the Consent Decree, it now also provides mandated ongoing, community-based oversight of SPD and the police accountability system.

There are three parts to the accountability system, and they all work together in different ways to promote effective, constitutional policing. The accountability partners include:

- Office of Police Accountability (OPA);
- Office of the Inspector General (OIG); and
- Community Police Commission.

Together, these partners are mandated to offer critical analysis and advice to the City Council, Mayor, City Attorney, and each other, while also making policy recommendations and engaging in collaborative conversations with the Seattle Police Department.

The Community Police Commission empowers the Community's voice in the police reform process. The CPC is a diverse coalition of 15 volunteer Community members. It is designed to be completely independent from the Mayor, City Council, and Seattle Police Department.



John T. Williams' brother attended a CPC event in August 2023 to share his gratitude for the work we continue to do in his brother's honor.

# CPC authority & responsibility

It is our responsibility to honor and amplify the Community's voice through this transformative time. As we embark on the next chapter of CPC's history, we're working closely with partners and allies to fulfill our duties as outlined in the 2017 Accountability Ordinance.

## Here's how we strategize that work:

**Collaborate:** We collaborate with Community, SPD, OPA, OIG, and the City Attorney's Office to improve system transparency.

**Input:** We center Community input and provide recommendations into SPD practices, including policy, recruiting, hiring, and operational practices.

**Monitor:** We monitor the implementation of CPC's policy recommendations and our accountability partner recommendations.

**Review:** We review closed OPA investigations to identify opportunities for systemic improvements, based on feedback from Community members.

# CPC structure

## Commissioners

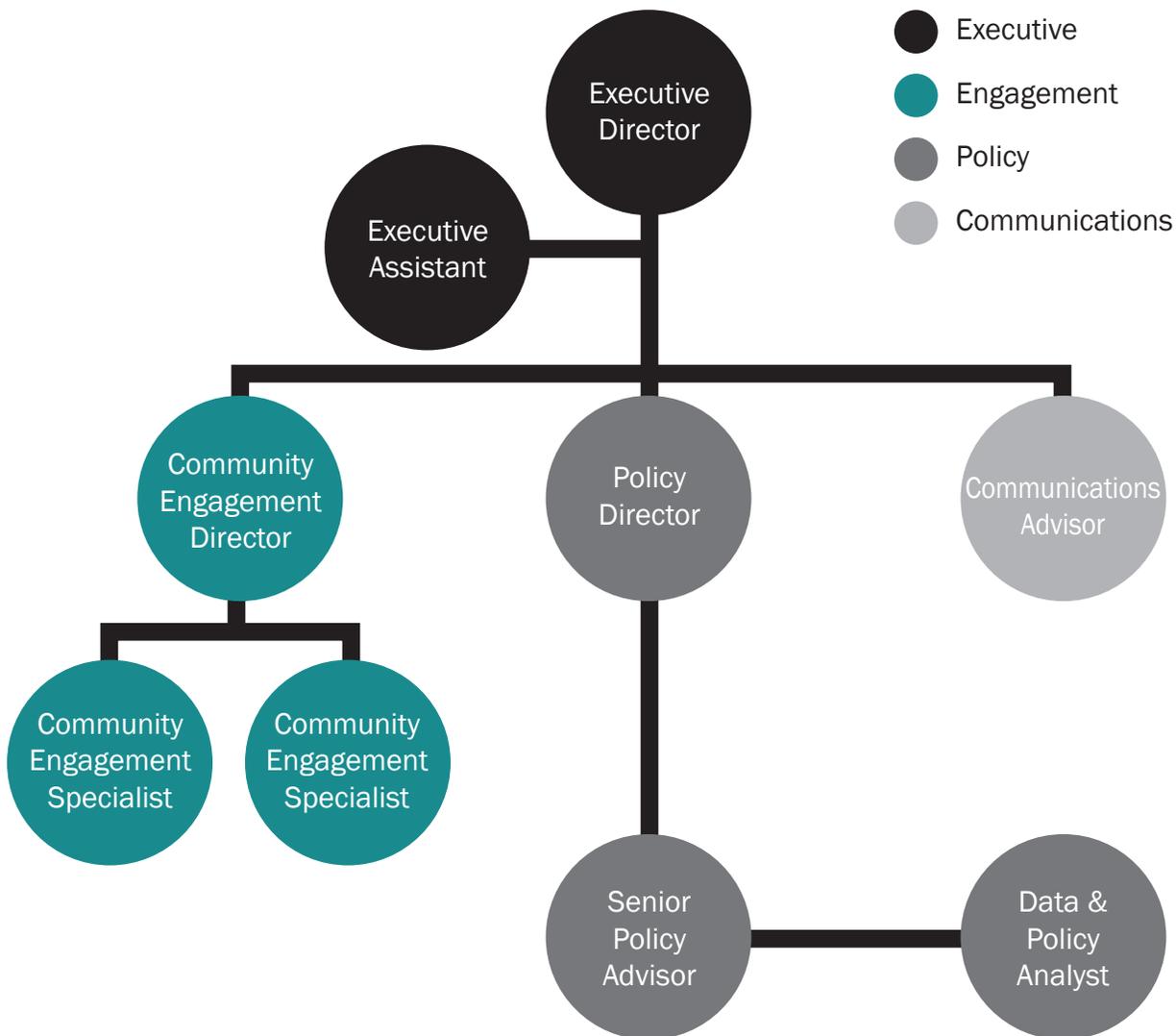
Per the Accountability Ordinance, fifteen volunteer Commissioners govern the work of the CPC. They are appointed to three-year terms.

Appointing authorities:

- Mayor
- City Council
- Community Police Commission

## Staff

There were nine staff members in 2023 helping to carry out the work of the Commission, per the structure of the Accountability Ordinance. Staff members are hired and supervised by the Executive Director.



# 1.

# 2023 Policies & Practices

## Response to the tragic death of Jaahnavi Kandula

On the evening of January 23, 2023, 23-year-old graduate student from India, Jaahnavi Kandula, was walking through a marked crosswalk when she was struck and killed by a police officer driving an SPD vehicle at 74-mph in a 25-mph zone without continuous sirens.

Following the tragic death of Jaahnavi Kandula, the CPC took immediate action to address the policies that may have contributed to this unfathomable loss of life.

CPC spent considerable time in 2023 working on policy and with Seattle's Indian Community related to the loss of Jaahnavi Kandula's life. For example, we've been drafting and recommending specific changes to SPD's emergency vehicle operations policy in an effort to prevent a tragedy like this in the future.

We sent detailed inquiries to both SPD and the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) to understand their respective policies and roles in this incident.

## Letter to the Seattle Police Department

Our [letter to SPD](#) focused on the department's vehicle operation policies. We sought detailed information on the protocols and training provided to officers regarding the safe operation of police vehicles. We also inquired about the measures in place to prevent similar incidents in the future, emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability in the handling of such cases.

## Letter to the Seattle Fire Department

In our [correspondence with SFD](#), we requested clarification on the department's protocols for supporting overdose incidents, particularly those involving police support. We aimed to understand the coordination between SPD and SFD during such emergencies and identify any potential gaps in the response procedures. This inquiry was crucial for ensuring that both departments work together effectively to prevent future tragedies.

These letters were part of our ongoing efforts to ensure transparency and accountability within our public safety departments and laid the groundwork for changes to SPD policies informed by Community input.

## Ongoing policy recommendations

We spent time throughout 2023 advocating for policies that protect the safety of the public, and working with the Indian American Community to collect its members' recommendations for useful Community input on policy recommendations, and three themes emerged:

1. Some rates of speed may be too much in any situation in urban Seattle;
2. Existing policies are too vague and leave too much to the interpretation of an officer. Without firm rules, there is no accountability; and
3. A more precise weighing of risk and benefit must be codified in policy. Residents deserve timely police responses during emergencies and calls for service. But they also deserve protection from police vehicles driving at unsafe speeds.

## National media attention

On the evening of Jaahnavi Kandula's passing, SPOG Vice President Detective Daniel Auderer was assigned to participate in the collision investigation. Nearly eight months later, on September 11, 2023, SPD released a never-before-seen body-worn video that recorded a phone conversation between Detective Auderer and SPOG President Mike Solan from the evening of her death. On the video, Detective Auderer is heard laughing, mocking, and making light of Kandula's death and even joking that her life "had limited value."

CPC acted quickly to [issue a public statement](#) strongly rebuking Auderer's actions.

On September 20, 2023, the CPC Co-Chairs [sent a letter](#) to SPD Chief of Police to recommend placing Detective Daniel Auderer on indefinite unpaid leave while the Office of Police Accountability (OPA) conducted its investigation into his alleged misconduct. We further requested that SPD immediately engage in a Community and police accountability partner workgroup to address repeated concerns with the culture of policing and police practices at SPD. Neither of those recommendations were implemented.

CPC engaged closely with Community and disseminated those messages via local and national news media outlets to ensure that our stance was heard far and wide: that Jaahnavi's life mattered and had value, that Detective Auderer's conduct was unacceptable, and that serious corrective action needed to hold Detective Auderer accountable for his outrageous behavior.

In September alone, CPC was quoted, interviewed, or mentioned by more than 30 national and international [news publications](#) including CNN, USA Today, NBC News, BBC News, ABC News, AP, Time Magazine, New York Times, and more.

## From the Co-Chairs

"This speaks to the concerns that the CPC has repeatedly raised about elements of SPD culture and SPOG resistance to officer accountability measures included in the landmark 2017 Accountability Ordinance. The people of Seattle deserve better from a police department that is charged with fostering trust with the Community and ensuring public safety.

Especially in light of this video, the hard work toward ensuring that the Seattle Police Department reflects the values of the Community it polices, and embraces transparent accountability, will remain a top priority for the Seattle Community Police Commission."



## Addressing ongoing culture issues within SPD

Damarius Butts was a young Black man who SPD shot and killed in April 2017. In the summer of 2023, new footage was released to the public showing a concerning issue that took place in one of SPD's break rooms in January 2021.

This newly uncovered body-worn video showed evidence of SPD officers prominently displaying a mock tombstone of Damarius Butts in an East Precinct break room, which was also decorated with a Trump 2020 flag.

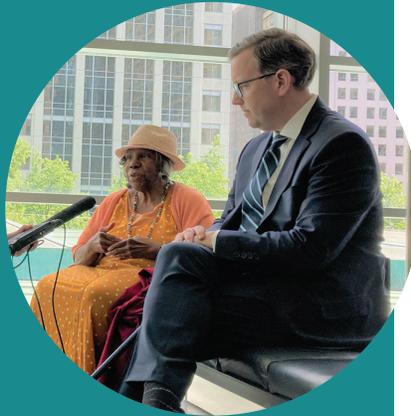
The mock tombstone incident further harmed the Community, broke down trust, hurt and outraged Butts' family, and brought into question a clear pattern of culture incidents where officers were making fun of community members who lost their lives due to the actions of SPD officers.

CPC remained engaged on the issue and further investigated what break room policies and practices need to change to prevent it from happening in the future.

## From the Co-Chairs

“The culture that allows such displays and violations of policy and law have no place in any police department, especially a department seeking to come out from under federal court oversight following a pattern and practice of unconstitutional policing.

Seattle Police Officers take an oath to serve our community, and the disgusting display in their break room does just the opposite and greatly harms the community’s ability to trust its police department.”



## Engagement with accountability partners

Throughout the year, we re-established and strengthened relationships with key accountability partners.

This collaborative approach has been crucial in advancing our shared goals of police accountability and Community safety. We have engaged in productive policy discussions on traffic stops, crisis intervention, complainant appeals, BolaWrap, and emergency vehicle response.



CPC staff and partners gather in 2023 with CPC Commissioner, SPD Officer Mark Mullens.

## Amicus brief in support of lifting the Consent Decree

In a significant move, the CPC filed an [amicus brief](#) in federal court supporting the lifting of the Consent Decree. This action was based on the substantial progress made by the SPD in meeting Consent Decree requirements.

Our amicus brief highlighted the improvements in accountability, transparency, and constitutional policing practices and underscored our commitment to supporting a police department that is effective and accountable.

The CPC has made important contributions to the ongoing efforts to end the federal Consent Decree. We provided valuable input and will continue to be instrumental in the process, ensuring that the SPD maintains high standards of accountability and transparency.

## From the Co-Chairs

“The CPC agrees with the joint motion and the need to return the primary responsibility of police oversight and accountability to the Community and its elected representatives.

However, compliance with the Consent Decree does not mean that police accountability work is finished. Everything that could be achieved on accountability and compliance through the Consent Decree process has been achieved, and now it is the City’s responsibility to continue the work in progress.

Effective, constitutional policing that considers the voice and values of the Community that is being policed remains a primary goal of the CPC.”



## Policy staff learning & development

The CPC policy staff gained valuable insights into policy through attending several key conferences and events, including those run by the:

- National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE);
- American Society of Criminology (ASC); and
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).

These learning experiences enhanced our staff's knowledge and capabilities, directly benefiting our policy work and initiatives.

[Highlights](#) from the ASC conference include:

### ShotSpotter

We listened to an academic assessment of ShotSpotter's effectiveness in reducing gun violence and increasing police response times once notified of a gunshot in Bakersfield, CA.

Key findings:

- There were no significant differences in either variable in years prior to being installed to two years after; and
- There was a slight increase in gun violence after installation.

## Dispatch

The role of dispatch in the criminal justice system is grossly understudied, yet it is important to understand the impact of their interactions with civilians and their subsequent impacts on civilian perceptions of on-site police officers.

Key findings:

- Civilian interactions with the call-taker significantly impacted how they interacted with the police once on scene; and
- The use of procedurally just tactics successfully mitigated negative perceptions.

## Mental health calls

We listened to an evaluation of managing calls for mental health assistance by extending the co-responder model into the call center setting.

Key findings:

- Incorporating behavioral health liaisons significantly diverted calls away from law enforcement, saving time and resources for the police department and getting callers connected to useful resources.



Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) Behavioral Health Art Therapy program offers a culturally appropriate curriculum featuring the work of artists living with mental health challenges, many of whom are immigrants or refugees who do not speak English. Here, their beautiful artwork was featured at a community engagement attended event, the ACRS 50th anniversary summer party.

## Mid-year report to City Council

We presented a [mid-year report](#) to the City Council, highlighting our progress and ongoing efforts.

This report was a testament to our commitment to transparency and accountability, showcasing our achievements and the challenges we are addressing.

Our policy achievements in 2023 reflect our unwavering commitment to improving police practices and ensuring that our public safety system is just, transparent, and accountable. We will continue to work to uphold these values and drive meaningful change within our Community.



CPC Co-Chairs Joel Merkel and Rev. Harriett Walden in Seattle City Council Chambers at the accountability partners 2023 mid-year report.

## Commissioner workgroup accomplishments

### Police Practices Workgroup

#### BolaWrap

In August 2023, the Police Practices workgroup drafted a [letter](#) to SPD Chief Adrian Diaz with concerns and questions about SPD's BolaWrap Pilot Program, which launched in May 2023.

The letter outlined concerns about:

- The efficacy of BolaWrap in the field;
- The potential for serious injury; and
- The lack of Community outreach and education related to the program.

*Note:* SPD ended its use of BolaWrap around the same time this letter was drafted.

### Complainant Appeals Workgroup

The 2017 Accountability Ordinance tasked the CPC with assessing the need for and developing a complainant appeal process that is consistent with employee due process rights, and providing any recommendations adopted by the workgroup to the Council for consideration.

In 2023, the Complainant Appeals Workgroup developed a [memo](#) and [presentation](#) highlighting CPC's progress, challenges, learnings to date, and action items related to this task.

## 2. Recommendations on Police Contracts

### Seattle Police Officers Guild CBA recommendations

The CPC worked tirelessly to help pass Seattle’s landmark 2017 Accountability Ordinance with unanimous support from city leaders. However, within two years, many key pieces of that law were undermined by new police contracts.

Building off our years of work in this area, the CPC has been working to address the problems posed by the police contracts in three key ways:

- **Amplifying the Community’s voice** in current and upcoming police contract negotiations;
- **Advocating for changes to state law** so police accountability cannot be bargained away during contract negotiations; and
- **Filing briefs with the Federal Court** in opposition to Seattle’s current police contracts, leading to a court order requiring Seattle to address many of the ways the contracts undermine accountability.

The CPC is committed to ensuring the collective bargaining rights of all people are protected. However, we must acknowledge that police are vested with unparalleled authority in our society to carry weapons, use force, and deprive people of their liberty. Because of this unique dynamic, police officers must be subject to higher standards including transparency in collective bargaining that may not be appropriate for non-law enforcement unions.

Unfortunately, police contracts in Seattle and across the country have been used as tools to undermine accountability for decades. Seattle Community members and labor advocates have been clear: **this must end.**

It is the CPC’s position that accountability measures that combat police misconduct—which is often violent and disproportionately affects BIPOC Communities—should not be subject to bargaining at all. However, as current Washington State law requires many of these provisions to be bargained, we call on the public’s help to ensure the contracts and the negotiation process itself are as accountable as possible.

We worked in 2023 to anticipate negotiations to the expired 2020 Seattle Police Officers Guild (SPOG) contract by:

- Seeking feedback from Community and partners;
- Getting a representative for the CPC appointed to the negotiating committee; and
- Creating a plan for once the new contract dropped.



Seattle City Council Chambers during the 2023 accountability partners mid-year report.

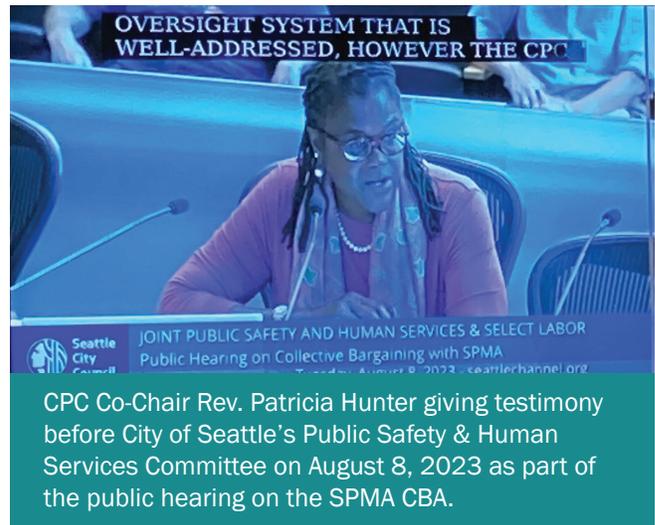
## Seattle Police Management Association CBA recommendations

In 2023, the CPC provided critical recommendations to the City Council regarding the Seattle Police Management Association (SPMA) contract negotiations. Our detailed letter and testimony to City Council outlined key suggestions to ensure that the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) aligns with the principles of accountability and transparency that we uphold.

Our recommendations focused on:

- **Enhancing oversight** mechanisms within the contract;
- **Strengthening provisions** that promote police accountability; and
- **Ensuring the contract** supports the overall goals of police reform and Community trust.

These recommendations were aimed at fostering a police management structure that is both responsible and responsive to Community needs.



# 3. Changes to City Ordinances

## Changes to the Accountability Ordinance

One of the most important policy achievements in 2023 came in July with the city’s passage of significant changes to the Accountability Ordinance. These amendments are the first changes since the ordinance was enacted in 2017 and have a profound impact on our organizational structure and operations.

Key changes include:

- ✓ **Establishing and funding** a new Deputy Director position within the CPC, enhancing our capacity for leadership and oversight;
- ✓ **Strengthening mechanisms** for police accountability and transparency; and
- ✓ **Improving coordination** and communication between various accountability partners.

These changes mark a significant step forward in our mission to ensure a just and accountable policing system.



Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell addresses CPC Commissioners and staff at its summer Annual Meeting in 2023.

# 4. Monitoring State Legislation

## Supporting legislation that aligns with the Accountability Ordinance

Per the Accountability Ordinance, CPC is charged to “identify and advocate for reforms to state laws that will enhance public trust and confidence in policing and the criminal justice system.”

CPC is further charged to “review and provide input to OPA, OIG, SPD, and other City departments and offices, including the Mayor, Council, and City Attorney on the police accountability system, police services, and SPD policies and practices of significance to the public.”

CPC supports legislation that is:

- Consistent with the Accountability Ordinance;
- Recognizes the independence of CPC;
- Promotes effective, constitutional policing that facilitates the trust, respect, and support of the Community; and
- Addresses Community concerns when applicable as expressed in the Ordinance.

## Supporting the priorities of our partners

### Seattle City Council legislative priorities

On January 18, 2023, CPC voted to support Seattle City Council’s legislative priorities and legislative statement of values, including:

- **Brady List layoffs:** Enhancing authority for police chiefs to discipline officers, including the ability to lay off officers on the Brady List;
- **Qualified immunity:** Ending qualified immunity for law enforcement;

- **Police contracts:** Prohibiting collective bargaining on topics related to discipline, appeals, subpoena authority, and state reforms about law enforcement;
- **Police reform:** Requiring police reforms that free local jurisdictions from having to negotiate and pay for accountability reforms, including body-worn cameras;
- **Officer discipline:** Reforming civil service hearings and arbitration in law enforcement officer discipline cases;
- **Discipline appeals:** Removing private arbitration as a route of appeal in law enforcement discipline cases;
- **Deadly use of force:** Supporting independent prosecutions of deadly use of force by law enforcement;
- **Employment:** Extending employment in law enforcement, fire, and other public agencies to legal permanent residents and those with [DACA status](#);
- **Training:** Expanding law enforcement training for de-escalation and implicit bias;
- **Emergency response:** Increased flexibility for civilian personnel to respond to 911 calls (referencing the [CAHOOTS program](#));
- **Immigration law:** Reducing or eliminating city and county law enforcement involvement in immigration law enforcement; and
- **Federal warrants:** Restricting local jurisdictions from honoring ICE detainers without a federal criminal warrant.

## Washington Coalition for Police Accountability legislative priorities

Also by vote, we supported the Washington Coalition for Police Accountability (WCPA) priorities—two priorities covering civil rights, one regarding criminal charges, and one in traffic safety, which include:

1. **Private Right of Action:** Allowing victims and their families who are injured by police violence to sue for violations of the state constitution or state laws, without the shield of qualified immunity.
2. **AGO Patterns and Practices Investigations:** Empowering the Attorney General’s Office to investigate patterns and practices of misconduct within specific agencies or departments and address policies, practices, training, and to bring a lawsuit against the department.
3. **Office of Independent Prosecutor:** Aligning the new state Office of Independent Investigation (OII) with a statewide Office of Independent Prosecutor (OIP). This means the 39 separate county prosecutors (who work closely with local law enforcement) wouldn’t make charging decisions in cases of serious or deadly use of force by an officer. Instead, the results of OII investigations should go to the state Office of Independent Prosecutor for charging decisions.
4. **Traffic Stops Safety:** Reducing police violence by regulating how police respond to non-moving traffic violations such as expired tabs.



CPC Co-Chair Rev. Patricia Hunter testifies at City Council in 2023 alongside accountability partners.

## CPC 2023 legislative priorities

In 2023, CPC actively followed state-level legislation, monitoring bills, and providing analyses to the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR).

Key legislative bills we tracked and analyzed included:

- **HB 1511:** Enhancing police accountability measures.
- **SB 5434:** Improving public safety through reforms in law enforcement practices.
- **HB 1520:** Addressing police transparency and the use of body-worn cameras.
- **SB 5089:** Proposing changes to the oversight and training of law enforcement officers.

The Policy Director presented a comprehensive overview in January 2023 of the key bills we were monitoring. Our engagement ensured that the interests and priorities of the CPC were represented in legislative discussions, contributing to informed policymaking.

CPC followed a slew of other bills we monitored during the session, including:

- **HB 1177:** Creating a missing and murdered indigenous women and people cold case investigations unit.
- **HB 1445:** Concerning law enforcement and local corrections agency misconduct through investigations and legal actions.
- **SB 5274:** Expanding eligibility in certain public employment positions for lawful permanent residents.

## Qualified immunity

In 2023, CPC supported a bill aimed at holding law enforcement officers personally liable in civil lawsuits brought in Washington state courts, if they engage in conduct that is unlawful under the state's constitution or laws.

- **HB 1025:** Addressing a legal doctrine (qualified immunity) that shields individual officers from civil liability for causing injury during their encounters on the job.

The current lack of an effective legal remedy for people injured by officers jeopardizes justice for the victims and implies impunity for the violators.

## Traffic safety priority bills

During the 2023 legislative session, CPC staff hosted a Commission discussion on bills related to reducing biased traffic stops and unnecessary interactions between police and black, brown, and indigenous road users, as well as low-income drivers.

- **HB 1513:** Clarifying when an officer can and cannot stop drivers for primary violations.

In addition to restricting the ability to stop drivers for most non-moving violations, the bill restricts consent searches, improves data collection about stops, and supports a grant program to local communities to assist low-income drivers in resolving nonmoving violations.

On January 30, 2023, the House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry Committee held a public hearing on this bill. Advocates for the bill, including the Seattle OIG, which provided testimony, emphasized that the bill reduces the opportunity for violence arising from traffic stops.

The bill died but remains a priority for CPC.

## Vehicle pursuit bills

CPC staff also hosted a Commission discussion on the topic of vehicular pursuits. Staff tracked multiple bills in the legislature covering vehicular pursuit reforms from the original changes in 2021 where CPC was also actively engaged.

## CPC Co-Chairs Seattle Times Op-ed

On February 3, 2023 the *Seattle Times* [published an op-ed](#) by CPC's three Co-Chairs. In it, they laid out how the state legislature could address police accountability via two CPC-supported bills outlined in this chapter, **HB 1025** and **HB 1513**.

### From the Co-Chairs

“Too often, traffic stops for low-level offenses — which disproportionately involve low-income drivers and people of color — lead to tragic outcomes. And there is ample evidence in many of these cases to suggest that some officers behave with a sense of impunity arising from a lack of legal accountability for their actions.

Police officers have a special obligation to uphold the law in their encounters with the public. When they fail to do their duty, it causes incalculable harm to those who are killed or injured and erodes society's trust in law enforcement as an institution.”



# 5. Community Engagement & Outreach

As emphasized in the Accountability Ordinance, the voice and values of the Seattle Community are important to ensuring that policing aligns with the Community’s needs and expectations.



A popular summer 2023 event welcomes Community members for food, activities, and engagement at the Reunion on Union.

CPC is responsive to Community needs and concerns by:

1. **Engaging in Community outreach** to obtain the perspectives of Community members and SPD employees on police-Community relations, SPD policies and practices, the police accountability system, and other matters.
2. **Maintaining connections with disenfranchised communities** and with other Community groups in all of the City’s legislative districts, as well as with SPD demographic and precinct advisory councils.
3. **Providing SPD, OPA, and OIG with Community feedback** relevant to their operations received as a result of its public outreach activities.
4. **Providing technical assistance on Community matters** to OPA and OIG, as reasonably requested.

## Community engagement touchpoints

In 2023, the community engagement team attended more than **100 events** and met with over **6,000 Community participants**.

2023 select highlights from each month include:

January	Somali Woman-made American flag recognition event in partnership with King County
February	Youth court meeting with service providers and updates on youth and family services
March	Small business grant/loan application event where CPC connected with business owners
April	Community Passageway to discuss Community policing and strategic partnerships
May	Rainier Beach Annual Health & Wellness fair to connect with local youth
June	Juneteenth Celebration event where CPC met with 300 Community members at its table
July	Africatown Reunion on Union to recenter with the African American Community
August	Umoja Fest at Judkins Park where CPC visited with 250 Community members at its table
September	Mayor’s Day of Remembrance for gun violence victims where mothers of victims spoke
October	Boys and girls club where CPC distributed “know your rights” flyers to local youth
November	NACOLE in Chicago to learn and network with other community engagement teams
December	North Precinct Advisory Council to engage Community and SPD on public safety



CPC community engagement joins King County Executive Dow Constantine as he accepts East African elder, Nadifo B. Dalmar's gift of a hand-knit American flag.

## How CPC outreach informs our work

The voice and values of the Community are at the heart of what we do. The community engagement team regularly attends local Community meetings and connects with partners, youth, Community liaisons and others to hear about concerns and opportunities impacting their well-being and safety.

The community engagement team has a close feedback loop with both the Commission and CPC's staff team and helps inform and align our work to actionable policy priorities. In everything we do, we uplift community-based recommendations and aim to center the voices of those who are furthest from justice.



CPC hosted a successful tabling event celebrating Juneteenth in 2023 and sharing resources with the Community.

## Outreach with SPD & the public

In 2023, the community engagement team connected with the Community and SPD by regularly attending SPD's Community and demographic advisory councils. The goal of SPD's councils is to engage with diverse communities, become more knowledgeable about law enforcement needs in each Community, and partner with SPD on public safety issues.

2023 SPD advisory councils include:

- African American Advisory Council
- East African Advisory Council
- Filipino Advisory Council
- Korean Advisory Council
- Latino Advisory Council
- LGBTQ Advisory Council
- Middle Eastern Advisory Council
- Native American Police Advisory Council
- Southeast Asian Advisory Council
- Citywide Advisory Council



2023 community engagement attends an SPD African American Advisory Council meeting and bumps into CPC Co-Chair Rev. Walden and OIG's Bessie Marie Scott.

Additionally, the community engagement team regularly partook in recurring advisory and Community meetings including:

- SE Seattle PEACE Coalition
- Let's Connect
- Rainier Vista Youth Organization
- SPD Precinct Advisory Councils



CPC Community engagement greets police officers at Rainier Beach High School Health Fair.

## CPC public perspectives gathered

### Community response in the aftermath of Jaahnavi Kandula's death

In 2023, much focus in Community centered around public safety, increased crime, and emergency vehicle operations in the aftermath of Jaahnavi Kandula's death.

As one example of how Community perspectives impacted our work, CPC engaged in Community outreach related to the loss of Jaahnavi Kandula's life. We worked closely with Kandula's Indian Community members who are distraught and greatly impacted by this unspeakable loss. Community members sought feedback on what we were doing to inform SPD's vehicle operations policy as outlined in chapter 1 of this report.

Furthermore, the Seattle Indian Community reiterated that Detective Auderer's outrageous comments only further devastated the Community who were already grieving. The public outcry following Detective Auderer's comments greatly influenced CPC's response by requesting that Detective Auderer be held accountable for his unprofessional conduct and that SPD engage with impacted Community members to address the erosion of Community trust and public safety.

Both events, including CPC's recommendations on emergency vehicle operations and holding an officer accountable for misconduct were centered and uplifted from Community outreach and engagement.



Community engagement gathers input and perspective at a barber shop event in 2023.

## 6. Looking forward

Looking forward to the future, the Commission is resolute in its mission to amplify and build common ground among communities affected by policing in Seattle.

The CPC's founding is rooted in the aftermath of SPD's excessive use of deadly force against First Nations woodcarver John T. Williams in 2010. This incident, along with numerous other high-profile cases of excessive use of force against BIPOC Communities, galvanized the

community and culminated in CPC's creation. We continue to honor the work of Community and carry the memory of John T. Williams and all other victims of police misconduct in everything we do.

We seek to ensure that SPD's unconstitutional policing practices are corrected and that government institutions are especially responsive to people harmed by injustice. And we never waver from that original founding and goal.

CPC continues to engage the Community to help inform city leaders' decision-making so that they understand what we need for our Community to thrive, feel safe, and move forward in a system that is more accountable to the people it serves—particularly for vulnerable communities that have historically experienced the most harm.

We stand unified—even as we grow, change, and evolve, we will always stand faithful to our mission, for Community. We enter the next phase with intentionality. We are acting deliberately to look back at where we came from, chart a vision for the future, and create a path for how best to move forward—together.

CPC looks forward to continuing to engage on Seattle policing issues in a way that satisfies and increases public and Community trust and ensures a safer Seattle for all.

## CPC Mission

The Community Police Commission listens to, amplifies, and builds common ground among communities affected by policing in Seattle. We champion policing practices centered in justice and equity.

## CPC Vision

We envision our communities and Seattle's police aligned in shared goals of safety, respect, and accountability.

### **Annual report requirements as outlined in the 2017 Accountability Ordinance**

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 3.29.370.A. states that:

- CPC shall produce annual reports that are:
    - Readily understandable; and
    - Useful to policymakers.
  - The annual report shall be:
    - Posted online; and
    - Electronically distributed to:
      - Mayor
      - City Attorney
      - Council
      - Chief
      - OPA Director
      - Inspector General
      - City Clerk (for filing as a public record)
- The annual report shall include the following:
    1. An evaluation of the extent to which all of the purposes, duties, and responsibilities have been met;
    2. A summary of all recommendations for changes in:
      - a. Policies and practices,
      - b. Collective bargaining agreements,
      - c. City ordinances, and
      - d. State laws;
    3. A summary of the implementation status of any previous recommendations and, for any that have not been implemented, the reasons; and
    4. Information about CPC's outreach to SPD employees and the public, the perspectives gathered by CPC from such outreach, and how the outreach informed CPC's work.

## Special thanks

The CPC sends a heartfelt thanks out to every Community member who attended an engagement or provided input to the Commission. Without the tireless work of the Community members who engage the Commission to provide their invaluable feedback, we could not do our work.

The CPC also extends full gratitude to its accountability partners—Office of the Inspector General, Office of Police Accountability, and the Seattle Police Department—whose cooperation with the CPC builds a robust accountability system.



# Seattle Community Police Commission

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