

**From:** Heidi Merchen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 17, 2024 1:54 PM  
**To:** PAAC <[paac@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:paac@cityofsanrafael.org)>  
**Subject:** Public Comment PAAC 07/17/2024

Hello PAAC members,

Hope you and your families are well. As I cannot attend tonight, I am submitting my public comments via email.

I want to ground us in the care for and commitment to our community that brought you to serve and remind you that every organization has room for improvements. Please look at police culture. Think about how it allows for and even supports brutal treatment. Think about your role in helping shift from a culture that is often rooted in violence and dehumanization to a culture that is rooted in justice and full potential for everyone.

You heard in April that AB 481 was passed to allow community input into PDs use of military equipment, what you did not hear was the why. The why for requiring community input and oversight is because military equipment is more frequently deployed in low income, black and brown communities meaning the risks and impacts of police militarization are experienced more acutely in marginalized communities. When members of this committee suggest that instead of sharing military equipment SRPD should have their own, I wonder if you have read the research that shows police departments with military grade equipment are:

- more likely to use violence
- that SWAT deployments disproportionately impact black, and Latino households
- that drones can easily be misused for surveillance to exploit and discriminate against people, putting all of our privacy at risk

Please request SRPD include RIPA data when they give you a report of military equipment uses-this will give you a look into culture and possible places for you to help support positive change.

Please pay close attention to the reasons for using military equipment and ask yourselves, is the PD highlighting the protection of our entire community or are they highlighting the protection of members of their department. Because both need to be considered. The PD is well versed in advocating for their needs and making a case for themselves from their perspective, your role is to uplift the community's needs and make sure they are also heard, respected and addressed.

In the May meeting you were asked to approve a training plan that isn't significantly different from the plans the PD had before the PAAC. The PAAC was formed for advising and increased accountability due to broken trust and a clear indication of a deep-rooted police culture that if changed allows for both increased community safety and increased officer safety. We learned in April that POST sets the training standards and SRPD can do more.

SRPD is holding up the 8-hour training they did on tools for tolerance for law enforcement as Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) training and stated that it touched on ALL ethnicities to try to be inclusive. This is a statement from the PD representing lack of understanding. Why did they pick the one-day training rather than the four-day training? And more importantly how did they measure the impact of the training?

You were given a laundry list of trainings as check boxes without any explanation of how learning, effectiveness and impact are measured. Is anyone doing anything differently after attending these training sessions and if so, what? Please ask for key performance indicators for training. There aren't any included in the report that you accepted.

Police culture is deeply rooted in training. Brandon Nail and Oscar O'Con were Field Training Officers (FTOs), and Daisy Mazariegos was recently out of the field training program when they brutally beat and seriously injured Julio Jimenez Lopez-yet we have still not heard what has changed in the training program since then and what SRPD is doing to address police culture. Why? Why haven't we heard anything? It is normal to think it is because SRPD hasn't done anything. Please use your positions on the PAAC to ask. Ask for a report of how they are doing things differently and how they are measuring that the changes are leading to an improvement in the way SRPD treats the community.

There is no science to support the trickle-down training model that was described-that the leadership team meets once a month and that training "is incorporated into everyone's leadership style and passed on to staff. That leadership trains their subordinates."

Tonight, you are being asked again to approve a report that has little substance. I was surprised to find the topic of Domestic Violence rather than Use of Force on the agenda which I understood would be covered in July after the discussion at the May meeting as it is so deeply tied to the reasons this PAAC was created. I was also expecting to see a report out on complaints received as Chair Kamena requested at the last meeting. Please also ask for Racial Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) Data. It is a tool for all of you to review for trends to better support the community. This DV report doesn't include the policy purpose statement from SRPD manual: "The purpose of this policy is to

provide the guidelines necessary to deter, prevent and reduce domestic violence through vigorous enforcement and to address domestic violence as a serious crime against society." While the 2-page report you are asked to accept doesn't address deterring, preventing or reducing domestic violence and vigorous enforcement is the only tool mentioned here. I am again left wondering, how does accepting this report link to better services for our community? How are you all seeing the work you have done this year as connected to the communities you live in? What's most important to your neighbors when it comes to how they feel about SRPD? What could we all do to open up new possibilities for everyone to feel safe and supported in our community?

PAAC members, it is your responsibility to request meaningful change for our community, please don't just let the same old status quo plans pass because then we will have the same old status quo results. Thank you.

*Heidi*  
*she/her/hers* [\(why this matters\)](#)

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time." -Angela Davis 🏛️