

Born from reforms to stop the police brutality and oppression protested in the 1967 civil uprising, the 1974 Charter did more than establish civilian oversight. It revolutionized how police were held accountable and became a national model for civilian oversight agencies. The 2012 Charter made the model better and solidified the vision, leadership and legacy of Detroit residents.

Detroit Leads in Civilian Oversight

www.detroitmi.gov/BOPC

Celebrating Detroit's History and Vision

Across the U.S., Detroit is known for its leadership in community-driven oversight of its police department. We are proud that the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners and the City of Detroit recently were selected for the first time ever to host an international conference on this important civil rights role. Next year, the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) comes to our city September 22-26, 2019.

The year 2019 also marks our city's pioneering role in police reform. One of our greatest achievements remains the one envisioned by the civil rights activists and city leaders of 1973: direct, independent citizen oversight as established in the 1974 Charter and enhanced in the 2012 Charter. Whether elected by district voters or appointed by the mayor, we are the people's representatives to govern the police department with the Chief of Police and Mayor and to serve as the people's monitor for constitutional, community policing.

As Board members, we appreciate your trust and hope that you continue to participate and share your feedback. Our weekly meetings provide a regular forum to make voices heard, to learn and provide input on current policing practices and proposed new rules, and to engage directly with Chief James Craig and other top commanders. Our website offers connectivity for those who cannot attend, with agendas, minutes, citizen complaint forms, meeting video and other important information readily available. This special section also provides highlights for everyone to understand the vital role of civilian oversight now and for the future.



2017-18 Chair Lisa Carter and Vice-Chair Eva Garza Dewaelsche



Far left: Incoming Vice Chair Darryl Brown, Police Commissioner for District 1, talks about implicit bias with Dr. Agustin Arbulu, director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. Left: Incoming Chair Willie Bell, Police Commissioner for District 4, talks with Police Academy cadets about how civilian oversight helps ensure the best standards in police professionalism. The Board of Police Commissioners elected Bell and Brown to serve as executive officers from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

Why Civilian Supervisory Control and Oversight of the Police Department Matters

By **Peter J. Hammer**

Serious problems in police-community relations have lurked behind every episode of racialized mass violence in Detroit for the past hundred years, particularly as it impacted the African American Community. This was the finding of the 1926 “Mayor’s Committee on Race Relations Detroit Michigan,” the 1943 NAACP Report “What Caused the Detroit Riot?” and the 1968 “Kerner Commission Report.” The history of police violence and brutality is extensively detailed in Judge Damon J. Keith’s landmark ruling in *Baker v. City of Detroit*, upholding the legality of Detroit’s police affirmative action policies.

In the wake of the 1967 Rebellion, tensions in police community relations reached a crescendo in the early 1970s as S.T.R.E.S.S. (Stop the Robberies and Enjoy Safe Streets) forces were unleashed on the city. The politics of this turmoil played out in two important ways in the elections of 1973. Coleman A. Young was running for mayor against former Police Chief John F. Nichols. At the same time, the citizens were being asked to approve a new City Charter.

Everyone recalls that Coleman A. Young was elected Mayor, but fewer people understand the significance of the adoption of the 1974 City Charter. Both outcomes had important implications for police-community relations. Mayor Young disbanded the S.T.R.E.S.S. unit and the Charter established the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC), a significant national innovation ensuring civilian oversight and control over the police department.

The innovations of the 1974 City Charter were strengthened

in the 2012 Detroit City Charter. The 2012 Charter provides: “The Board of Police Commissioners has supervisory control and oversight of the Police Department as set forth in this Chapter.” The BOPC has authority to review and approve the Departmental budget, provide the Mayor with the slate of candidates from which the next Police Chief will be chosen, and appoint the civilian Director of Police Personnel. These are significant structural responsibilities that ensure meaningful civilian control over the Department.

In addition, the Detroit BOPC plays a critical role in investigating and resolving civilian complaints against the Department, as well as serving as the final authority for reviewing discipline of employees of the Police Department. BOPC is also authorized to approve all promotions within the Department.

In the wake of Emergency Management, there remains a serious deficit of democracy in Detroit. Indeed, on his way out the door, the Emergency Manager gutted the authority of BOPC’s civilian supervisory powers. The fact that BOPC is now back up and running should be celebrated. As the nation wrestles with problems of police brutality, Detroit is once again in a position of leadership. Civilian supervisory control and oversight of the Police Department provides Detroit the opportunity to positively redefine what public safety means and how our police force interacts with our citizens. Given Detroit’s troubled history, BOPC provides room for optimism.



Peter J. Hammer is a professor of law at Wayne State University Law School and is the director of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights. He is the editor and author of numerous articles and publications including the new biography *Crusader for Justice: Federal Judge Damon J. Keith* (2013).

Senior United States Circuit Judge Damon Keith administered the oath of office to the Board of Police Commissioners during the city’s official swearing in ceremony at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center in January 2018 (photo: Kwabena Shabu).

Detroit Board of Police Commissioners - Districts and Police Precincts

About the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners

The Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC) is comprised of 11 members. Seven (7) are elected by districts like City Council members, and four (4) are at-large mayoral appointees approved by the Council. All 11 Board members serve without compensation as a vital civilian board to help ensure police powers and practices comply with Constitutional protections and community policing standards.

The 1974 City Charter first established a civilian oversight board. The BOPC derives its current powers and duties from the 2012 Charter, which strengthened independent, citizen oversight.

The Board has supervisory control and oversight of the Police Department. The Board is required to meet at least once each week but may vote to recess during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays. All meetings are held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

The BOPC meets each Thursday at 3 p.m. at Detroit Public Safety Headquarters, except for the second Thursday when the Board holds an evening meeting at 6:30 p.m. at community locations throughout police precincts. Each meeting is open to the public.

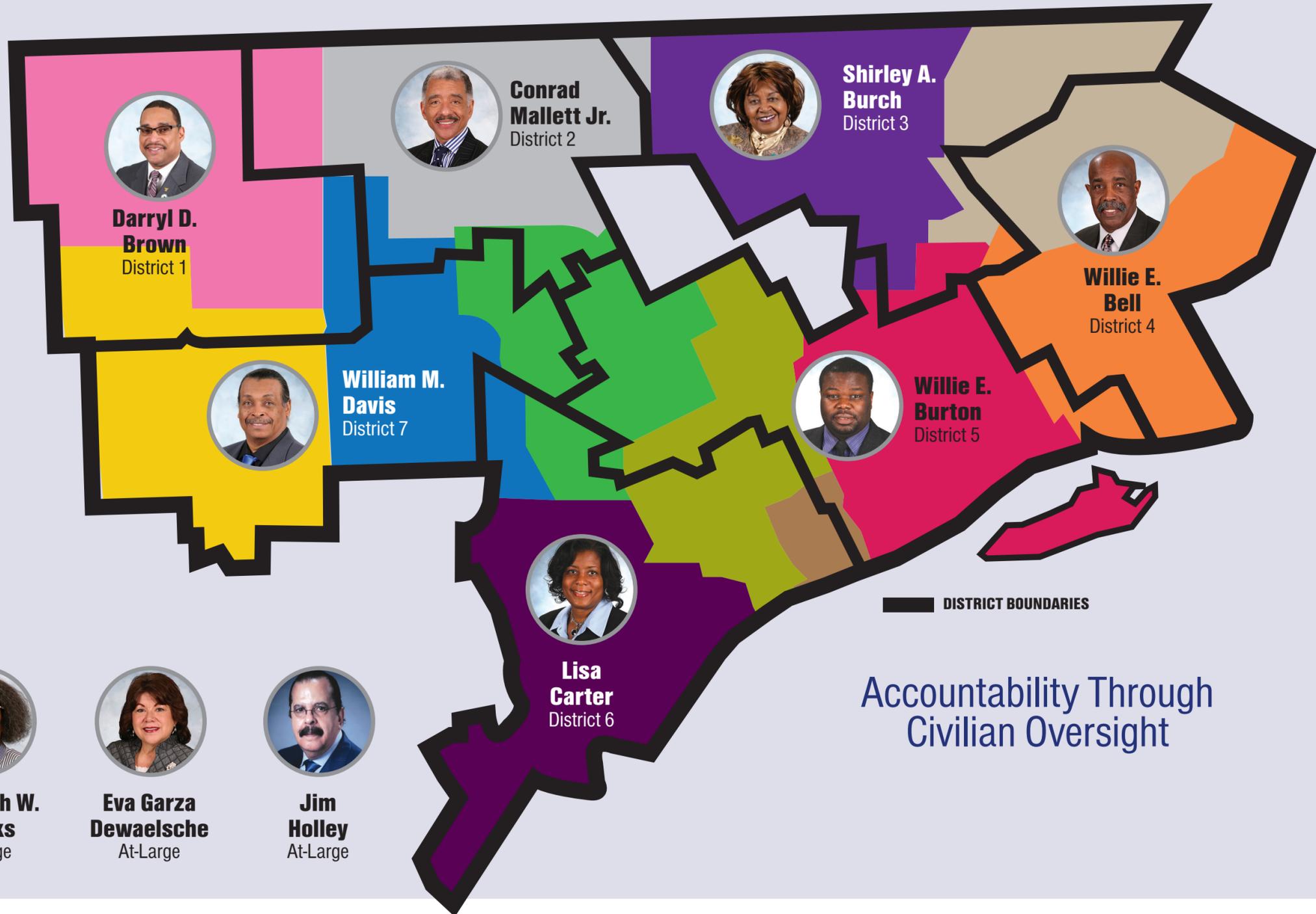
Upcoming Community Meetings

Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.

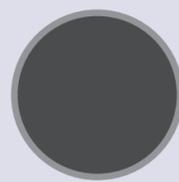
- July 12** • 10th Precinct
- August 9** • 5th Precinct
- September 13** • 4th Precinct
- October 11** • 7th Precinct
- November 8** • 6th Precinct
- December 13** • 3rd Precinct

UPCOMING TOPICS: marijuana update, advanced police technology, domestic violence and police encounters, and audits on body cameras and electronic weapons

- PRECINCTS**
- 2nd PRECINCT
 - 3rd PRECINCT
 - 4th PRECINCT
 - 5th PRECINCT
 - 6th PRECINCT
 - 7th PRECINCT
 - 8th PRECINCT
 - 9th PRECINCT
 - 10th PRECINCT
 - 11th PRECINCT
 - 12th PRECINCT
 - DOWNTOWN SERVICES



Accountability Through
Civilian Oversight



Vacant
At-Large



Elizabeth W. Brooks
At-Large



Eva Garza Dewaelsche
At-Large



Jim Holley
At-Large

Complaints key to improving policies and procedures



Polly McCalister, Ph.D.

The Chief Investigator leads the BOPC investigative arm, the Office of the Chief Investigator and oversees the team that provides objective investigations into complaints against DPD employees, including police officers and 911 operators. Complaints are vital because they help to identify problems with police practices and employees.

CI McCalister affirms civilian oversight is not a new method of police accountability. “However, it is a critical resource to address police conduct while offering practical recommendations to address police deficiencies. Citizen Complaints also authorize the Office of the Chief Investigator to review concerns about democratization and systemic injustices,” she added. “The goal of our office is transparency by conducting impartial and thorough investigations that will contribute to creating a foundation to reconstitute public trust.”



The BOPC Team of Civilian Investigators



Coming soon
in Spanish and Arabic

The City Charter makes The Board responsible for investigating complaints about DPD through its Chief Investigator and the Office of the Chief Investigator. The OCI directs the process for receiving and investigating citizen complaints that are non-criminal against the Detroit Police Department and its personnel. OCI is composed of civilian investigators and administrators.

If you have a concern regarding the performance of any Detroit Police Department employee, you have the right to file a complaint using the following methods:

- **In-person**
At the BOPC’s Office of the Chief Investigator, located at Detroit Public Safety Headquarters, 1301 Third Street, Suite 767, Detroit, Michigan 48226.
- **At any Detroit Police precinct**
- **Telephone: (313) 596-2499**
- **Online: www.detroitmi.gov/bopc**
- **Fax: (313) 596-2482**
- **Complaint Form**
Complaint forms are available at all Neighborhood City Halls, Detroit Public Libraries, and Detroit Police Department precincts.
- You may also have someone else file the complaint form on your behalf.
- You will need to plan to have an in-person interview with the investigator.

How Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Helps Communities

By **NACOLE**

Builds Bridges

Effective policing must be responsive to community standards, values, and needs. Civilian oversight builds bridges between communities and the police forces that serve them by: communicating and cooperating with community and civic leaders before and after major incidents; by assuring the public that investigations of police misconduct have been completed fairly, thoroughly, and objectively; and by conducting independent investigations and reviews to ensure constitutional policing practices. Civilian oversight further acts as a bridge by conveying the concerns and needs of the community to the police, and reporting to the community how the police are performing, which allows the public to trust the police department and its officers and to view them as honest, reliable, and trustworthy. Civilian oversight practitioners are generally not currently-serving police officers, but trained and educated lawyers, investigators, researchers, analysts, and volunteers in your community.

Increases Confidence in Police

Civilian oversight works to increase public trust and confidence in the police. By conducting independent reviews and audits of police policies and practices, and by ensuring that investigations of police misconduct or uses of force are handled fairly and objectively, oversight helps a community to trust that issues are resolved in a way that maximizes the public interest. This trust translates to higher confidence in a police force, and greater cooperation in a department's efforts to prevent and solve crimes.

Helps Manage Risk

Civilian oversight is critical to managing a municipality's exposure to risk from lawsuits claiming unlawful actions by individual officers or departmental failures to supervise or train officers. Oversight accomplishes this by ensuring that individual officers who engage in misconduct are effectively investigated and disciplined; by evaluating and proposing improvements to police management and

supervision and training; and by reporting publicly on a department's progress in implementing such improvements.

Ensures Greater Accountability

One of the primary goals of civilian oversight is to advance fair and professional law enforcement that is responsive to community needs. This is accomplished, in large part, by promoting constitutional policing. Oversight focuses on assessing officer and departmental compliance with local policies as well as state and federal law, and preserving important reforms. It also aids in evaluating the integrity and effectiveness of internal police accountability systems.

Protects Civil Rights

Civilian oversight is a developing area of civil rights protection. Oversight practitioners are at the forefront of investigating, reviewing, and auditing individual cases or patterns of potential civil rights violations in areas such as racial profiling, biased policing, the use of deadly force, illegal searches, excessive force, and unlawful arrests.

Supports Effective Policing

Mutual trust and respect between police and communities are critical to effective law enforcement. Civilian oversight increases public trust in police by assuring the public that investigations have been done fairly, thoroughly, and objectively. This improved trust leads to greater public cooperation with law enforcement, and in turn, improves public safety.

Established in 1995, NACOLE is a non-profit organization that brings together individuals and agencies working to establish or improve oversight of police officers in the United States. The Detroit BOPC, which was established in 1974, is a NACOLE member.



Top to bottom: A few books read recently by the BOPC; a student comments on public safety at a recent training session as Board Secretary Greg Hicks listens; Alvin Stokes and Sharon Parnell of the Police-Community Relations Council; and members of the BOPC with community leaders. Detroit lost a great champion of law enforcement and citizen-led oversight with the sudden passing of Police Commissioner At-Large Derrick Sanders.





Board of Police Commissioners



Detroit Board of Police Commissioners

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It's GO time™ **DETROIT**

Welcome
National Association for Civilian
Oversight of Law Enforcement
Annual Conference

September 22-26, 2019
Detroit Marriott at the
Renaissance Center

IT'S TIME TO EXPERIENCE
ALL THERE IS TO SEE AND
DO IN THE D

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