

OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT POLICE MONITOR  
**CITY OF NEW ORLEANS**



SUSAN HUTSON  
INDEPENDENT POLICE MONITOR

November 12, 2020

Superintendent Shaun Ferguson  
New Orleans Police Department  
715 S. Broad Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New Orleans, LA 70119

RE: Facial Recognition Audit

Dear Superintendent Ferguson:

The Office of the Independent Police Monitor (OIPM) is an independent branch of city government responsible for providing oversight to the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD). The OIPM provides transparent assessments of the NOPD's work, progress, and obstacles. Based on those assessments, the OIPM provides the NOPD with detailed recommendations on policy, practice, and how to become or remain compliant with the Federal Consent Decree. Most importantly, at the center of the OIPM's work is the community. The OIPM is responsible for issuing public reports to the people of New Orleans and the NOPD regarding the state of policing in New Orleans.

Our office has previously written letters<sup>1,2</sup> to the City of New Orleans, communicating concerns the community has raised regarding the use of surveillance technologies, especially by NOPD. Furthermore, we have also noted that many surveillance technologies, like facial recognition have been shown to misidentify people with dark skin at higher rates<sup>3</sup> and can introduce new forms of racial bias into policing.

Our community has requested that OIPM be involved in the oversight of NOPD's usage of facial recognition technologies and the policies surrounding its usage. Therefore, OIPM would like to work with NOPD to conduct a thorough, timely and transparent audit of the use of surveillance technology by NOPD.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nolaipm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Letter-Regarding-Citywide-Public-Safety-Improvements-Plan-Proposed-by-Mayor-Landrieu.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://nolaipm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/OIPM-RTCC-Letter-3-1-19.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nist.gov/speech-testimony/facial-recognition-technology-frt-0>



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The OIPM requests that you respond by close of business on Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, with the following information.

Requested information:

- Name (including, manufacturer, model number, year, relevant package information, etc) of all systems NOPD has used or had access to within the past two years that is capable of facial recognition.
- The date each system capable of facial recognition was first enabled and the date it was first used.
- Data sharing agreements, memorandums of understanding, or other signed documents with any relevant bodies connected to the usage of facial recognition tools.
- Invoices for any expenses related to facial recognition systems.
- Written policies or procedures regarding NOPD's usage of facial recognition tools.
- Full access logs for the past year of any systems capable of facial recognition.

After the information is received, we would like to review it and schedule a planning meeting with relevant NOPD and OIPM personnel to discuss audit details.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Susan Hutson  
Independent Police Monitor

