



CITY OF OAKLAND

## *INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM*

**TO:** Jestin D. Johnson  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Dr. Carlo Beckman  
Project Manager II  
Oakland Police Department

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Response to the  
Alameda County Grand Jury Report  
on the Oakland Police Department's Information Technology Unit

**DATE:** September 26, 2024

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Receive a Report From The City Administrator Regarding Ways to address Oakland's Missed Opportunities with Technology And Authorize The Council President To Respond On The City Council's Behalf To The 2023-2024 Alameda County Civil Grand Jury Report Findings Titled "Oakland Police Department Missed Opportunities with Technology"**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On June 24, 2024, the Alameda County Grand Jury published its 2023-2024 Final Report, which had a section titled Oakland Police Department: Missed Opportunities with Technology.

In the 2024 report, the Grand Jury made eight findings and six recommendations. The findings focused on the Oakland Police Department's (OPD) lack of a technology strategic plan, suggested that OPD does not have written procedures and does not respond to all ShotSpotter alerts, will be unable to respond to all automated license plate reader alerts (ALPR), that the lack of written procedures for the ShotSpotter and ALPR technology will make it difficult to improve the effectiveness and identify bias in response to alerts, that OPD's Information Technology Unit (ITU) is understaffed which hinders the ability to support current and future technologies, that the ITU does not fully utilize the City of Oakland's Information Technology Department's (ITD) tools, and that OPD does not utilize voice form technology in report writing.

To better understand the City of Oakland's technology landscape and how it is maintained, it should be pointed out that the City of Oakland's centralized Information Technology Department (ITD) provides Citywide information technology services, including computers, servers, network and data center infrastructure, security, and management of enterprise information systems, applications, and databases including those that support OPD and public safety, such as Computer-Aided Dispatch. ITD has an Infrastructure and Operations Division that includes a team dedicated to supporting public safety information technology, supporting 911 communications, mobile data terminals, and other infrastructure and

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application technologies. In 2022, ITD developed a strategic plan that includes projects and improvements for OPD and public safety. OPD ITU, on the other hand, is not part of ITD and supports operational technology that is not directly supported by ITD such as ShotSpotter, ALPR, etc. OPD ITU and Citywide ITD collaborate closely together to deliver technology services and support to OPD.

The recommendations focused on OPD ITU developing a strategic technology plan, developing a written policy for selecting and responding to ShotSpotter and ALPR alerts, replacing the sworn officers with permanent non-sworn technology-trained IT professionals, utilizing ITD's tools, and creating a pilot program to implement voice technology for reports.

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) appreciates the opportunity to address the grand jury's findings and recommendations concerning our technological infrastructure and operational practices. The Oakland Police Department is committed to leveraging technology to enhance public safety, streamline operations, and uphold the highest standards of transparency and accountability. Our responses aim to address the specific findings and recommendations and outline our planned actions in response to the grand jury's recommendations. Through continuous improvement and strategic investments in technology, we strive to better serve the Oakland community and ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of our law enforcement operations.

## **RESPONSE TO FINDINGS**

**Grand Jury Finding 24-1:** *The Oakland Police Department does not have a long-term strategic plan for implementation and use of technology.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

City Explanation: The Oakland Police Department's Information Technology Unit (OPD ITU) does not currently have a strategic plan specific to the implementation and use of technology. OPD ITU has committed to creating a Strategic Plan within the next 12-18 months. This will allow OPD time to receive and analyze the recommendations from the OIG Staffing Study and incorporate those findings into the OPD ITU Strategic Plan. The Grand Jury should note that any strategic plan will inevitably lead to a budget request to acquire the technology identified as being necessary to the operational health of the department. OPD ITU will work closely with centralized ITD to develop a plan that complements and strengthens the ITD Strategic Plan.

**Grand Jury Finding 24-2:** *The Oakland Police Department does not respond to all ShotSpotter verified alerts.*

City Response: The City wholly disagrees with the finding.

City Explanation: The 911 Communications Management Team has confirmed that all verified ShotSpotter alerts are automatically assigned as Priority-1 calls for service by OPD's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. This was implemented at least as of 2021.

Priority-1 calls for service are the highest priority call level (other examples of Priority-1 calls are, robberies, shootings, kidnappings, etc.). All Priority-1 calls require that an officer respond, regardless of the length of time that the call has been standing. There are, at times, delays in

responding to Priority-1 calls due to limited resources and call volume. The priority is always the sanctity of life when triaging Priority-1 calls.

There are also many instances where field units will self-dispatch upon becoming aware of an alert via the ShotSpotter Application on their vehicle computer or Department issued smartphone. If evidence is located related to a ShotSpotter alert, the evidence is recovered, a canvass for video is conducted, and a report is completed.

In summary, OPD treats all verified ShotSpotter incidents as Priority-1 calls for service and, as such, responds to all verified alerts.

**Grand Jury Finding 24-3:** *The Oakland Police Department will be unable to respond to an estimated 100+ license plate reader alerts per day.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

City Explanation: The Department recognizes that the ALPR/Flock system, a system of fixed location cameras that captures the license plate of passing vehicles, provides a large amount of information related to crimes such as vehicle theft and stolen vehicle plate information (which represents most alerts on the ALPR/Flock System). While Flock is beneficial for stolen vehicle investigations, that is not the primary intent of the use of the technology by the Oakland Police Department. Where Flock is invaluable is in the identification of vehicles associated with burglaries (auto, residential, commercial), robberies, shootings, homicides, and other violent crimes. These types of crimes often involve stolen vehicles or stolen or switched license plates however, targeting the crime of auto theft is not as effective as focusing efforts on those specific subjects involved in violent/disruptive crimes, which will help OPD prioritize our response to alerts.

The Flock system allows us to filter alerts based on felony vehicles and with that filter, the ALPR/Flock alerts being received will be significantly more manageable and make precision enforcement possible by utilizing a variety of specialized Department resources, and when necessary, Patrol. It is also important to note that enforcement response to alerts is not the only use case of the ALPR/Flock system, as the system provides evidentiary information related to crimes after they occur, allowing investigators to later identify and prosecute subjects involved in violent or disruptive criminal activity.

Additionally, the Department has already implemented an Operations Center within the Gun Crime Intelligence Center that maintains and manages ALPR/Flock Alerts within the Department and coordinates with the Criminal Investigation Division (CID), Ceasefire Section, and Special Resource Sections (SRS), to respond to priority alerts related to violent crime. The Operations Center has worked with OPD ITU, and CID, during the entire period of ALPR/Flock system integration into Field Operations.

While the department has an overall policy as it relates to ALPR/Flock, DGO I-12, the Operations Center is developing a formalized Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as integration efforts continue. The SOP will be completed by June 2025.

**Grand Jury Finding 23-04:** *The Oakland Police Department does not have written procedures for responding to ShotSpotter and license plate reader alerts.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

City Explanation: OPD does not currently have written procedures for responding to ShotSpotter or ALPR/Flock alerts

While OPD does not have a written procedure for responding to ShotSpotter alerts, all verified ShotSpotter alerts are automatically assigned as Priority-1 calls for service by OPD's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. In addition, the Department has had a ShotSpotter Policy (Department General Order I-20 – Gunshot Detection System) since September 29th, 2020. The Department has also developed a revised version of DGO I-20 which has a more extensive direction (related to data sharing with Alameda County District Attorney's Office and Oakland Housing Authority Police), which addressed concerns raised by the Oakland Privacy Advisory Commission, and further explains the benefits of the technology.

While the department has an overall policy as it relates to ALPR, DGO I-12, the policy does not contain procedures regarding prioritizing OPD response to ALPR alerts associated with certain crime categories (set forth above).

The Operations Center is developing a formalized Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) setting forth the priorities and how to filter ALPR alerts and document how we prioritize and respond to ShotSpotter alerts as integration efforts continue. The SOP will be completed by June 2025.

**Grand Jury Finding 24-5:** *Without written procedures, the Oakland Police Department is unable to evaluate how to improve the effectiveness and identify bias in response to alerts.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

City Explanation: The Oakland Police Department agrees with the need for written procedures as it relates to ALPR/Flock and ShotSpotter to help with evaluating the effectiveness of these products and identify any potential bias with the system. Standard Operating Procedures for both ALPR/Flock and ShotSpotter will be completed by June 2025.

OPD would also like to note that response times to ShotSpotter alerts will vary based on the call volume in the area where the ShotSpotter alert was generated. This means that data related to the response to ShotSpotter alerts will be skewed based on area, as not all areas (West Oakland and North Oakland compared to East Oakland) experience the same level of priority call volume, and also do not experience the same amount of ShotSpotter alerts. This means it is difficult to evaluate effectiveness or identify bias in OPD's response to ShotSpotter alerts based solely on response times to ShotSpotter alerts.

However, the Department has taken steps to eliminate the chance for bias in responses to ShotSpotter incidents by automatically making all verified ShotSpotter alerts Priority-1 calls for service through our CAD system.

ALPR/Flock works similarly, as the ALPR alerts have historically been, and are currently trending to be, higher in areas of East Oakland than they are in most of West Oakland. As some alerts require further investigative follow-up, versus some that would require immediate

enforcement, measuring response times or response mapping would be misleading and not take into account the numerous factors involved in the type and method of appropriate response.

The locations of the cameras were shared with Oakland Privacy Advisory Commission, based on historical crime data and ingress/egress points of busy roads, and are distributed throughout the city. OPD did this mitigate or identify any potential unconscious/implicit bias during the process.

Finally, it should be noted that both systems process their respective data without analyzing factors like race, gender identity, ethnicity, etc., when providing alerts. The alerts are generated entirely based on the presence of gunfire or crime-related vehicle/plate information.

**Grand Jury Finding 24-6:** *The Oakland Police Department's IT Unit is understaffed, reducing its ability to support existing technologies and implement long-term plans.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

City Explanation: The OPD ITU has six employees supporting OPD operational technology: a Project Manager II who provides leadership, two officers who support the project manager in various technology initiatives (with one officer being temporarily assigned), a Police Services Technician II responsible for desktop support and user administration across multiple technologies, a Business Analyst II focusing on Stop Data Submission and special data projects, and another Business Analyst II exclusively dedicated to OPD's internal accountability tool (Vision).

Considering the numerous projects the department is set to execute in the forthcoming months—such as upgrading the Records Management System and implementing a new asset management system—it is imperative to augment the team with at least two (2) additional Information System Specialists II and one (1) Police Services Manager I or Project Manager I to oversee daily operations. OPD ITU will work with ITD to determine the best organizational deployment for these additional resources.

These additional resources will allow the Project Manager II to devote attention to strategic planning and long-term objectives, thereby enhancing the department's capacity to effectively manage and implement these critical technological advancements.

**Grand Jury Finding 24-7:** *The Oakland Police Department's IT Unit does not fully utilize Oakland's city IT department productivity tools including, but not limited to, trouble ticketing system, monitoring services and inventory systems.*

City Response: The City agrees with this finding.

City Explanation: The OPD ITU does not currently use any of the tools identified in this finding. However, OPD is currently in the procurement stage for the inventory (asset management) system used by the ITD radio shop, which will be used for several areas at OPD, including the tracking of operational technology equipment such as devices and sensors, and Militarized Equipment. OPD ITU is working together with ITD to evaluate the ITD tools mentioned by the Grand Jury.

**Grand Jury Finding 24-8:** *The Oakland Police Department does not utilize voice form technology to assist officers when writing reports.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

City Explanation: The OPD ITU does not have voice form technology to assist officers in report writing. The OPD ITU will conduct a review of vendors offering this service and evaluate the potential adoption of this technology within the department.

### **RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 24-1:** *The Oakland Police Department must develop a written policy for selecting and responding to ALPR alerts.*

City Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

City Explanation: The OPD ITU has created a draft high-level overview of the requirements for creating and implementing a strategic plan. However, additional staffing or outside consulting will be necessary to fully execute this strategic plan. If this plan is created internally, specific duties will need to be reassigned from the current Project Manager II to allow them to facilitate the creation and implementation of the strategic plan. OPD ITU anticipates completing the strategic plan by June 2026.

**Recommendation 24-2:** *The Oakland Police Department must develop a written policy for selecting and responding to ShotSpotter alerts.*

City Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

City Explanation: While OPD's CAD system automatically assigns verified ShotSpotter alerts a Priority-1 call status, OPD will create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to document how we prioritize and respond to ShotSpotter alerts by June 2025.

**Recommendation 24-3:** *The Oakland Police Department must develop a written policy for selecting and responding to ALPR alerts.*

City Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

City Explanation: The recommendation will be implemented by June 2025.

**Recommendation 24-4:** *The Oakland Police Department's IT Unit should replace rotating sworn officers with permanent non-sworn technology-trained IT professionals.*

City Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is unwarranted.

City Explanation: Rather than replacing the two officers currently assigned to the OPD ITU, the department should augment the team by adding two new Information System Specialist IIs and a Project Manager to oversee day-to-day operations. It is critical that the OPD ITU have officers

on staff who have firsthand field experience and knowledge of police practices to provide guidance on the implementation of police technology and continued support after the technology is implemented. This guidance and continued support were invaluable during the implementation and deployment of the Computer Aided Dispatch upgrade which was completed on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. OPD ITU will work with ITD to determine the best organizational deployment for these additional resources.

**Recommendation 24-05:** *The Oakland Police Department's IT Unit should utilize the city of Oakland's IT tools including but not limited to help desk and trouble ticketing.*

City Response: The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

City Explanation: OPD ITU will work closely with ITD to review the tools used by Oakland's Information Technology Department and assess their potential adoption based on suitability for the OPD ITU. All evaluations will be completed by December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Recommendation 24-6:** *The Oakland Police Department should set up a pilot program to implement voice forms for officer-required reports.*


City Response: The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

City Explanation: OPD ITU agrees to investigate the feasibility of incorporating voice form technology through a comprehensive evaluation of available software. This will require identifying and meeting with potential vendors who could provide this service.

The most likely candidate for implementing this technology is the Records Management System (RMS), a project which is expected to begin by January 2025. Given that the implementation will take approximately 18 months after project initiation, this constitutes a long-term project. OPD ITU will evaluate if there are any other alternatives by December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Dr. Carlo M. Beckman, Project Manager II @ 510-238-2068.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Carlo Beckman (Oct 30, 2024 10:27 PDT)

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Oakland Police Department

City Council  
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