Councilmembers Propose Updates to Independent Monitor Ordinance

Denver, CO – Based on feedback and suggestions from Denver’s Citizen Oversight Board (COB), engaged residents, and community-based organizations, Councilmembers Paul Kashmann, Robin Kniech, and Paul López, are proposing changes to the ordinance governing Denver’s Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) and the COB, which is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the OIM. The proposals include ensuring that no uniformed member of the police or sheriff departments is exempt from oversight, improving notification procedures, clarifying authority to provide policy advice, and other updates. These changes will ensure Denver’s independent oversight system fulfills the expectations of Denver residents to foster greater trust in our public safety agencies, 72% of whom voted to make the OIM a permanent charter office in 2016.

“If rank and file officers and deputies are subject to oversight to ensure investigations of alleged misconduct are properly conducted, then any investigation into wrongdoing by a chief or sheriff needs to be subject to the same oversight,” said Councilman Kashmann.

"Public safety in Denver is all of our responsibility and requires all of our participation," said Councilman Paul Lopez. “These changes fulfill the expectation of voters who overwhelmingly decided to make civilian oversight a necessary and permanent city function."

Councilwoman Kniech described many of the changes as “common sense, such as requiring written procedures for prompt notification of cases and interviews and ensuring only information that is legally protected is withheld from OIM reports.”

Katina Banks, Chair of the COB expressed that “the Monitor’s policy feedback has been beneficial to the city on everything from body cameras to policies on use of force, so formalizing this authority is good for both our safety agencies and the community they protect.”
**NEXT STEPS**
Denver City Council will have an initial discussion of the proposed changes at the Safety, Housing, Homelessness and Education Committee on Wednesday, January 16, beginning at 10:30 am. The meeting will include 15 minutes of public comment, speakers must sign up between 10:00 am and 10:15 am. The meeting is schedule for discussion only, no vote will be taken.

**BACKGROUND**
The OIM monitors internal investigations, provides input on discipline, and recommends policies and procedures. The COB evaluates the effectiveness of the OIM, makes policy-level recommendations regarding discipline and use of force, and communicates regularly with the community and safety agencies.

Denver has had independent, civilian oversight of the police and sheriff departments since 2005. Only minor changes have been made to the ordinance since that time. This would be the first comprehensive review and update to the ordinance since the system was established. During that time new technologies have emerged, our community has grown in size and diversity, and new innovations have emerged in peer cities—all of which informed the proposed changes.

(See [One Page Summary](#) for a complete list of proposed changes)

*An earlier version of this release stated that 74% of Denver residents voted to make the OIM a permanent charter office in 2016. This version has been revised to reflect the final figure, which was 72%.*

###