



OFFICE OF POLICE OVERSIGHT

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July 18, 2024

Robin Henderson, Interim Chief of Police
Austin Police Department
715 E. 8th Street
Austin, TX 78701

RE: OPO Policy Recommendation for Addition to Austin Police Department's (APD) General Orders

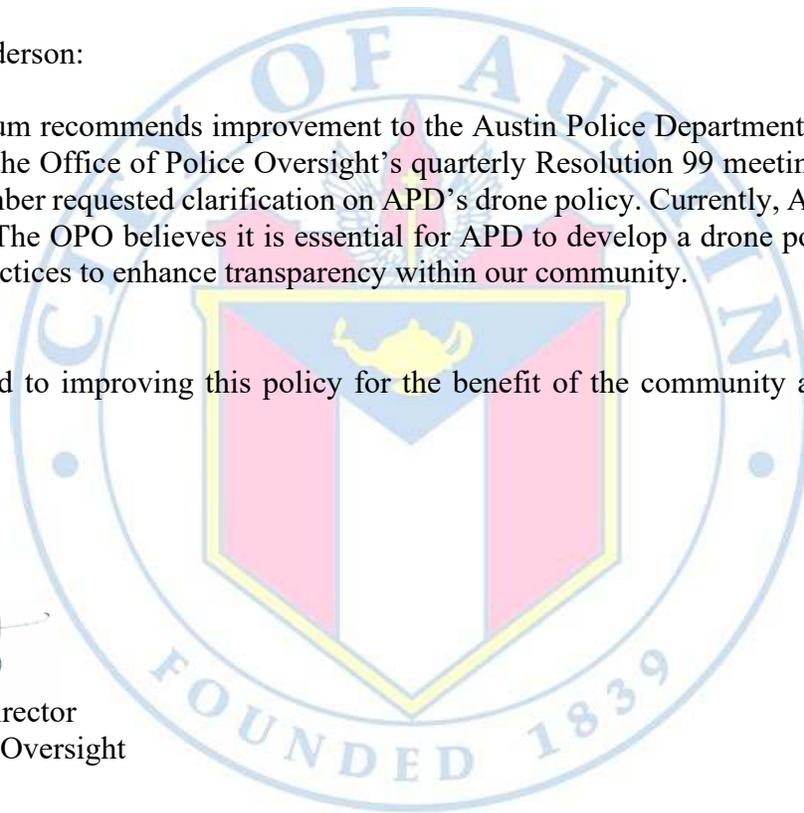
Dear Chief Henderson:

This memorandum recommends improvement to the Austin Police Department's (APD) General Orders. During the Office of Police Oversight's quarterly Resolution 99 meeting on June 13th, a community member requested clarification on APD's drone policy. Currently, APD does not have a drone policy. The OPO believes it is essential for APD to develop a drone policy aligned with national best practices to enhance transparency within our community.

We look forward to improving this policy for the benefit of the community and APD's sworn personnel.

Sincerely,

Gail McCant, Director
Office of Police Oversight





Recommendation – Create New Policy

Recommendation #1:

OPO recommends that APD create a separate policy in the General Orders addressing the department's use of drones (Unmanned Aerial Systems).

OPO analysis indicated that APD needs to create a separate policy that aligns with national best practices and is consistent with other surveillance technologies, such as Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR), already outlined in the General Orders.

OPO recommends the policy include:

- Definition of drone.
- Authorized users, training requirements, and regulations.
- APD's jurisdiction and authority to operate regarding drone use.
- Access to data collected, storage, and data retention requirements.
- Under what circumstances is drone use allowed (see Texas Government Code 423.)

