

# CITY OF OAKLAND



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**Date:** March 8, 2021  
**To:** Members of City Council and Members of the Public  
**From:** Vice Mayor Kaplan  
**Re:** **Resolution Amending Resolution No. 88174 C.M.S., Which Adopted The Fiscal Year 2020-21 Mid-Cycle Budget Adjustments, To:**

- 1. Delete A 1.00 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Public Information Officer I Position In The Oakland Police Department (OPD) Public Information Office And Add A 1.00 FTE Public Information Officer I Position In The OPD Missing Person Unit;**
- 2. Delete A 1.00 FTE Police Services Technician II Position In The OPD Special Victims Section And Add A 1.00 FTE Police Services Technician II Position In The OPD Missing Person Unit; And**
- 3. Delete A 1.00 FTE Police Evidence Technician Position In The OPD Criminal Investigation Division And Add A 1.00 FTE Police Evidence Technician Position In The OPD Missing Person Unit.**

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Dear Colleagues on the City Council and Members of the Public,

As you have heard from members of the public, including in public comments at our meetings, there have been problems with response to Missing Persons cases, and inadequate resources in the missing persons unit. As a result, families who have had loved ones go missing have received slow and inadequate response, leading to additional suffering and reducing the ability to find missing persons and respond to family members.

This action, which is provided as revised per City Attorney guidance, re-allocates positions to support the OPD Missing Persons Unit. Those positions are: one (1) Public Information Officer I; one (1) Police Services Technician II; and, one (1) Police Evidence Technician. These positions will be critical in ensuring that missing persons cases receive proper follow up and investigation, and that families of the missing person can receive timely responses from MPU, and will give the Missing Persons Unit the resources to do public outreach and media outreach to get assistance in finding missing persons.

There is a public outcry to solve cold cases, in particular missing persons cases that are still pending in the City of Oakland. The families are left in distress and upheaval from the loss of a loved one with insufficient assistance made available to them.

Public Safety Committee  
March 8, 2021  
File # 21-0012

The MPU is responsible for investigating missing and abducted persons cases. Currently, the MPU is staffed with two investigators - one professional staff investigator, and one sergeant. The Sergeant is also responsible for supervising the Juvenile Intake Unit. These conditions and responsibilities confirm the MPU, which coordinates resources for investigations of missing persons, does not have the resources devoted for an adequate response.

There are multiple cases of OPD and the MPU not fully following up on missing persons cases, including: not taking custody of vehicles with its contents for forensic processing by a properly trained Crime Scene Technician; relocating the vehicle to an OPD secured lot to bag-up the property inside vehicle for evidence to be placed into evidence; and, not using social media bulletins and media advisories. In fact, the OPD Media Relations Office utilized the department's social media platform to share twenty-nine (29) posts in a week about the protests, but no media post was created for missing person cases. Furthermore, in one particular instance, the MPU unit did not even make contact with the missing person's family during the first two weeks of the investigation. Families were also not able to contact the MPU, as they were not able to leave voicemail messages due to the voicemail inbox being full.

Our team spoke with families who had loved ones go missing to learn about their experiences with the OPD MPU and community stakeholders. There is significant community interest since there is a tremendous backlog in cases facing the MPU. Families want their loved ones found alive or otherwise accounted for. There have been multiple speakers who have expressed concern about the MPU during Public Comment during Council Meetings, citing long standing open cases, cases that are apparently not investigated due to backlog and the lack of staffing of the MPU.

Thus, we submit this item, to redirect resources to provide for improvements to the Missing Persons Unit.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Kaplan", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Vice Mayor Rebecca Kaplan  
Oakland City Councilmember At Large