




AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Dr. Reginald D. Freeman
Chief, Oakland Fire Dept.

SUBJECT: Informational Report on the
Implementation of the MACRO
Program

DATE: July 7, 2022

City Administrator Approval 

Date: Jul 7, 2022

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends The Oakland City Council Receive An Informational Report On The Progress Of The Implementation Of The Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) Program, Including The Timeline For When MACRO Crews Will Begin To Respond To Non-Violent 911 Calls.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 2, 2021, City Council directed the City Administrator to explore options for expediting the implementation of the 18-month pilot phase of the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) program.

This informational report provides City Council and the public with an update on the implementation of the MACRO program with specific details pertaining to the timeline for when MACRO crews will begin to respond to non-violent 911 calls.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In 2019, City Council allocated \$40,000 to research the feasibility of launching a program in Oakland modeled after an innovative community-based public safety system in Eugene Oregon, known as CAHOOTS. The Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) model operating is widely recognized as a non-law enforcement mobile crisis intervention that has seen significant success since its inception. The program launched 31 years ago, provides mental health first response for crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and addiction.

With the support of the Urban Strategies Council (USC), several stakeholder groups and community members, including people in Oakland's most impacted communities, engaged in nine months of analysis to determine the best pathway forward. This work resulted in a recommendation for a pilot program in two geographic areas of Oakland.

City Council
July 19, 2022

The City Administration and Fire Department personnel have provided a series of updates to the Public Safety Committee and the City Council on the status of the program's implementation.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Progress on the Implementation of MACRO

Much progress has been made on the implementation of MACRO program. Since April 16, 2022, MACRO has operated responder crews in the two designated pilot impact zones during a day shift (0700-1500) seven days a week. MACRO responders have been self-dispatching "on-view", meaning that MACRO responders identify an incident and intervene before it becomes a call into emergency services (police, fire, or medical). To date MACRO has made over 2,000 total contacts, and a breakdown of the life-time incident types is in the table below:

Incident Type	Incidents	%
Wellness Check	1530	73%
Sleeper Check	433	21%
Behavioral Health Concern	61	3%
Panhandling	24	1%
Indecent Exposure	3	0%
Other	54	3%

Incident Definitions

- **Wellness Check:** MACRO Responders identify people at risk of harm and seek to help the person minimize or decrease any safeguarding risks. Crews ascertain whether the individual is alive, breathing, and conscious but are limited to providing basic medical care, calling for medical transport, and offering information on organizations that can provide further services.
- **Sleeper:** A Wellness Check performed with an individual who is first identified as sleeping.
- **Behavioral Health Concern:** A person struggling with their behavioral health brought on by stress, addiction, depression, anxiety, relationship problems, grief, mood disorders, or other psychological concerns that interfere with their behaviors or cognition.
- **Indecent Exposure:** The exposure of one's body, especially the genitals or a woman's breasts, in a public place or in a way considered offensive.
- **Panhandling:** Any solicitation made in person upon any street or public place in which a person requests an immediate donation from another person. The term does not include passively standing or sitting.

Expansion of MACRO Coverage

MACRO's progress over the first three months has been largely to establish a presence in the community, gain familiarity with the impact zones and build relationships with individuals MACRO crews will serve. All while refining ways of working with various service referral partners, Fire Communications, and other emergency services. With 18 Responders on staff, MACRO has the opportunity in expand the service area and hours of operation to move closer to the operational goals of the pilot: 16 hours of daily coverage across the impact zones.

Currently, MACRO has capacity to deploy three teams of Responders during a "day" shift [0700-1500]. With our staff size we can add a fourth team and expand our coverage area to include Central Oakland [14th Ave – High St, below Hwy 580], including the Laurel and Dimond District, respectively. Will expand its hours of operations to include a modified swing shift that will provide coverage from [0700-1900] and the expansion into Central Oakland on Monday July 18, 2022.

Timeline for when MACRO Crews will begin to respond to non-violent 911 calls (Receive dispatches from the 911 system.)

MACRO leadership has worked closely with Fire & Police Communications to determine the appropriate timeline for transferring non-criminal, non-violent and non-emergent 911 calls to Fire Communications for MACRO. The plan is to begin the transfer of certain categories of 911 calls to Fire Communications for MACRO dispatch by Monday July 18, 2022.

Discussion between MACRO, the Fire Communications and Police Communications are ongoing. MACRO and Fire Communications have been meeting regularly since April 2020 to address several points of clarification for Dispatchers within the department. These include policies and procedures for receiving calls from Police Communications and dispatching a MACRO unit to respond, as well as overall communications between Fire Communications and MACRO units.

To move forward staff have agreed that all MACRO Responders will attend a training led by Fire Communications to establish communications norms for receiving dispatch instructions. MACRO leadership has met with dispatchers from Police Communications to discuss the programs current progress, and the type of calls determinants that would qualify for a MACRO response. Fire Communications is developing a script for the Dispatchers to aid them in screening calls that are sent over from Police Communications. Fire & Police Communications management will decide the exact technical processes of transferring potential MACRO calls, with the goal of the keeping things aligned with the current process for transferring medical and fire calls.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The Fire Department has developed an email distribution list of approximately 80 recipients who have opted into receiving email updates on the status and impact of the pilot. Anyone is eligible to be added to that list, as it was created out of persons who had made direct inquiries to the department or who have expressed a desire to support and advise on the process. OFD is also

using social media, earned media (such as print news, TV, radio) and the City website to promote its efforts.

COORDINATION

The Fire Department is in ongoing coordination with the City Administration, various city departments, advisory board members, local, state, and federal officials, and the city's lobbyist as it strives to meet the goals of this pilot program.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: There are no economic impacts related to this report.

Environmental: There are no environmental impacts related to this report.

Race & Equity: The ongoing coordination to implement the MACRO program will directly support the following objectives related to race and equity:

- Decreased negative outcomes from law enforcement response to nonviolent 911 emergency calls, especially among Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC);
- Decreased criminal justice system involvement for people in crisis, especially among Black, Indigenous, People of Color;
- Increased connections to community-based services for people in crisis, especially among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color;
- Redirection of MACRO-identified 911 calls to an alternative community response system;
- Reduced Oakland Police expenses and call volume related to 911 nonviolent calls involving people with mental health, substance use, and unsheltered individuals.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff recommends the Oakland City Council accept this informational report on the progress of the implementation of the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) program, which includes the timeline for when MACRO crews will begin to respond to non-violent 911 Calls.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Vena Sword Ratliff, Division Manager,
Medical Services Division, Oakland Fire Department at 510-238-3736.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reginald D. Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Dr. Reginald D. Freeman
Chief, Oakland Fire Dept.