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**We passed a balanced budget. Check out the highlights.**

1 message

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Dear Friend,

On Monday, Oakland City Council [adopted a balanced two-year budget](#) that preserves critical services while investing in our future. We made tough decisions to close a historic \$360 million deficit, while also investing a record \$216 million in affordable housing, expanding community safety, avoiding layoffs, and creating a "vacancy strike force" to fill vacant, budgeted positions to deliver services.

I want to thank the hundreds of community members who shared feedback on our budget priorities, and the City employees who make our city run by delivering critical services. I also want to appreciate Mayor Sheng Thao for her partnership on this budget and my Council President's Budget Team — Councilmembers Carroll Fife, Kevin Jenkins, and Rebecca Kaplan. Our collective tenacity and resourcefulness helped to identify additional resources to deliver more services for our residents and businesses.

Thank you also to Oakland voters, who approved two important revenue measures last November that I am proud to have authored. Measure U is raising \$850 million for affordable housing, street improvements and paving, and upgrades to our parks, fire stations, libraries, and recreation centers. Measure T, a progressive corporate business tax, is raising about \$20 million annually to strengthen critical city services.



## Budget Highlights

This budget builds on the foundation of our last budget by advancing equity, fiscal responsibility and results, as well as investing in our future by creating more affordable housing and expanding community safety. The adopted balanced budget with the Council's amendments includes:

- **Affordable Housing & Homelessness Solutions** with \$216 million for the creation, acquisition and preservation of affordable housing, a Council-created Rapid Response Homeless Housing Acquisition Fund with \$8.8 million to more rapidly create housing for unhoused residents, and \$1 million a year for tenant legal services, especially important as the [COVID eviction moratorium expires July 15th](#).
- **Expanding Community Safety** by activating our public spaces, adding \$1 million a year for community ambassadors in our business corridors, hiring two civilian police investigators to solve crimes, and prioritizing filling vacant 911 dispatcher and MACRO crisis responder positions. The Council approved Mayor Thao's police staffing plan — setting the number of officers to realistically account for the actual time it takes to recruit, train and graduate new recruits.
- **Preventing Violence** by investing \$2.85 million more in violence prevention programs, including \$600,000 focused on sex trafficking, and funding 24/7 crisis response.
- **Supporting Our Economy** by continuing the small business Facade Improvement Program with \$200,000 and staffing for multilingual business assistance, increasing Cultural Affairs grants by \$300,000 each year, adding funding for the activation of Frank Ogawa Plaza and for staffing special events and cultural affairs.
- **Promoting Safe, Clean and Healthy Neighborhoods** by increasing funding for parks maintenance and facilities improvements, and adding more than \$10 million for traffic safety improvements.
- **Strengthening Fire Safety** by designating FEMA SAFER grant funds to reverse a proposed rolling Fire Station brown out, allowing the City to maintain fire and emergency service in all communities throughout the next two years.
- **Supporting Families** by expanding hours and services at Oakland's Head Start and Early Head Start program, supporting senior programs and Meals on Wheels with \$300,000 per year, adding \$70,000 per year for Feather River Camp, and supporting healthy food and food security with \$500,000 a year to SABA Grocers
- **Expanding Democracy** by laying the groundwork to implement Measure W/Democracy Dollars with necessary software, staff to conduct education and training, and discretionary funds to support the 2024 election
- **Reorganization Plan of City Departments** to streamline services will have quarterly reports including one to Council by March 31, 2024 in advance of a final decision next year during the midcycle budget process.

## District 2 Highlights

For District 2 specifically, some of the budget highlights include:

- **Activating parks and renovating recreation centers & a fire station:** The Capital Improvement Project Budget via Measure U is funding the renovation/expansion of the **Lincoln Recreation & Resilience Center**; a feasibility study to kick off the master planning for **San Antonio Park** and a future **Community Library and Resilience Center**; and the **renovation of Fire Station 4 in Central Oakland**. **Clinton Park** in Little Saigon is getting a boost of parks improvement funding from Measure Q (\$100k+). For **Lake Merritt**, we've allocated \$1 million per year in parking revenue for Lake Merritt to advance equity and inclusion, including supporting the Lake Merritt Freedom Market and other activities/events (\$200k+), as well as park improvements (\$150k) and expanding the park ambassadors program (\$150K).



- **Traffic safety:** Each Councilmember will have \$100,000 for discretionary traffic calming projects. In San Antonio, we will make the traffic diverters along E 15th Street permanent to help address violence and sex trafficking. Around Lake Merritt, we're allocating \$100K per year for traffic calming from parking revenue. In addition, we set aside \$770k for citywide traffic safety & violence prevention to help address issues such as side shows.
- **Supporting our economy and business community:** To continue supporting businesses and growing our economy, we've included \$1 million a year city-wide for Community Ambassadors in commercial corridors, including those in District 2. And, at our special Council meeting on June 28th, we approved the new [Activate Oakland initiative](#) with a grant of \$434,000 to revitalize downtown and neighborhood commercial corridors by activating public spaces, incubating events, and promoting public safety awareness. The event program will offer sponsorships of \$1,000 to \$10,000 and will be administered by Visit Oakland. In addition to supporting areas in District 2 that have business districts/associations such as Grand Lake, Chinatown, Jack London and Little Saigon, we also hope to support neighborhoods like Eastlake, where local businesses such as those along lower Park Blvd. need support.

## Community Appreciations

Huge appreciations to Oakland's community based organizations, unions, businesses, leaders, residents and city workers who have been doing the important and necessary work of organizing to show up and participate in our budget process over these last six months, in addition to the important work they carry out every day to serve our people. Your participation and engagement in this process has made it all the more possible for us to advance a budget that prioritizes, amidst a historical deficit, the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities.

This means prioritizing what we know is working, and trusting the community's voice when they call for resources. As **Andrew Park, Executive Director of Trybe** said, "Please invest, not in just restoring the (violence prevention) funding, but MORE funding to DVP, because we see it working on the streets... I've never seen Oakland – the FLATLANDS – so unified, with the passion and purpose to disrupt violence, and to fight for a prosperity that can go for a lasting peace." This budget is our attempt at reaching that lasting peace, not just for our flatlands, but for all of Oakland, including our residents, small businesses and artists.

And by investing in and partnering with our small businesses, we know that community transformation is possible. "As a small business owner, business has had it's challenges in the past years, especially post pandemic, with higher inflation and the cut in EBT benefits; (SABA Grocers) Fresh 5 X has brought to my small store more sales, and more revenue means more taxes for the City of Oakland. I've also been able to hire extra people, as well as invest in equipment for store improvements... We've also decreased tobacco sales by 80%. This program is helping to build the community, and we really need it," said **Zach Taulib, Jalisco Market Owner**.





Our work would not be possible without the talent and dedication of our City of Oakland employees. **Heavy equipment mechanic Felipe Cuevas**, President of Oakland's SEIU 1021 chapter, representing more than 2,000 City workers, said "Even in the face of a challenging revenue shortfall, the Mayor's budget prioritizes important city services our members are proud to provide. The budget values our workers, and doesn't impose cruel cuts that hurt Oakland residents and put our members out of work. This budget and this budget process have been a welcome change, and I hope we can move forward with City workers and City officials continuing to work together in an inclusive, collaborative way so we can all do the best we can for all of Oakland's residents."

I am hopeful that the implementation of this budget will continue to support our efforts in **delivering effective, equitable services to Oaklanders rooted in Oakland's values of racial equity, fiscal responsibility, transparency and results.**

With Oakland Love,

*Nikki 7 Bas*

Nikki Fortunato Bas  
District 2 Councilmember + Council President

#LoveLife