

City of Minneapolis  
Police Conduct Oversight Commission

Dear Chief Medaria Arradondo,

In light of the criminal trial of former Minneapolis Police Department Officer Derek Chauvin, accused of murdering George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and the anticipation of public protests from Minneapolitans regarding this trial, the Police Conduct Oversight Commission would like to bring your attention to evidence-based literature that could prove beneficial to the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) when responding to demonstrations of public protest. It would be reassuring to hear from you that MPD officers will be utilizing a response model that learns from the experiences of 2020 and takes into account proven and effective strategies recommended by experts in the field.

Most notably, we would like to bring your attention to a report published on October 2, 2015 by the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), of which Chapter 8 details findings and recommendations for improving responses to protests and mass demonstrations directed toward the St. Louis County Police Department and their department's response to public protests in the wake of the shooting of Michael Brown Jr. in 2014.<sup>1</sup> Given numerous accusations of police use of force throughout the summer protests held in Minneapolis last year, our commission recommends that - if you have not already done so - read Chapter 8 of this report to evaluate MPD in relation to the recommendations provided in this report.<sup>2</sup> Our commission specifically would like to highlight the following passage:

*“The front line of defense to manage a disorderly crowd is starting with a softer approach. This strategy of crowd management, sometimes called the “Vancouver,” “Boston,” or “British” model, starts with officers in soft uniforms, interacting with protesters in a respectful and positive manner before and during a protest....Experience has shown that highly visible officers interacting with members of the crowd before, during, and after a protest event can decrease violence and disorder as well as the number of arrests.”*

There is a series of peer-reviewed research on the subject of understanding crowd dynamics during mass demonstrations. We encourage you to take these studies into account in order to provide a safe public safety response that respects the rights of community members.

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<sup>1</sup> Blake Norton, Edwin E. Hamilton, Rick Braziel, Daniel Linskey, & Jennifer Zeunik. (2015). Chapter 8. Responses for Handling Protests and Mass Demonstrations. Collaborative Reform Initiative: An Assessment of the St. Louis County Police Department. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). U.S. Justice Department. 10/02/2015. P48-58. <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p316-pub.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Liz Sawyer and Libor Jany. (2020). Complaints skyrocket over police response to George Floyd protests. Star Tribune. 07/02/2020.

<https://www.startribune.com/complaints-skyrocketing-in-wake-of-mpls-police-response-to-floyd-protests/571608232/?refresh=true>

Professor of Criminology Edward R. Maguire speaks quite well in his 2015 article *New Directions in Protest Policing*, “*Fair and effective protest policing strategies encourage people to comply voluntarily with police and the law. Unfair and ineffective protest policing strategies run the risk of instigating defiance or rebellion, thus potentially worsening matters.*”<sup>3</sup> We believe this is an ethos all can rally behind to provide a safe process for citizens to express their right to protest. His article is certainly relevant to this matter. Additional literature acknowledges that protesters do not all protest for the same reasons and act in the same way while demonstrating.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, it is critical for the health and safety of our citizens for officers to clearly understand the risks involved in using chemical irritants and less lethal ammunition and their mortality rate, if not, likely long-term impacts on citizens.<sup>5 6</sup> We encourage you to fully consider this literature and what insight it can bring in relation to your stated vision to do all you can to protect and serve in a way that minimizes harm and risk of personal injury to yourselves and to our community members.<sup>7</sup>

Sincerely,

Chair & Commissioners of the Police Conduct Oversight Commission

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<sup>3</sup> Maguire, Edward R. (2015). *New directions in protest policing*. *Saint Louis University Public Law Review*, 35(1), 67.

<sup>4</sup> Maguire, Edward R, Barak, Maya, Cross, Karie, & Lugo, Kris. (2018). *Attitudes among Occupy DC participants about the use of violence against police*. *Policing & Society*, 28(5), 526-540.

<sup>5</sup> Haar, Rohini J, Iacopino, Vincent, Ranadive, Nikhil, Weiser, Sheri D, & Dandu, Madhavi. (2017). *Health impacts of chemical irritants used for crowd control: A systematic review of the injuries and deaths caused by tear gas and pepper spray*. *BMC Public Health*, 17(1), 831.

<sup>6</sup> Haar, Rohini J, Iacopino, Vincent, Ranadive, Nikhil, Dandu, Madhavi, & Weiser, Sheri D. (2017). *Death, injury and disability from kinetic impact projectiles in crowd-control settings: A systematic review*. *BMJ Open*, 7(12), E018154.

<sup>7</sup> John Elder. (2018) *Chief Arradondo's Vision Statement*. From the Chief. Inside MPD. 2/8/2018.

<https://www.insidempd.com/2018/02/08/chief-arradondos-vision-statement/#:~:text=Do%20all%20you%20can%20to,and%20to%20our%20community%20members.>