DENVER—Alongside our community, the Citizen Oversight Board (COB) is deeply saddened and disturbed by the July 17 police shooting on Larimer Street that left the suspect and six bystanders injured, some quite seriously. The investigations into this shooting will take time, likely much more time than anybody would like. We believe that if conducted with objectivity and rigor the investigative process can result in appropriate accountability for all involved.

We are mindful that the criminal investigation of the officers’ conduct in the shooting must take place before any administrative investigation may proceed. The COB and the OIM (Office of the Independent Monitor) were created to provide, among other things, civilian oversight of administrative investigations of officer-involved shootings, not criminal investigations. With the exception of the OIM being able to observe interviews, they do not typically have access to related information or evidence during criminal investigations. While Interim Independent Monitor Gregg Crittendon was given an early opportunity to review some of the video footage of this incident and has briefed the Board, we await the full release of body-worn camera and HALO footage.

As a Board, we take our responsibilities seriously and will continue to closely follow the progress of this matter and the actions of all involved. We will take every step in our power to ensure that the investigative process is worthy of the community’s trust and that our questions, the OIM’s questions, and the community’s questions are fully addressed. To the extent that we find areas where the process can be improved, we will communicate these areas to the public and will act to improve them.

How matters like this are handled has the potential to either build trust between the community and law enforcement or deepen the divide that exists for many. We urge the Denver Police Department and the Denver District Attorney to be as transparent as possible with the community as well as with the OIM and COB, which are legally authorized to access confidential information. We were created to give the community a seat at the table and make it easier to participate in what can be a complex process.

Incidents like this also highlight the need for strong and trustworthy leadership of the OIM. We are actively seeking applications for the position of Independent Monitor. We are focused on identifying someone the community can rely on and trust to do this difficult job well. We encourage any community members who are qualified and interested in the role to apply here: https://raftelis.hire.trakstar.com/jobs/fk02pqg.

Thank you,
The Denver Citizen Oversight Board

Julia Richman, Chair                          Terrance Carroll              Larry Martinez
Nick Webber, Vice-Chair                       Karen Collier                 Stefan Stein
Nikki Braziel                                 Al Gardner
The Citizen Oversight Board was created in 2004. It consists of nine community members who are broadly tasked with assessing the effectiveness and policies of the Department of Public Safety and the Office of the Independent Monitor, and making recommendations as appropriate. As of November 2021, the COB is also responsible for selecting the head of the Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM).