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Police Commission

News from the Oakland Police Commission

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Historic Milestone for the Oakland Police Commission

Adoption of Department General Order Regarding - Searches of Individuals on Supervised Release

Oakland - Tuesday, July 9, 2019 marked a historic milestone for the Oakland Police Commission as the City Council unanimously adopted Oakland Police Department (OPD) General Order R-02 Searches of Individuals on Supervised Release, authored by the Commission. This policy establishes clear precedent for other law enforcement agencies around the nation to develop community informed search policies.

The new Department General Order (DGO) includes an affirmative statement regarding the adverse community impact of unjustified inquiries into individuals' supervised release status and sets clear limitations on the time between a check of individuals' supervised release status and any search conducted by OPD. "Inquiring about an individual's Supervised Release, at the beginning of an interaction without proper justification is unjust." (DGO R-02 B-3).

In advocating to the Council for adoption of the DGO, Commissioner Tara Anderson emphasized that language matters: "As we work to shift the culture in the Oakland Police Department we must use direct language to denounce unjust conduct ... each Department General Order is an opportunity to increase the insight of those sworn to protect Oakland." Commission Chair Regina Jackson added that "[t]his policy content sends a message to the community that the Oakland Police will no longer presume our citizens engagement with criminal history... this is a huge step in the right direction concerning culture shift."

Council President Rebecca Kaplan stated after the adoption of the DGO that the City of Oakland must "ensure that OPD is not stopping and searching people unless there is a valid reason to do so. This policy can also help reduce racial disparities in policing and strengthen community-police relations."

The Commission heard directly from impacted communities, including those currently on parole and probation as well as key community advocates. Brendon Woods, the Public Defender for the County of Alameda, provided analysis and support for the Commission's efforts and added that: "This is an amazing accomplishment by the Commission and the City of Oakland. This new policy will prevent OPD from arbitrarily stopping and automatically searching members of our community simply because they are on probation or parole. This policy will help eliminate public mistrust and result in a safer community for everyone."

The Commission intends to develop a plan to monitor OPD's implementation of DGO R-02, to ensure proper training and oversight. The Commission will hold OPD accountable for its performance under this new General Order.