



OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR
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New Audit Finds More Resources and Strengthened Independence Needed for the City Agencies Tasked with Overseeing the Oakland Police Department

OAKLAND, California (March 10, 2026): Today, Oakland's Office of the City Auditor released a report about the City agencies tasked with providing independent oversight of the Oakland Police Department (OPD): the Police Commission, Community Police Review Agency (CPRA), and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Each of the three agencies has a distinct role in promoting constitutional policing in Oakland. After a 2003 Negotiated Settlement Agreement (NSA) requiring OPD to implement 52 reforms and bring OPD into federal oversight, the City established the police oversight agencies due to further misconduct. Voters approved Measure LL in 2016, establishing the Police Commission to oversee OPD's policies and procedures, and CPRA to investigate complaints of police misconduct. In November 2020, voters approved Measure S1, which amended Measure LL, expanding the independence, authority, and staffing of the Police Commission and CPRA, and establishing the OIG to review OPD's compliance with reforms mandated through the 2003 NSA.

The objectives of the audit were to assess the extent to which each oversight body is acting in accordance with its City Charter and Municipal Code requirements; identify obstacles, if any, each oversight body faces in meeting the requirements laid out in the City Charter and Municipal Code; and evaluate the extent to which the oversight bodies provide effective oversight of OPD. The audit covered January 2020 through December 2025, and found:

- The Police Commission and CPRA have not yet implemented all previous audit recommendations from the Office of the City Auditor's 2019 performance audit.
- The Police Commission, CPRA, and the OIG met 26 of 43 select City Charter and Municipal Code requirements.
- Vacancies, frozen positions, low minimum staffing requirements, and leadership turnover have hindered the police oversight agencies' ability to fulfill their legally mandated duties.

- The City Charter and Municipal Code are inconsistent and conflict on the hiring and removal of the heads of CPRA and the OIG.
- Structural independence – functional separation from the City Administration in matters of budget and hiring, for example – would help to ensure the police oversight agencies have sufficient resources and administrative authority to meet their legal mandates.

The audit report includes two recommendations to address the findings. The first calls for the City Attorney’s Office to independently analyze the agencies to identify the resources they need to meet their legal requirements. The City Attorney’s Office is independent, is uniquely positioned to factor legal requirements, and previously completed a similar analysis for the City Auditor’s Office. The second recommendation calls for the City Council to adopt revisions to the Municipal Code and pursue changes to the City Charter as needed, to resolve conflicts between the Municipal Code and the City Charter to resolve conflicting language. The audit notes that an earlier proposal to revise the enabling ordinances following the passage of Measure S1 has been pending Council consideration since early last year.

The Office of the City Auditor will follow up on the statuses of the audit recommendations twice per year as part of its semiannual audit recommendation follow-up process. The City Charter also requires recurring audits of the Police Commission and CPRA by the City Auditor’s Office every three years. This audit brings the Office current on that requirement.

City Auditor, Michael C. Houston, reflected on the audit results: “In recent years the City has not provided enough resources to deliver on its stated values and principles. Our audit confirms that police oversight is an example of this. The City and the community have vocalized a commitment to rigorous police oversight, but the City has not given enough resources for these three agencies to deliver rigorous police oversight.” City Auditor Houston added: “Like many Oaklanders, I was encouraged by the recent news regarding the Police Department’s progress in meeting the terms of the Negotiated Settlement Agreement. The leadership and organizational culture within City Hall that contributed to that good news, as well as the collaboration and responsiveness of the Police Commission, CPRA, and the City Attorney’s Office throughout our audit process, give me hope that the City Administration is committed to maintaining constitutional policing that residents deserve. Supporting the police oversight agencies with the resources necessary to fulfill their mandates will demonstrate that the City has a proportionate commitment to providing assurance that constitutional policing will be consistent and ongoing.”

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You can read the full report [here](#).

The City Auditor is available for in-person, virtual, or phone interviews.

Please direct questions to Assistant to the City Auditor Dena Shupe at DShupe@oaklandca.gov.

ABOUT OAKLAND'S CITY AUDITOR MICHAEL C. HOUSTON

A career public servant, Michael C. Houston, has been a government auditor and investigator for 18 years. He worked as a performance auditor for the City of San Jose's independent City Auditor's Office from 2008 to 2017 and then as the Director of Compliance and Internal Control at California State University East Bay, where he directed the audit and investigation functions between 2017 and 2019. Michael joined the Oakland City Auditor's Office in 2019 as the Whistleblower Program Manager and was promoted to be the Assistant City Auditor in 2022. In a March 2024 Special Election, Michael was elected to complete the term of the previous City Auditor, who resigned mid-term. Michael has a Master of Public Policy degree from U.C. Berkeley, a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Sonoma State University, and is a Certified Internal Auditor.

ABOUT THE OAKLAND CITY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The City Auditor's Office independently and objectively reviews City operations and services, and reports on their performance to the public. The Office's audits include recommendations to management and those charged with governance and oversight, on how to improve services, reduce costs, and increase public accountability. The Office conducts performance audits in accordance with Government Auditing Standards set by the Government Accountability Office under the U.S. Comptroller General. The City Auditor's Office operates a Whistleblower Hotline to receive and investigate allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse affecting or involving City of Oakland resources, employees, officials, or contractors. The Office also prepares financial ballot analyses for proposed legislation in accordance with the City Charter, and conducts analyses and reviews requested from the City Council. Visit www.oaklandauditor.com to learn more about Oakland's Office of the City Auditor or view a complete list of our released audits, investigations, and annual reports.