

**OFFERED BY COUNCILORS MINIARD CULPEPPER, BREADON, DURKAN,
FITZGERALD, FLYNN, LOUIJEUNE, MURPHY, PEPÉN, WEBER, AND WORRELL**



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

WHEREAS, The Office of Police Accountability and Transparency (OPAT) was established to investigate complaints of police misconduct, ensure that the Boston Police Department's internal affairs review process is fair and thorough, and review Boston Police Department's existing and proposed policies and procedures; *and*

WHEREAS, The purpose of the OPAT is to provide a single point of entry for individuals with concerns or complaints related to the Boston Police Department (BPD) and its officers and sworn personnel to be heard and responded to, and to provide the staffing and legal authority necessary to support the work of the OPAT and its related advisory boards and panels to undertake independent investigation and review of policing in Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, Since being enacted in 2020, the OPAT has struggled to achieve consistent transparency and accountability for the public. In Q1 and Q2 of FY26, Black Bostonians accounted for 55% of complaints despite making up only 21.5% of the city. Similarly, Hispanic Bostonians represented 24% of arrests while being just 19% of the city's population. While White Bostonians were significantly underrepresented across the same measures; *and*

WHEREAS, The legislative authority to establish oversight, transparency, and reporting requirements is a vital instrument for ensuring that all City departments operate with equity and public trust; and the exercise of this authority is necessary to provide the legal mandates required for full institutional cooperation and definitive timelines for accountability; *and*

WHEREAS, Enhancing the existing OPAT framework will expand and clarify the Office's scope in order to implement procedures that will alleviate the disproportionate impacts of law enforcement on BIPOC individuals and communities while fostering collaboration between residents and law enforcement; **NOW,
THEREFORE**

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:

Section 1.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, 12-17.4 (D)(3) is hereby amended by striking the words “within a reasonable time” and inserting in their place the following language “online within fourteen (14) days ”

Section 2.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, 12-17.4 (E) is hereby amended by striking the existing language and inserting the following:

"Within forty five (45) days of the publication of the annual report, the OPAT Commission shall appear at a public hearing of the Boston City Council Committee to respond to questions regarding the report’s findings, BPD cooperation, and the status of police reform goals. The minutes of each meeting will be posted online within fourteen (14) days following such meeting."

Section 3.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, 12-17.7 (F) is hereby amended by striking the existing language and inserting the following:

“*Concurrent Investigations.* OPAT investigations shall proceed concurrently with any criminal investigation to the maximum extent permitted by law. A stay of an OPAT investigation shall only be granted upon a written request from the District Attorney or Attorney General demonstrating that the administrative investigation will materially prejudice a criminal prosecution. Any such stay must be reviewed by the OPAT Commission every thirty (30) days to determine if the necessity for the stay remains. No person appearing before the Commission or OPAT Staff shall be punished for availing themselves of constitutional guarantees or rights provided by a collective bargaining agreement.”

Section 4.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, 12-17.7 (G) is hereby amended by adding the following language:

“OPAT Staff shall conclude all investigations, including those reviewed in cooperation with the CRB or IAOP, within one hundred and eighty (180) days. If an investigation remains open after one hundred and eighty (180) days, the Executive Director must provide a written status report to the Mayor, City Council, and the complainant every ninety (90) days thereafter, detailing the specific reasons for the delay. OPAT Staff shall make the timeline status of each case available online.”

Section 5.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, 12-17.7 is hereby amended by creating subsection (H) with the following language:

“It shall be the duty of every BPD officer and City employee to cooperate fully with OPAT investigations. Any officer who willfully interferes with, obstructs, or refuses to comply with an OPAT request for information shall be subject to disciplinary action, including termination, subject to applicable collective bargaining agreements and due process.”

Section 6.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, 12-17.15 is hereby amended by adding the following language to the end of section (A)(1):

“For all incidents involving officer-involved shootings and police uses of force resulting in serious injury or death, the OPAT shall receive the body-worn camera footage within seven (7) days, and released publicly within thirty (30) days after consultation with the families of victims and survivors.”

Section 7.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, 12-17.16 (E) is hereby amended by adding the following language:

“Evidence Transparency. The OPAT website shall host a dedicated transparency portal for the public release of body-worn camera footage as mandated by Section 12-17.15 (A)(1). All such footage must be posted within the sixty (60) day window established therein. The website shall also include a ‘Compliance Dashboard’ tracking the Police Commissioner’s adherence to the sixty (60) day response deadline for sustained findings.”

Section 8 Definitions.

“BIPOC” shall refer to individuals and communities identifying as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

“CRB” shall refer to the member(s), individually and collectively, of the City’s Civilian Review Board.

“IAOP” shall refer to the member(s), individually and collectively, of the city’s Internal Affairs Oversight Panel.

Section 9. Severability.

The provisions of this ordinance are severable and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which remain in full

force and effect.

Section 10. Effective Date.

The provisions of this ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage.

Filed on: July 22, 2026