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Oakland City Council Passes Budget that begins to Replace Police in Low-Level 911 Calls

The Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) was first proposed in June 2019 at a Police Commission hearing about policing in the unhoused community at St. Columba Church and culminated with the pilot design developed by over 40 community groups in a report by the **Urban Strategies Council** in June 2020. Yesterday, the Oakland City Council passed a two-year budget that provides over \$6 million for a MACRO pilot.

“MACRO is the ONLY named program that offloads a function of OPD to a civilian response in the 2021-2023 budget and was supported unanimously by the Council and the Mayor as well as community groups as diverse as APTP and the Oakland Chamber of Commerce!” said Cathy Leonard, spokesperson and steering committee member of the **Coalition for Police Accountability**.

Despite many new alternative response programs across the US, MACRO most closely follows the successful 30-year program in Eugene, OR, CAHOOTS. Under the MACRO model designed by and for Oaklanders, responders are well-trained community members who use de-escalation, trauma-informed care, and problem-solving to help residents find the best outcomes for situations.

Cathay Leonard explained the next steps. “Now, we must insist the community is involved in developing the pilot in their neighborhoods and that a representative engagement and oversight structure is in place for the ongoing input from the community.”

The city administration has not yet agreed to several elements that are essential to the model: excellent pay for the new community emergency responder jobs and prioritizing the hiring of BIPOC residents from communities impacted by health, environmental and economic disparities.

Leonard continued “supporting the success of MACRO is broadly felt and we’ll continue to ask Oaklanders to make sure the city follows the model for a successful and transformative program.”

The **Coalition for Police Accountability** was started by community groups after decades of police accountability struggles in order to bring independent oversight to the Oakland Police Department. CPA’s ballot measures, LL (2016) and S1 (2020), created and strengthened the Oakland Police Commission with over 80% voter support each time. CPA continues to lead the way in transforming policing with the community-led alternative to police.