



September 27, 2021

Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners
Commission President William J. Briggs, II
Commission Vice President Eileen Decker
Commissioner Dale Bonner
Commissioner Maria Lou Calanche
Commissioner Steve Soboroff

RE: After-Action Report Implementation Plan (BPC #21-178, September 28, 2021)

We are writing to oppose LAPD's latest effort to ram through this board proposals to increase police resources and powers. As Chief Moore notes, **the cost of this Implementation Plan amounts to \$18.44 million in addition to LAPD's record-breaking \$3.2 billion budget**, which already increased by \$44 million this year and consumes over half the city's discretionary spending. Much as LAPD's yearly budget increase was approved by this board in a budget released late on a Friday afternoon and voted through on Tuesday, this Implementation Plan also comes with just over one business day of time to review.

This Implementation Plan includes several proposals that will expand the police spending and harms that our communities keep protesting:

- Over **\$12 million** for new trainings in addition to **\$461,850 in bullets at \$17 per round** to shoot away at trainings and **\$492,850** in "overtime funds to address field jail training" for mass arrests (pp. 4, 5, 38, 141, 174)
- Over **\$2 million** for new staff specifically tasked with surveillance of social media, armed with **\$450,000** in new surveillance software that "will allow improved data collection and provide a more holistic background on target subjects" and be used for everyday surveillance by "Major Crimes Division, Robbery Homicide Division, and the geographic bureaus" (pp. 93, 94, 131)
- **\$348,130** for a new staff officer whose full-time role will be to permanently coordinate with "military" forces and facilitate their local deployment (pp. 4, 86)
- **\$108,000** in year-round technology subscriptions for the "shadow teams" that covertly infiltrate protests, with the goal that these "shadow teams" and their technology will be permanently "incorporated into Vice and Narcotics schools" (pp. 142, 179)

- **\$100,000** for snacks that “personnel can grab quickly and take with them,” apparently enabled through new “emergency use credit cards” (pp. 5, 96, 134)

Using protests that called to defund the police as an excuse to acquire bullets to shoot at protestors, a \$100,000 protest snack fund, and new spy powers is a disgusting insult to the hundreds of thousands of people who took the streets last summer.¹ This money grab is the absolute opposite of what our communities braved LAPD street violence to demand: defunding the police.

Chief Moore’s cover memo raises many questions about the cost of these proposals. As he notes, LAPD previously claimed these same reforms required over \$66 million. He writes that this larger figure “counted all costs – even if the resources were currently available” (p. 5) which presumably means LAPD double-counted the cost of resources that it already possessed. But one sentence later, Chief Moore claims the \$18.44 million estimate amounts to a \$48 million “reduction in cost projection.” It is unclear whether the \$18.44 million is in fact a “reduction” or simply accurate accounting. But LAPD’s comfort switching numbers so large without real explanation speaks to how little financial scrutiny they expect from you. Additionally, it is unclear how much of the \$18.44 million are yearly versus one-time costs.

In addition to the proposals that require new funding, LAPD is also trying to ram through other alarming and possibly illegal expansions of its surveillance powers. For example, buried in the proposals is a reference to biometric analysis of body-cam footage, described as “building an automatic speech recognition system, or other efficient system, for BWV footage” (p. 106).

Though LAPD’s details here are scarce, this system might violate California law, which provides that a “law enforcement agency or law enforcement officer shall not install, activate, or use any biometric surveillance system in connection with an officer camera or data collected by an officer camera.” Penal Code 832.19(b). The Implementation Plan also includes changes in the use of Field Interview cards, automatic license plate readers, and the Suspicious Activity Reporting program, along with proposals for data-sharing across agencies, expansions to the Information Technology Bureau, and much more (pp. 101-130).

The process by which these proposals are being advanced appears deliberately calculated to suppress community input. The proposals were made public in an 183-page document sent late in the afternoon on Friday, September 24, and the proposals will be voted on the morning of Tuesday, September 28. This is just over one business day to digest and respond to the 183-page proposals, and even that time period is only for people who happen to have received the proposal immediately because they subscribe to this board’s agenda by email. The public’s only opportunity to comment would be if they received that online agenda and then responded either by emails sent before 5 p.m. on Monday, September 27, or by becoming one of the dozen

¹ On top of those costs, LAPD proposes to spend a further \$4.31 million in overtime pay for “mobile field force and field jail training” (p. 4).

or so individuals who happen to secure a brief public comment slot during this board's 45-minute public comment period, before the agenda item is even introduced.

It is no surprise that LAPD is trying to force these proposals through without public input. In April, LAPD came to this board with an even more blatant money grab, proposing a "reform" plan described as costing \$66 million. Every written public comment sent to you that week – spanning 76 pages – opposed this plan on the grounds that it would increase LAPD funding.² So did verbal comments. Chastised by the community one time around, LAPD has slightly revised its plan. While this new proposal's figures are different, the fundamental issue is the same: the proposal will further expand LAPD's funding and spy powers.

Calls to reduce LAPD spending are extremely widespread, which explains why LAPD is using last summer's protests to expand its resources. LAPD knows that demands to defund the police are very popular. Last year, a Loyola Marymount Study presented to this board indicated that over 62.4% of Angelenos support proposals to "redirect some money currently going to the police budget to local programs," and 36.7% support proposals to "completely dismantle police departments."³ With this sentiment growing, LAPD seems eager not only to increase its violence and power over critics but to do so under cover of night.

Do not be fooled into thinking LAPD will use these new powers narrowly. LAPD says that the surveillance software it seeks permanent funding for "will allow improved data collection and provide a more holistic background on target subjects." We all know which "target subjects" LAPD will surveil as it tries to anticipate, preempt, and neutralize protests: police will spy on their critics. You cannot ignore the political and historical context here. These expanded surveillance capabilities will recreate the harm of the notorious Public Disorder Intelligence Division (PDID), which LAPD launched as a reaction to the Watts Rebellion. Then as now, this move is particularly dangerous as a response to growing public criticism of police.

LAPD expressly states they intend to use these new systems for everyday surveillance of our communities. LAPD's "Rationale" in the proposals for new social media surveillance software states that "Major Crimes Division, Robbery Homicide Division, and the geographic bureaus would use the software to leverage open source social media information and cell phone analytical tools to gather and process real-time information" (p. 93). This proposal for expanding LAPD's social media surveillance is extremely alarming in light of the recent revelations that LAPD falsely denied using controversial "artificial intelligence" analysis to monitor social media accounts of protestors and has been collecting social media information in Field Interview cards.⁴ While LAPD claims this surveillance will be limited to "open-source" data, modern

² See <http://lapd-assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/Public%20comments%20051121.pdf>.

³ Loyola Marymount University Center for the Study of Los Angeles, "[Police Data Brief: 2020 Police and Community Relations Survey](#)" at 8.

⁴ Lexis Olivier-Ray, "[Official Emails Show that LAPD Worked With a Controversial Social Media Surveillance Company During George Floyd Protests](#)," L.A. Taco (Sept. 3, 2021); Sam Levin, "[Revealed: LAPD officers told to collect social media data on every civilian they stop](#)," The Guardian (Sept. 8, 2021).

technologies allow for mass analysis of “open-source” data to produce detailed mosaics of our movements, associations, and views.

We ask you to reject these proposals and commit to reducing LAPD’s \$3.2 billion budget. This is the moment to stop expanding an institution that keeps harming our communities. The interpersonal harms that our communities face have been produced by years of police consuming more and more resources that could instead be used for housing, health care, education, and other investments that actually keep people safe and healthy. LAPD’s operating budget consumes half our city’s discretionary spending. It is the city’s choice to spend so much on policing at the expense of everything else that keeps perpetuating conditions for violence in our communities.

Throughout history, city officials have responded to LAPD mass violence at protests by rewarding police with new resources instead of addressing the roots of the community’s outrage. Time and again, this cycle has served to expand LAPD violence, leading to further protests and police crackdowns. You claim to “serve as the citizens’ voice in police affairs.” You now have an opportunity to break from this cycle of failure, to learn from this history and do something different. Now is the time to reduce LAPD’s resources, not increase them.

Sincerely,

Stop LAPD Spying Coalition
Los Angeles Community Action Network
Black Lives Matter - Los Angeles
White People 4 Black Lives
National Lawyers Guild of Los Angeles