

TO: Gabriel Escobedo, Chair, Santa Barbara Community Formation Commission
Santa Barbara Community Formation Commission Members

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RE: Findings from the Exploratory Study on Community Responses to the
Community Formation Commission’s Draft Recommendations for Civilian Police
Oversight of the Santa Barbara Police Department

Background

In 2020, the Santa Barbara City Council established the Community Formation Commission to guide the creation of a civilian police oversight system. In the fall of 2021, the Community Formation Commission (“the Commission”) contracted with the Center for Court Innovation (“the Center”), a non-profit organization that works with criminal legal systems around the country, to design and implement a short research project. The purpose of this project was to solicit community feedback on the Commission’s draft recommendations for the development of a civilian police oversight system of the Santa Barbara Police Department (SBPD). This memo summarizes methods, key findings from, and limitations of the study.

Methods

There were two primary methods of data collection for this project: **a short survey and a series of focus groups**. Both were designed and implemented by the Commission’s Survey and Focus Group Working Group and the National Association for the Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, with support and guidance from researchers from the Center for Court Innovation.

Survey The 17-item survey (with seven additional demographic questions) was administered over the course of 20 days, from March 3-23, 2022. The survey took less than ten minutes to complete and was offered in English and Spanish online and in paper copy, through access at City Hall and at events around the city. Participants were recruited via email, phone calls, in-person outreach, flyers, and social media announcements in partnership with community-based organizations, City of Santa Barbara listservs, local media, business organizations, funders, political organizations, educational institutions, advocacy organizations, religious organizations, legal-system stakeholders, and law enforcement agencies. In total, **1,040 surveys** were collected. The majority of these (98.75%) were completed in English.

Focus Groups Additionally, eight 90-minute focus groups were conducted over three days, from February 23-25, 2022. Focus groups were conducted in person at the Santa Barbara Central Library (5) and in Alameda Park (1), as well as online via Zoom (2). Participants were recruited

via targeted outreach to community-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, and educational institutions. **Fifty-six participants** were engaged in total across all **eight focus groups**.

Together, the survey and focus groups explored perceptions of and trust in the SBPD's existing internal investigation process as well as key areas of interest to the Commission for the finalization of their recommendations. The study was approved by the Center's Institutional Review Board. All data were coded and analyzed by Center researchers. Major findings from the two data collection methods are synthesized in this memo.

Limitations

This study had several methodological limitations. First, time constraints meant that the survey and focus group data collection needed to take place in one month. A longer timeframe could have resulted in more people having their voice heard about the commission's recommendations. Despite this quick turnaround, however, the number of survey and focus group participants was high. Second, the budget precluded the possibility of obtaining a probability sample that would be representative of Santa Barbara residents. The money, time, and people power needed to implement, for example, a random digit dial survey was beyond the scope of the resources allocated to collecting community feedback. The non-probability sample, however, did result in diverse and actionable feedback. Third, the survey could only be completed in English or Spanish. This meant that those whose primary language was something else may not have been represented.

Despite these limitations, the study captured a significant amount of valuable feedback from over a thousand people who weighed in on the commission's recommendations.

Survey Respondent Demographics

More than 1,000 surveys were collected (N=1,040).¹ The average age of the sample was 51. The majority of respondents (81%) indicated that they had never filed, attempted to file, or considered filing a complaint alleging misconduct with SBPD. An additional 10% were not aware that a complaint process was available, meaning that **91% of the sample did not have direct experience with SBPD's existing complaint review process**.

Because the Commission sought to provide respondents the opportunity to self-define as expansively as they wished, for demographic categories people were allowed to check all the answers that applied to them (rather than just one). Presenting accurate percentages based on the full sample is difficult because many people skipped these questions entirely and others only selected one answer, even when more than one may have applied.²

¹ Response percentages may add up to a little less or more than 100% for each question due to rounding.

² The percentages that follow present the percentage calculated as the number of people who checked that identity divided by the full sample of 1,040 people. Forty-five percent of respondents identified as female and 27% identified as male. Four percent selected cisgender, and less than 1% selected non-binary, genderfluid/genderqueer, or transgender. Nine percent of the sample identified themselves as heterosexual, 4% as bisexual/pansexual, 2% as gay,

In part to ensure as diverse a sample as possible were recruited into the sample, the survey asked respondents to indicate up to three neighborhoods where they lived or worked. Table 1 represents a breakdown of those responses.

Table 1 Neighborhoods of Primary Residence or Employment

Downtown	18%
Goleta	12%
Eastside	9%
Noleta, San Roque, Westside	7% for each
Isla Vista	6%
East Mesa, West Mesa	5% for each
La Cumbre, Montecito, Oak Park, Riviera, Upper State	4% for each
Mission Canyon	3%
Eucalyptus Hill, Lower Eastside, Lower Westside, Milpas Corridor, West Beach	2% for each
East Beach, Hidden Valley, Hope Ranch, Samarkand, Summerland	1% or less for each

Civilian Oversight Board

The focus group protocol and survey asked a variety of questions relating to the composition, training, duties, and compensation for the Civilian Oversight Board.

General Membership

The vast majority of survey respondents (84%) thought the Civilian Oversight Board should represent the diversity of the Santa Barbara Community. While there was some skepticism among survey respondents about the relative diversity within Santa Barbara, there was agreement across all focus groups that the Commission should include participation from as many different groups of people as possible. As one participant explained, “I don’t believe Santa Barbara is very diverse, but I’d like a variety of people in police oversight roles from different races, ethnicities, incomes, and backgrounds. If this question is intended to suggest that the racial composition must be benchmarked to Santa Barbara’s demographics, I do not support that.” Specific groups named included: Blacks/African-Americans, Latinos/Latinx, women, people with disabilities and mental health challenges, unhoused people, LGBTQ-identified people, and returning citizens. Many participants felt that groups with identities experiencing historically challenging relationships with police should be particularly included: “there should be an effort made to include individuals who otherwise may be scared to speak up and represent opinions of the underrepresented. The objective is to make things better.”

and 1% as lesbian. Fifty-five percent of the sample chose to identify as white, 11% as Hispanic or Latino/Latinx, 4% as Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% as Black/African-American, and 2% as Indigenous. Eleven percent identified as a victim or former victim of a crime, 9% identified as a student, and 8% indicated they had been personally impacted by the criminal justice system. Fewer than 5% of respondents self-identified as being each of the following: veteran, immigrant, individual with a disability, current or former law enforcement officer/employee, and currently or formerly homeless.

Focus group participants discussed the involvement of young people in varying ways. Some felt including youth under 18 offered “an important perspective.” Others were less supportive of this idea, expressing concern that the work “may not be appropriate or [may be] triggering for youth” and that they might be “still be in high school, and less experienced in guiding PD.” For those young people or young adults over 18 and in college in Santa Barbara, focus group participants and survey respondents felt there should be some requirement that they live locally and/or “be familiar with the neighborhoods and community here.”

Some focus group participants and survey respondents wondered if the Board was too large at 11 members. “Eleven members is overkill—that’s more than the entire County of Los Angeles has overseeing thousands of officers,” said one survey respondent. The primary reasons cited for concern about size were increased complexity of decision-making and budget.

Membership of People with Prior Law Enforcement Experience

Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents (65%) thought people with prior law enforcement experience should be able to serve on the Board, with 23% of these indicating there should be a lag time between when people left law enforcement and when they were eligible to serve on the Board. Seventy-five percent of this 23% endorsed between 2 and 5 years as the appropriate number of years to wait. Law enforcement’s role on the Board was the second most common category of open-ended response for survey respondents.

There was consensus across the focus groups that knowledge of policing policies, procedures, and practices was essential for Board members. For many, this came down to a question of what the purpose of the Board was: “if you wanted the commission to serve as a jury, you’d want everyone to have a blank slate (meaning not affiliated with law enforcement). But if you wanted people to have multiple perspectives, you wouldn’t preclude anyone.” If accountability and oversight exclusively were the goals, then some participants indicated they would not support involvement of those with prior law enforcement experience—especially if that experience was local. If the goal was collaboration and inclusivity, however, then to some participants “[i]t is contradictory to the objective of being inclusive or collaborative by being exclusionary.”

There was considerable variation in what shape that involvement might take. **For some, first-hand experience in law enforcement was felt to be essential due to challenges of policing.** “The gap [in knowledge] is so big” between those in and out of law enforcement, one participant explained, that “even people with six-plus months of police training struggle with how to use force.” Another questioned, “how can a civilian on the Civilian Oversight Board without any law enforcement experience be able to make an accurate and reasonable determination” regarding police conduct? This was also reflected in survey responses:

There are many things an officer has knowledge of that a private citizen does not and this will alter the way an officer responds to an incident versus a private citizen. That perspective is important to note and is equally important to be heard. If the point of the commission is to ensure officers are acting in accordance with the law, then there should be persons on the

board with the knowledge of how an officer should be/would be applying it. Individuals with no hands-on experience will obviously be lacking in this area.

Many focus group participants and survey respondents who saw the merits of involving prior law enforcement thought there should be limits to this involvement, whether that be part of the application/screening process of selecting members, or limiting participation to those who had law enforcement experience outside of SBPD, limiting their involvement to one or two positions on the Board, or carving out a non-voting role. “I think it is good to have someone who knows law enforcement or might have good input on the organizational structure and culture of law enforcement,” one focus group participant explained. “I think, though, that this depends on a person’s intentions. I’m not sure how to assess it, but I think the person needs to believe that the Civilian Oversight Board is real.” Explained another focus group participant:

I think that having individuals with some perspective of law enforcement is important. I think police officers have a difficult job. I think there are different ways to communicate that experience, like perhaps in a liaison role, other than being on the committee, if it’s to be independent. [...] I think that having a consultation liaison role could be helpful to build trust in the community and increased understanding, if they want recommendations to stick.

Those not in support of involving law enforcement identified two major areas of concern: 1) **potential bias due to the small size of Santa Barbara**, and 2) **confusion about law enforcement involvement in a civilian oversight entity**. A focus group participant suggested:

I understand that there has to be a collaboration but if you call it a Civilian Oversight Board then it really has to be a *civilian* oversight board. Say for example retired law enforcement need to be on this board. Then everything that was recommended should be on the table. Things that would eliminate skew—you don’t want to skew results as a possible member or a member to vote. I think it could potentially skew the results of this board if they had a vote.

Some survey respondents and focus group participants felt that existing dynamics precluded collaboration in this specific area. One survey respondent said:

There is a documented, studied culture which occurs within law enforcement that invokes an “us vs. them” approach to civilians. We don’t need a devil’s advocate for law enforcement on the committee board, we need citizens who are committed to more transparency within the department.

There was some indication in both focus groups and open-ended survey responses that there **needs to be clarification of the definition of “law enforcement.”** (As one participant put it: “How do other agencies that contain sworn members that have arresting powers play into this—the fire department, airport, harbor masters, building inspectors, etc.?”)

Membership of Immediate Family of Current SBPD Employees

There was less support for expanding Board membership eligibility to family members of SBPD employees. **A majority of survey respondents (68%) disagreed that immediate family**

members of current SBPD employees should be eligible to serve on Board. There was little discussion of this in the focus groups or survey responses, which spent much more time on the question of the eligibility of people with direct law enforcement experience. The question of potential bias, or lack of neutrality, that underlaid the concern for those who did not support involvement of those with prior law enforcement experience surfaced here as well in the limited data available. “I think that there is a lot of overlap and personal connections by having family members affiliated with the Santa Barbara Police Department serving on the oversight board. This may create conflict.” However, some focus group participants still expressed a desire not to be excluded from involvement just because of family connections: “We live here. This is our community as well. Many [family members] are locals.”

Process for Selecting and Removing Members

Some focus group participants and survey respondents expressed concern about political bias affecting the work—and ultimate success—of the proposed oversight process, including both those strongly in support of and those strongly critical of law enforcement. As one survey respondent stated, “I worry that individuals with a political agenda will seek positions on the commission. This commission, if established, must be non-partisan.” Nearly all focus group participants agreed that **delineating clear application/selection and removal processes ahead of time, as well as articulating expectations around confidentiality and dedication to the mission of the Board, would allay fears of bias on both sides.** “For it to work effectively, it must be shielded from influence by the Police Department and its stakeholders. Likewise, it must be shielded from influence both those who do not support law enforcement,” said another survey respondent. Suggestions included conducting an annual review for members, screening for bias, including a transparent public interview process, and ensuring those with prior law enforcement experience had “a clean record with no infractions—if there was anything that wasn’t 100% crystal clear, that should disqualify the person.”

Training

Focus group participants in all eight groups agreed that **extensive training was essential for all Board members.** Many thought all the trainings should be mandatory, while others were concerned about the amount of training given the voluntary nature of the Board. Trainings on structural racism and the history of policing in marginalized communities, as well as ride-alongs with law enforcement, were highlighted as vital.

I am a strong advocate for progressive advancement in policing, but that said, I recognize police have a really difficult job and the situations that they are in sometimes can be really difficult. I also think that part of the goal of the process is to build bridges and community trust. If bridges are built, and there is community trust, I think that exposure to something like a ride-along is important.

Additional trainings listed in the draft recommendations that some participants deemed important included those on the Brown Act, steps of the criminal justice system process, community outreach, and use-of-force and de-escalation practices.

Additional suggested training topics included communication skills, ethics, history of the community, how to work directly with those who are unhoused, disability sensitivity, mental health and policing, and existing SBPD training content and process.

There was some concern that the number of trainings would exclude those with less time or financial resources. As one participant explained,

I think that the trainings could limit certain socioeconomic groups from being able to join. Housing is a big issue here and [some] people need to work two jobs to make it work. The amount of these trainings could limit people from certain socioeconomic groups who cannot step up and fulfill these obligations. \$200k+ is the median income and those individuals with that level of income could likely serve, but this doesn't leave room for a vibrant commission group.

Compensation

Some participants suggested that Board members be compensated for trainings and the broader Board work. “Everyone who joins should be paid a stipend. Especially childcare, which leverages who can serve and who has the time and money. Both should be prioritized.”

Among survey respondents, **more than half (58%) agreed or strongly agreed that Board members should receive a stipend for participation.** Almost the same amount (57%) agreed or strongly agreed that the amounts included in the draft recommendations were appropriate. Open-ended survey responses and focus group findings suggest that many believe that **Board members should receive compensation in line with whatever those who serve on other city commissions or boards receive.**

Some survey respondents stated that the stipend was **too high**—“Cut the stipend in half. \$50 per meeting is plenty!”—or **should not exist at all**—“There should be no compensation as this will lead to members serving for an income source and not a public service.” There were also comments on the additional reimbursements, with some stating that there should **either be a stipend or reimbursement, but not both**—“Stipends to pay for parking, childcare, etc. may be appropriate, but a general stipend does not seem appropriate.”

Duties

Nearly three-quarters of survey respondents (71%) agreed that the Board should conduct regular community surveys related to public perceptions and understandings of police investigations and report those survey results back to the community. This community communication piece surfaced frequently during focus groups, though more frequently related to clarifying the Board's purpose: “The Civilian Oversight Board needs to do training and outreach so the community understands its role and what it does. Be proactive and go to the community rather than expecting the community to come to you.”

For many focus group participants, **creating understanding across Santa Barbara's communities of the purpose, goal, and responsibilities of this role was key to buy-in.**

I think for a community as diverse as Santa Barbara is, with so many needs and specialties, I think outreach as far as the education about the Civilian Oversight Board and the Office of Police Oversight, and how involved these groups are, is important. Like, to break it down and make it understandable. If you were to bombard someone with these slides, they wouldn't want to know, and would have trouble understanding. It should be somewhat simplified, so that the community can have confidence. Quite frankly, if you were to see even a brief description, it would be hard to have confidence. The Civilian Oversight Board and Office of Police Oversight can be seen as filters for processes within the police department. From an outsider, to have confidence that filter is doing its part, we need to know what the purpose is of these groups.

Additional suggestions for duties or general considerations for the Civilian Oversight Board included ensuring language accessibility, guaranteeing physical accessibility of physical office space, making more widely available information on how to file a complaint and what is required, and creating a support advocate role to help support people through completing complaints.

Office of Police Oversight

Functions/Duties

Focus group participants were asked to identify which of the existing recommended responsibilities stood out to them as particularly important, and there was some support for nearly all, including patterns and trends analysis, independent oversight, recommendations for changes in SBPD policies and procedures, community engagement, and collaboration. There was **mixed response to the survey question of whether people with previous law enforcement experience should be allowed to serve as the Director of the Office of Police Oversight**. Forty-three percent agreed, 36% disagreed, and 21% were unsure. One focus group participant stated what they believed to be the most important function:

The most important thing is that they are actually watching the police department. I think it's important that they are separate. That police are not just watching themselves, that they are a separate entity. That is not something like an annual review. There needs to be an authentic view. They need to be immersed into the culture and implement changes.

The idea of **credibility being tied to presence, trust, and collaboration** surfaced again here, with many of the same sentiments as for the Board. Community engagement, for some, represented the lynchpin of the Office:

If you can't engage with the community, you can't go anywhere. It is important to have someone who is bilingual, charismatic, connects with the community, is trust-worthy, and recognizable in the community. You want people to come back. The other areas would suffer because of lack of community engagement.

Participants framed **collaboration as important both to preserve the purpose of the Office and maintain its credibility**. “Collaboration is important to the board not being watered down. I could also see a lack of collaboration making the board being taken less seriously.” A participant in a different focus group echoed this sentiment, explaining, “In order to have the police department’s trust and acceptance of oversight there must be collaboration with the police.”

Nearly **two-thirds (64%) of survey respondents thought the Office of Police Oversight should be able to accept complaints of alleged SBPD misconduct both directly and anonymously**.

Perceptions of the Santa Barbara Police Department’s Current Internal Investigation Process

Survey respondents were divided about the SBPD’s transparency about its existing internal investigation process, with 30% agreeing it was, 27% disagreeing, and 43% not knowing much about the process. Similar breakdowns held for those who agreed that they trusted the outcomes of SBPD’s own internal investigation process (27%), those who disagreed (29%), and those who felt that did not know much about the process (35%).

Some survey respondents expressed frustration with the creation of these entities, seeing them as redundant to existing, working mechanisms. “There is already a complaint process, both local at the PD, through other City Departments, even the Mayor's Office if needed. If the investigation doesn’t seem thorough, it can be reviewed by other state agencies,” wrote one respondent. A focus group participant explained of the current process: “Currently complaints are handled before they are formalized and, more often than not, it is a result of misunderstandings or misinformation about the law and are resolved quickly.” Another survey respondent shared,

Many of the processes the oversight committee proposes to offer are already offered by the SBPD and are totally transparent and available, including anonymous and third-party complaints (for example complaints are commonly received and forwarded from City Hall staff). These mechanisms exist and are working; it seems like some of the services being proposed are not tailored for the citizens’ needs and are “solutions desperately in search of problems” that do not exist.

However, **others of the focus groups and survey respondents supported the creation due to what they saw as lack of clarity about or accessibility of the complaint process**. One survey respondent said, “I looked on the SB police website for how to report potential police misconduct, and I can’t find anywhere to do that. So yes, we need this!” Meanwhile a few focus group respondents indicated patterns of response within the department that led them to support oversight mechanisms: “I’ve heard specific complaints about certain people in the hierarchy of the police department who have not listened to individuals’ complaints. If certain concerns are escalated, these have been brushed under the rug.”

Perceptions of the Complaint Review and Civilian Oversight Process

Half of survey participants said that an Office of Police Oversight that could both receive and monitor complaints about alleged SBPD misconduct and make public reports would increase their trust in the complaint process. (Sixteen percent said it would decrease their trust, 21% said it would stay the same, and 13% indicated being unfamiliar with the complaint review process.)

Fifty-six percent of the survey sample indicated that an Office of Police Oversight that could both receive and monitor complaints about alleged SBPD misconduct and make public reports would increase the transparency of the complaint process (11% indicated the transparency would decrease; 21% said it would stay the same; and 13% said they were unfamiliar with the complaint review process). **The same number (56%) said that a civilian oversight process as outlined in the survey would increase their trust in policing in their community. Sixty percent said such a process would increase their belief in the transparency of SBPD, and 62% said such a process would increase SBPD’s accountability to the community.**

Survey responses indicate that increasing community knowledge about how to file complaints and how to monitor the status of a filed complaint was perceived by many to be helpful, even when they do not identify an issue with the existing process. Said one respondent, “I have significant trust in the integrity of the SB Police Department, but believe that the oversight proposals would help increase trust throughout the community.” Echoed others, “I think it’s an excellent idea as a way to hold officers accountable. And possibly increase and build relationships between the public and law enforcement.”

Many stressed the importance of **creating clear pathways/mechanisms for clarity around the status of a complaint**—a “[o]ne-stop shop for knowing where my complaint is and being able to review its status [...] both automated updates and point of contact.” Focus group participants also suggested making sure there were multiple methods for filing complaints, stressing the need for those that do not involve smart phone technology.

Relative Power of the Board, the Office, SBPD, and City Council

A recurrent theme through the focus groups and survey responses was **uncertainty about the relative authority or power of the Board versus the Office.** Most focus group participants voiced concern one way or another about the lack of clarity on this issue. **Many expressed confusion over what they perceived as the duplicating roles of the Board and the Office:** “when I was reading the documents first,” one participant explained, “[I thought] ‘Oh, there’s two entities.’ But it kind of felt like they were doing the same thing. It almost feels like the entity is monitoring the entity that is monitoring the entity.” Other focus group participants said they understood the difference between the two positions but were unclear about who was had authority over whom: “I don’t see the Civilian Oversight Board and the Office of Police Oversight as duplicative. A staff person will help to make [the goals of oversight] happen. They

can implement the goals of the program in a way that the volunteers can't. Is the Civilian Oversight Board their boss?"

This question of power was central to most of the concerns on all sides. **Some participants were concerned the Board would have too little power or authority to have their recommendations implemented:** "It does not seem like they actually have the power to do anything. What are they going to do when things fall apart? What's going to happen when the training isn't being done. What power do these people have? What actually is their job?" Another participant expressed it thusly:

One is a paid position, and one is not. I think that right there puts importance on one over the other just because one is a paid position through the city and the other is civilians of the city. There should be more power in the civilians. There are a lot of strong people on the committee and I would like to see them have some power. That seems to be a concern, being that they're not paid. I would want to make sure that they have some teeth, and they can make decisions and have follow-throughs.

This lack of clarity led to some participants feeling like the **two entities were merely pro forma:** "The reality is nothing has changed. What is the role of this committee if this committee is just a blip along the way? It almost feels like they become the rubber stamp for what has already been done."

On the other hand, there were **some focus group participants and survey respondents who felt the Board had too much power and authority.** In one focus group, participants described this as "overreach," and felt it was so great that they were **concerned about officer retention.**

Necessity of the Civilian Oversight Board

Whether or not there is a need for civilian police oversight in Santa Barbara remained an open question for some survey respondents and focus group participants. The most common response among survey respondents was **concern or confusion over what problem the Civilian Oversight Board was meant to solve specifically in Santa Barbara and whether the Board was necessary at all.** Some of these respondents felt that the development of the Board was more a response to things happening nationally rather than issues being experienced locally in Santa Barbara.

While there is question regarding community policing in communities across the nation, does Santa Barbara have an egregious relationship in the community? My understanding is that while there are incidents of police misconduct, they are far and in between.

This sentiment was shared by some focus group participants: "This isn't an issue in Santa Barbara. We don't have these systemic issues," said one participant.

Other participants were less certain there was no issue, but thought **clarification of the nature and extent of the problem would be helpful.** "Do we know what we are trying to fix or even

get done? What are the reasons for having these groups? What has not been working? We should start there first.”

Another prominent theme among survey respondents was **apprehension that the Board was not worth the cost to taxpayers**. “Will the non-monetary benefit to the community outweigh the administrative cost for the general fund/special revenue funds?” wondered one survey respondent. For one focus group participant, establishing a need that could be clearly articulated to the community was a necessary step in establishing wide-spread community support for the proposed oversight process and associated costs to the city.

I wouldn’t be comfortable funding the Civilian Oversight Board or the Office of Police Oversight with a blank check. I’d want to know their costs to see if it’s necessary. And to see if it fits in with the city’s budget. There’s a recent study going on examining rent prices that is costing the city \$200,000. That’s a lot of money. Do we really need this? I’d want to see specific numbers and reasons supporting those numbers.

And finally, some study participants in both the surveys and focus groups noted that there were **already existing oversight systems in place, just as there was already a complaint process in place**. For some, the process was merely redundant, as for this survey respondent: “there are already people on city council to do this.” For others, like this respondent, there was a sense that the complaint process was not universally understood, but that knowledge of the filing process was the issue rather than other fundamental flaws:

It is my understanding there are already ways to make complaints. I do believe the SB community can be educated on the process of the SBPD complaint system better, but I do not believe there is an issue with transparency given the new laws on release of information.

Combination of Complaints and Accommodations

Multiple focus groups raised the possibility of including not just complaints but also accommodations made by police and staff in an annual report and other community communication mechanisms. “It feels as though the board is prioritizing complaints and discipline,” one focus group participant said. “They should also highlight to the public what SBPD is doing well” said another.