



CITY OF CLEVELAND
Mayor Frank G. Jackson

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

City of Cleveland takes New Direction on Missing Persons and Sex Crime Investigations

Mayor Jackson to Implement All Twenty Six Recommendations

CLEVELAND – Today marks a new era for how missing persons and sex crimes are investigated in the City of Cleveland. Mayor Frank G. Jackson along with Law Director Robert Triozzi; Public Safety Director Martin L. Flask; Police Chief Michael McGrath; Community Relations Director Blaine Griffin and members of the Special Commission on Missing Persons and Sex Crime Investigations – City of Cleveland Assistant Director of Public Safety, Mary Bounds ([Bio](#)); Executive Director of the Rape Crisis Center, Megan O’Bryan ([Bio](#)); and Attorney-at-Law with the firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP, Teresa Beasley ([Bio](#)) – announced recommendations that will ultimately help guide the city’s policies and procedures on how missing persons and sex crimes are investigated and handled.

“I want to thank the Commission for their hard work and these broad-reaching recommendations which provide a road map that will lead to improved public safety, increased accountability and better police-community relations by improving our entire system,” said Mayor Jackson. “The way forward is clear – we will provide our police officers, prosecutors and all first responders the tools and training to help them better handle these cases; and, we will continue to reach out to our community to help them understand the need to work with the police, especially in reporting sex crimes and missing persons. This comprehensive approach will ultimately lead us to a better, stronger, safer community.”

The Commission’s final report (click [here](#)) is a thorough review of the City of Cleveland’s policies, procedures and responses to missing persons and sex crime investigations. The twenty-six recommendations will create systemic change through accountability, operational changes, community relations and public awareness.

“We conducted our review from a holistic approach. We wanted to make substantive recommendations that would yield systemic change. The way we were able to achieve that was to facilitate community forums and focus groups, to interview city departments that have a role in these cases and physically visit the environments where victims interact with law enforcement,” said Commission Members. “Without the outstanding cooperation and input from the community and the city we would not have been able to create this roadmap that will help the city take this new direction.”

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The report identifies appropriate resources to improve the “first point of contact” experience for victims and their families, as well as additional training and operational support to help officers improve quality of service. A few report highlights include:

- Concentrating staff and resources in the Fusion Center to gather and review Missing Persons data from Cleveland and the five-county region, as well as become the main point of contact for the community in following up on Missing Persons cases;
- Updating the general police orders for both Missing Persons and Sex Crimes Investigations, including best practices from around the nation to become more victim and family-focused, specify investigative techniques and improve outcomes;
- Expanding the role of the City’s Prosecutor’s Office to increase current focus on special victims;
- Utilizing the Police Review Board and external agencies to review, audit and assess operational changes and provide feedback on quality assurance, community perception and caseload management; and,
- Implementing a comprehensive community education campaign to encourage the community to report crimes and missing persons, improve police-community relations and utilize the media to help raise awareness of missing persons.

As part of the accountability portion of the recommendations, Mayor Jackson will appoint an oversight committee of volunteers to monitor the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations.

In addition, the recommendations extend beyond the borders of City Hall. The Commission provided suggestions to the City’s external partners such as the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services, Ohio Attorney General’s Office, Cuyahoga County Sheriff’s Department, Cuyahoga County Chiefs of Police Association and the Fusion Center.