



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

DRAFT LEGISLATION: Amendments to Chief of Police Investigations Process

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Outline

- Background – Accountability Ordinance and Chief of Police Investigations
- Policy Goals
- Summary of Draft Legislation
- Next Steps

Background – Accountability Ordinance (1/2)

- In 2017, [Ordinance 125315](#) (Accountability Ordinance) established the City's three-pronged police oversight system:
 1. **Office of Police Accountability** – independent, civilian-led office within SPD that investigates misconduct complaints involving SPD employees
 2. **Office of Inspector General for Public Safety** – independent office separate from the Executive that reviews and audits SPD and OPA
 3. **Community Police Commission** – community-based oversight commission that reviews closed OPA investigations
- This system did not include a process for investigating misconduct complaints naming the Chief of Police and ensuring that such complaints would be handled in a fair and transparent manner, free of potential conflicts of interest

Background – Chief of Police Investigations (2/2)

- In 2022, [Ordinance 126628](#) established a specific process for OPA's handling of complaints naming the Chief of Police that included oversight role for OIG
- Since July 2022, OPA has received over 70 complaints
- Issues with the current investigation process that limit OPA and OIG's ability to address these complaints in a timely, efficient, and accountable manner:
 - Comprehensive intakes for all complaints
 - Staffing restrictions for conducting intakes
 - Inconsistent technical requirements
 - New complaints during an OIG-managed investigation
 - Limited reporting requirements

Policy Goals

- Streamline and clarify the intake/investigation process for complaints naming the Chief of Police
- Provide staffing flexibility
- Support procedural efficiency
- Increase transparency

Summary of Draft Legislation

Amendments to Chief of Police investigation process:

- Allow OPA, with OIG's agreement, to close qualifying complaints as a *contact log* after an initial screening
- Allow OPA to assign *non-supervisory, civilian staff* to intakes
- Allow OIG to initiate and manage the investigation of a new complaint that arises during an ongoing investigation managed by OIG
- Clarify that investigations must be timely, thorough, and *objective*
- Establish a consistent requirement for OIG to *promptly* notify City entities and the complainant
- Require OIG to include investigation information in quarterly reports for the Mayor, the President of the Council, and the Chair of the Council's public safety committee, and in its annual report for the public.

Next Steps

- May 6 – Possible Introduction and Referral
- May 13 – Committee discussion and possible vote

Questions?