

CITY OF OAKLAND

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that a special meeting of the City of Oakland Budget Advisory Commission (BAC) is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 6:00 PM**

The Budget Advisory Commission will be held in City Hall Hearing Room 2

Commission Members:

Mandela Bliss, Larisa Casillas, Mike Forbes, Ben Gould, Mike Petouhoff, Karen Roye, Will Bao, Rana Bader, Stephisha Ycoy-Walton, Vanessa Zamora, Danforth Dougherty, Susana Flores

City Representative(s):

Tiffany Kirk Patrick, Walter Silva, & Asti Jenkins – Finance Department

Meeting Agenda:

1. Welcome and Admin Matters - 15 min
 - a. Check in on goals set from start of year
 - b. Update on Remote meeting support from staff
 - c. Update on Commissioner Protocol Terms: 3 years not 2 under BAC enabling Ordinance
 - i. See policy at link below and forward any questions to Mike and Tiffany
 - ii. <https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/boards-amp-commissions/documents/bac/budget-advisory-commission-establishing-ordinance-13337-c.m.s.pdf>
 - d. Approval of Prior Minutes
2. FY27-29 Resident Survey- 30 min
 - b. Discussion of Potential East Bay Polling Institute and Potential attendance at Oct mtg
3. Report and vote on Public Safety, Economic Development and Violence Prevention Report and staff collaboration- 30 min
4. Trenching Policy Recommendation Report and Vote- 10 min
5. Open Forum - 10 min

You are invited to a Zoom webinar!

When: Sep 15, 2026, 06:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Monthly: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/tZYqc-yprjMiGN1aM05NFgTXes6X3Anylyzz/ics?icsToken=DPhQLCVau56VevppQAALAAAAELZdg2LsfuC79Kccstex5PjdCsz-](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/tZYqc-yprjMiGN1aM05NFgTXes6X3Anylyzz/ics?icsToken=DPhQLCVau56VevppQAALAAAAELZdg2LsfuC79Kccstex5PjdCsz-FbdPVn94QhpxC8ZZ6u67ewo1MYQKM6ivCoVeCu0_8XmIJjIBu7PjAwMDAwMg)

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Topic: Meeting of the City of Oakland Budget Advisory Commission (BAC)

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82745108829>

Phone one-tap:

+16699006833,,82745108829# US (San Jose)

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Join via audio:

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+1 719 359 4580 US

+1 253 205 0468 US

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

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+1 309 205 3325 US

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 360 209 5623 US

+1 386 347 5053 US

+1 507 473 4847 US

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Webinar ID: 827 4510 8829

International numbers available: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82745108829>

Budget Advisory Commission – DRAFT SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The results of the survey will be reported to the Mayor and City Council to inform their budget priorities. The Budget Advisory Commission (BAC) will share final results with the City Council no later than three weeks after the survey closes, or during the first week Council returns from Winter Break.

The Oakland [Budget Advisory Commission](#) (BAC) is a group of volunteer residents who propose budget policy and process recommendations to Oakland's city leadership. The BAC is required to survey Oakland residents on their budget priorities at the start of every two-year budget cycle.

The City's Budget Process

Oakland operates on a two-year budget cycle. In odd years (2023, 2025, 2027) the Mayor develops a budget for the City Council and Oakland residents. Each city council member shares their own budget priorities with constituents through district meetings and budget forums, while also holding budget-specific meetings for public input, and department reports.

Budget Timeline

- February - BAC presents its survey findings to City Leadership
- March - City Council has a budget retreat and budget priorities are developed
- April - Five-year forecast is presented to the City Council's Finance Committee
- May - Mayor releases their proposed two-year budget (2027-2029) and City Council hosts budget forums. *This is a great opportunity for residents to become involved, share their own priorities with the City Council.*
- June - City Council develops alternative budget proposals. Residents give input on alternative budget proposals by attending meetings at City Hall, via Zoom, or in writing. The final budget is adopted by June 30.
- July 1 - New fiscal year begins.

Budget Structural Deficit

The city has a structural budget deficit. A structural deficit happens when a city's ongoing costs grow faster than its ongoing revenue. Unlike a one-time budget gap caused by an emergency or economic downturn, a structural deficit doesn't fix itself over time. The gap will continue to grow without action, such as spending cuts, new revenue, or both.

TELL US ABOUT YOU

1. Are you a resident of the city of Oakland? *Required question; if No, end survey*
2. Generally speaking, how would you rate Oakland as a place to live?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor
3. Do you approve or disapprove of the overall job being done by Oakland City government in providing services to the people who live here?
 - a. Approve
 - b. Disapprove
4. Did you take this survey last year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. How did you hear about the survey last year?
 - a. My council member
 - b. Member of the BAC
 - c. A community organization
 - d. Other
 - e. Don't remember
6. How did you hear about the survey?
 - a. My council member
 - b. Member of the BAC
 - c. A community organization
 - d. Other
 - e. Don't remember
7. In May 2025, City Council members hosted budget presentations in their districts. Did you attend any?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. Did you attend any public meetings at either the Main Public Library or at 81st Avenue Public Library for the 2025 budget cycle?
 - a. Yes

- b. No

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. Gender

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Nonbinary
- d. Prefer not to say

10. Age (years)

- a. 14-18
- b. 19-25
- c. 26-30
- d. 31-39
- e. 40-49
- f. 50-59
- g. 60-69
- h. 70-79
- i. 80-89
- j. 90-plus

11. Race

- a. American Indian or Alaska Native
- b. Asian
- c. Black or African American
- d. Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin
- e. Middle Eastern or North African (MENA)
- f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- g. European/White
- h. Mixed race
- i. Prefer not to say
- j. Other:

12. City council district

- a. 1 (Councilmember Unger)
- b. 2 (Councilmember Wang)
- c. 3 (Councilmember Fife)
- d. 4 (Councilmember Ramachandran)
- e. 5 (Councilmember Gallo)
- f. 6 (Councilmember Jenkins)
- g. 7 (Councilmember Houston)

13. Are you registered to vote in Oakland

- a. Yes
- b. No

LIFE IN OAKLAND

As residents, we experience budget decisions every day through services and programs we rely on, the infrastructure around us, and even the culture of our city. The following questions ask you to reflect on your experience of life in Oakland: What is going well and what can be improved.

Streets

- 1. Your streets are paved and free of potholes.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
- 2. Your streets are clean and free of litter.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
- 3. Your street is well-lit at night.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

Traffic & Pedestrian Safety

- 4. Stop signs in your neighborhood make it feel safe to cross the street.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
- 5. Crosswalks in your neighborhood are visible and make it safe to cross the street.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
- 6. Street signals are working and help keep intersections safe.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
- 7. Traffic speeds in your neighborhood feel safe for pedestrians, kids, and cyclists.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

Graffiti and Cleanliness

- 8. If you have ever called 311 to report an issue, how satisfied were you with the response?
Very dissatisfied – Dissatisfied – Neutral – Satisfied – Very satisfied
- 9. How satisfied are you with the city's current response time and effectiveness in removing graffiti in your neighborhood?

Very dissatisfied – Dissatisfied – Neutral – Satisfied – Very satisfied

10. How much of a priority should graffiti removal and abatement be in the city's budget?

Not a priority – Low priority – Medium priority – High priority

Business & Shopping

11. You shop regularly in Oakland.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neutral — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

12. You frequently eat out in Oakland.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neutral — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

13. Where do you go to shop, if you don't shop in Oakland? (open-ended)

14. What else would you like to share about why you do not shop or eat out in Oakland?

15. Please rank the following in order of importance when considering to shop or eat out in Oakland.

- a. The selection of brands available (1 not important → 5 very important)
- b. The number of options for eating out (1 not important → 5 very important)
- c. A vibrant streetscape (1 not important → 5 very important)
- d. Houseless people on the street (1 not important → 5 very important)
- e. Trash and dumping on the street (1 not important → 5 very important)
- f. Feeling safe from crime (1 not important → 5 very important)

Safety

16. You feel safe in your neighborhood.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

17. You feel safe in Oakland.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

18. *If you disagree or strongly disagree*, what would make you feel safer? (open-ended)

19. Are there Public Safety Ambassadors in or around your local business district?
No

Yes
Do not know

20. *If yes*, do you feel more safe with Public Safety Ambassador presence?

No
Yes
Do not know

Housing & Food Security

21. There is a range of housing options available for people at different income levels in your neighborhood.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neutral — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

22. You worry that you or your neighbors could be priced out of the neighborhood.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neutral — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

23. You or your neighbors have experienced food insecurity in the last six months.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neutral — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

24. You have had to visit a food bank in the last year.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Neutral — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

Homelessness/Encampments

25. How much of a priority is it for the city to address unsheltered homelessness and encampments?

Not a priority—Low priority—Medium priority—High priority

26. How well is the city currently meeting the needs of unhoused residents (e.g., outreach, shelter, sanitation, mental health/substance use services)?

Very poorly—Poorly—Adequately—Well—Very well

Health & Well-being

27. There are shops in your neighborhood that sell vegetables and fruits.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

28. Your park is clean.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

29. Your park is well-maintained.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

30. Children and youth in your neighborhood have a park where they can safely play.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

31. There are trees and green space in your neighborhood.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

32. On a hot day, there is enough shade in your neighborhood to keep cool.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

Senior Services

33. Is there a senior center in your neighborhood?

Yes / No

34. *(If yes)* The senior center is an important part of the neighborhood.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

35. What else would you like the city council to know about senior services in your neighborhood?

Transition-Age Youth (16-25)

36. Transition-age youth (16–25), including those exiting foster care, need more visible support in Oakland.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

37. The city should track how well it's serving this age group to know what is working.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

Community & Belonging

38. You know your neighbors.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

39. Community events in the city make you feel a sense of belonging.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

Arts & Culture

40. You have heard about Oakland's art and music scene.

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

41. Oakland has a strong cultural and arts legacy.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
42. You have attended an art or cultural event in the last 12 months.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Strongly Disagree

Library

43. Do you have a library branch in or near your neighborhood?
Yes / No
44. *(If yes)* You like your neighborhood library.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
45. *(If yes)* Your library feels like a hub for the neighborhood — a place people gather, not just check out books.
Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
46. What else would you like the city council to know about libraries in your neighborhood?

Trust and Transparency

47. City spending reflects my priorities
Strongly Agree — Agree — Neutral — Disagree — Strongly Disagree
48. How informed do you feel about how the city spends its budget?
Very informed -- Somewhat informed -- Not very informed -- Not at all informed
49. What would increase your trust in how the city manages its budget?
50. What process or engagement would you like to see implemented to ensure that the city's decisions best reflect your needs and values?

YOUR PRIORITIES (open-ended question)

In the next two years, what are the most important issues facing Oakland residents that you would like to see prioritized in the City's budget? (open-ended)

Ongoing communication

What is the best way for you to receive information on the city's budget?

- Regular town halls
- Emails from city council member
- Emails from Mayor's office
- Email updates from BAC or Budget Department (add space for email)
- Online dashboards
- Other:

Please share your email with us to stay in touch:

Demographic information

14. Housing status

- a. Own home
- b. Renter
- c. Other (couch surfing, living in car, etc):

15. Married/single/domestic partner

- a. Married
- b. Single
- c. Domestic partner
- d. Other:

16. Level of education

- a. Completed high school
- b. Completed some college
- c. Completed 2-year college
- d. Completed 4-year college
- e. Completed some graduate school
- f. Completed graduate school (MA/MS)
- g. Completed some post-graduate
- h. Completed post-graduate (PhD, JD, MD)

17. What is your total household income?

- a. \$0 to \$49,999
- b. \$50,000-\$99,999
- c. \$100,000-150,000
- d. \$150,000+
- e. Prefer not to answer

18. How long have you lived in Oakland?

- a. 0-5 years
- b. 6-10 years
- c. 10-15 years
- d. 15-20 years
- e. 20-25 years
- f. 25-30 years
- g. 30-plus years

19. Occupation:

Thank you for completing the survey. Your time is greatly appreciated!

From Mike Petouoff, Chair of the BAC Public Safety Economic Development and Violence Prevention Ad Hoc

To: BAC Commissioners

Sept 15th 2026

Subject: Forwarding Memo for Proposed BAC Policy Materials on Public Safety and Economic Development

After a lot of work we are excited to request a BAC Vote on this material.

We had multiple meetings with staff and Mayor Lee joined one of the calls and expressed interest and urgency in moving forward, with hope that we can move this forward at our September BAC mtg.

This is a work long time in the making and I want to offer thanks to those current and past commissioners who have contributed. Commissioner Grimsley was a driving force and established early coordination with the Re-envisioning Public Safety Task Force, and Commissioner Armmand Bryant, was instrumental in coordinating with Ashleigh Kanat, Oakland Director of Economic Development and inviting her to a past BAC meeting where she presented the EDAP to BAC.

Thanks also to Commissioner Michel Forbes who has been instrumental in establishing coordination with the City Auditors Office, resulting in valuable contributions from the Auditor. Thanks to Commissioner Rana Bader for her health care expertise, and helping to shape the vision for how OFD Ambulance service consolidation might help shape MACRO to meet its intended goals. Thanks also to Commissioner Danforth Dougherty and Commissioner Stepheshia Walton for their work in bringing the final work products forward.

We have a policy memo, a deck and a set of posters to support public meetings with staff. Please read and be prepared to make any suggested edits.

Mike

Which Recommendations Address Property Crime, Violent Crime, or Both

Recommendation		Property Crime	Violent Crime
Status quo	Sworn officer staffing (law enforcement)	●	●
1	Economic Development & Violence Prevention		
1.1	EDAP funding & geographically and age targeted job creation	●	●
1.2	Chamber Workforce Development partnership and focus	●	●
1.3	Leverage community colleges and new Samuel Merritt campus for targeted job creation	●	●
1.4	Expand Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program	●	●
1.5	Public Safety Ambassadors in business districts	●	●
1.6	Violence de-escalation education in schools; OPD training review	●	●
1.7	Focused Deterrence: Project Ceasefire & Life Line	●	●
1.8	Improve & focus job training and support for those coming out of prison (reentry)	●	●
2	Safe & Healthy Communities		
2.1	Lead-based paint abatement	●	●
2.2	Fresh food access / nutrition	●	●
2.3	Leverage parks, libraries & digital access as "third places" for youth and platforms to reach areas of highest need	●	●
3	OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Wrap-Around Services		
3.1	Consolidate ambulance services to improve equity and capture insurance revenue for Oakland	●	●
3.2	Use revenue in part to enable MACRO to achieve envisioned purpose, and keep all fire stations open to preserve response time	●	●
4	Improved Deployment of OPD Sworn Officers	●	●
5	Public Education & Engagement (Enabling)	●	●

● Primary focus ● Indirect/supportive contribution

Property-crime ratings follow Stephen Raphael and Rudolf Winter-Ebmer, "Identifying the Effect of Unemployment on Crime," Journal of Law and Economics 44, no. 1 (2001): 259-283, and Alexi Thompson & James J. Jozefowicz, "Property Crimes and the Marginally Employed," Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics (2024); violent-crime ratings follow Jens Ludwig (University of Chicago Crime Lab), Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of American Gun Violence (2025), along with lead-crime and nutrition research. Workforce measures also reduce violent crime indirectly.

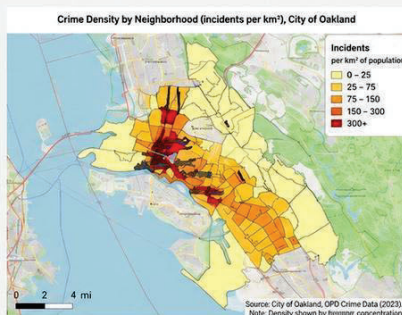
Source: Oakland Budget Advisory Commission, based on the report narrative and cited research. Ratings are illustrative.

Addressing Oakland's Interrelated Crime, Economic Development, and Budget Stability Issues in Keeping with Oakland's Culture and Diversity

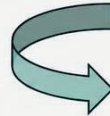
A Report from the Oakland Budget Advisory Commission to Support
Oakland's Path to Fiscal Health

Nexus of Public Safety and Economic Development

**Chronic Crime – 5–6 times
higher than other cities**



Residents,
visitors, and
businesses
want and
deserve to
feel safe
and stay.



Limited
economic
opportunity
can contribute
to conditions
associated
with crime.

**Irony "Retail Leakage"
\$1.5B+ / Year**



Goal:
Improve Public Safety
Safer neighborhoods. Stronger communities.



Goal:
Improve Top Line City Revenue
More local spending. Stronger local economy.



**When we invest in opportunity, safety, and healthy neighborhoods together,
Oakland becomes a better place for everyone to live, work, and thrive.**

4

With thanks to our Collaborators



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Draft for 15 September 2026 Budget Advisory Commission Meeting

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Executive Summary

BAC Recommendations on Oakland's Interrelated Crime, Economic Development, and Budget Stability Challenges, in Advance of the 2027–2028 Budget Cycle

The Budget Advisory Commission (BAC) typically comments on the Mayor's Proposed Budget, as the Consolidated Fiscal Policy (CFP) requires, and we will do so again after the Mayor submits the Proposed Budget on May 1, 2027. This report comes earlier, and intentionally so. We are offering proactive recommendations now so the public can learn about them, weigh in on them, and shape them before the budget cycle begins. Many of these ideas could deliver real benefits to Oakland's communities, yet they are not widely understood. Early publication also gives staff, the Mayor's office, and Council members time to examine the recommendations and develop precise budget estimates.

The central idea of this report is simple: Oakland's two biggest challenges are not isolated line items. They are interrelated problems that can best be solved together. On the public safety side, Oakland's crime rate is substantially and persistently higher than that of comparable cities. That fact argues for confronting root causes and breaking old cycles.

One important factor is the well-documented relationship between unemployment and property crime. Groundbreaking, widely cited research by Professor Stephen Raphael of UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy and Rudolf Winter-Ebmer — with more than 1,800 citations — demonstrated the importance of economic conditions, especially for property crime.¹ More recent work by Alexi Thompson and James J. Jozefowicz, analyzing U.S. data from 1993 to 2022, found that unemployment, underemployment, and marginal attachment to the workforce are associated with higher rates of property crime, including theft and burglary.² Economic stability and access to jobs are clearly part of the public safety landscape — and that is exactly why Oakland should treat public safety and economic development as connected.

On the economic side, Oakland loses roughly \$1.5 billion per year to “retail leakage” — Oaklanders shopping and dining elsewhere, at least in part out of concern for safety. And Oakland's recovery from COVID continues to lag other California and U.S. cities significantly. Both factors depress municipal revenue and feed the structural deficit.

Because crime and economic development are so intertwined, Oakland needs a comprehensive approach. Our sworn OPD officers play a vital role, and they must be well compensated. But other factors also drive public safety and economic health. Some are rooted in equity issues tied to Oakland's cultural diversity and its history of redlining,³ detailed later in this report. Naming these issues honestly is the key to understanding root causes and breaking old cycles. Put simply: we need well-deployed officers and the conditions that make fewer of them necessary.

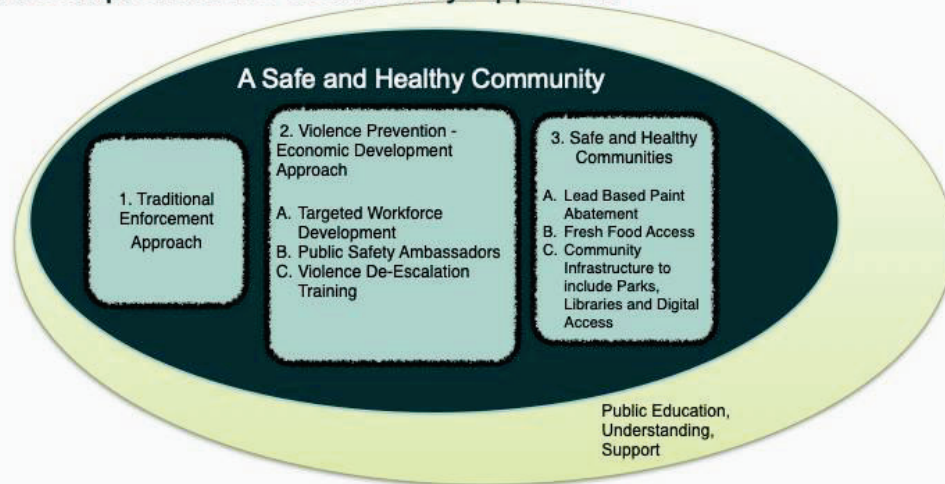
Other initiatives — public safety ambassadors who make business districts both safer and more welcoming, focused deterrence through Project Ceasefire, and violence de-escalation training in schools — have already demonstrated success in Oakland and in other cities, and they can be expanded. Rigorous data collection will be essential to document results and guide that expansion.

¹Stephen Raphael and Rudolf Winter-Ebmer, “Identifying the Effect of Unemployment on Crime,” *Journal of Law and Economics* 44, no. 1 (2001): 259–283.

²Alexi Thompson and James J. Jozefowicz, “Property Crimes and the Marginally Employed,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/02601079241276592>.

³City of Oakland, Racial Equity Impact Analysis: Eliminating Lead Paint Hazards in Oakland & Alameda County (2021), https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/housing-comm-dev/documents/lead/lead-paint-reia_9-23-21_final.pdf.

A Comprehensive Community Approach



A comprehensive community approach: traditional enforcement, violence prevention and economic development, and safe and healthy communities, enabled by public education and engagement.

Taken together, the evidence argues for a comprehensive strategy: traditional policing, yes, but also greater emphasis on violence prevention, economic development, and safe and healthy communities — all enabled by community outreach and education.

Some of these efforts are already under way and need expansion; others are new. We have gathered the best available academic research and examples from cities that have succeeded in these pursuits. All deserve earnest consideration and public discussion.

The BAC also needs a fuller understanding of existing city programs and plans — gained through discussion with staff — to make the most informed recommendations.

We therefore propose, as an immediate action, that the Mayor and Council convene a session or series of sessions in fall 2026 or early winter 2027 to examine these issues comprehensively — with participation from city experts, the Oakland chambers of commerce, civic leaders, and members of the public — well in advance of the 2027-28 budget cycle.

Introduction, Problem Statement, and Evaluation of the Status Quo

Addressing Oakland's Interrelated Crime, Economic Development, and Budget Stability Challenges in Keeping with Oakland's Culture and Diversity

Problem Definition

Oakland faces a set of interrelated challenges: crime rates far higher than comparable cities, a COVID recovery that trails California and the nation, and long-standing retail leakage to nearby cities estimated at about \$1.5 billion per year. Together, these conditions reduce municipal revenue and deepen the structural budget deficit.

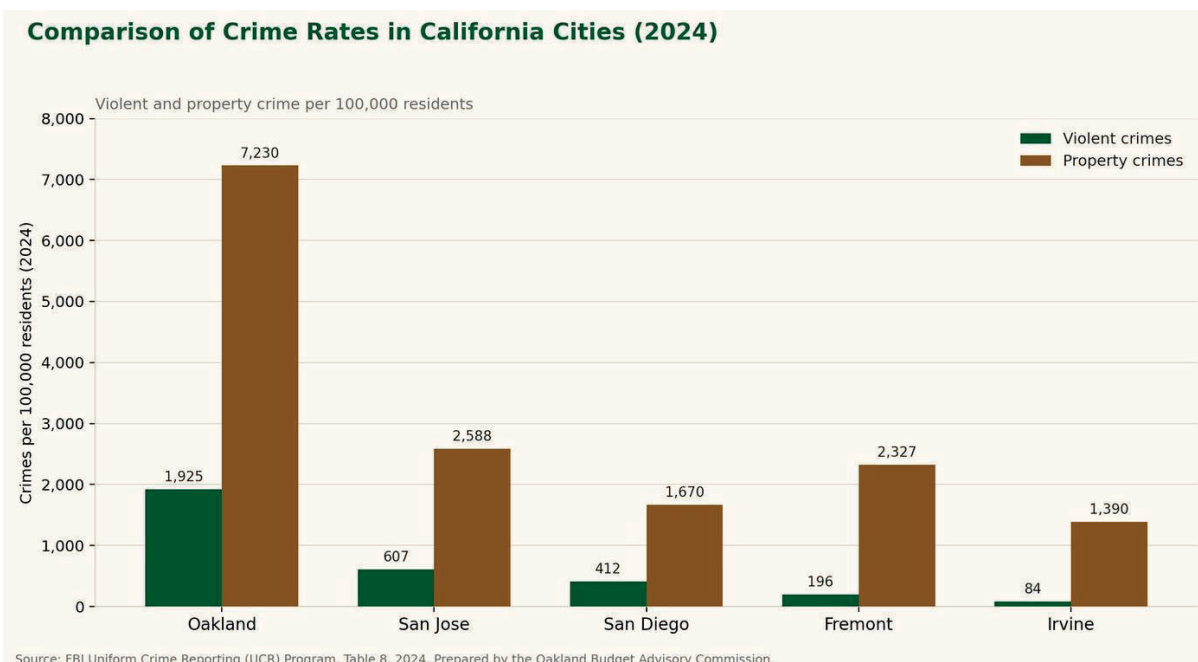
These problems feed off one another. Unemployment can contribute to higher crime, while safety concerns discourage job-creating businesses, visitors, and residents from shopping and dining in Oakland. Even though Oakland has been recognized as a leading dining destination, fear of crime still pushes economic activity elsewhere. Public fear of crime often produces calls for more sworn officers — but that response is costly, and it can crowd out other strategies that may also improve safety and economic stability.

Evaluation of the Status Quo

Economically, Oakland faces two problems — one recent, one long-standing. The recent problem: Oakland continues to lag California and the nation in COVID recovery. The long-standing problem: retail leakage. Businesses leave Oakland, and even Oakland residents hesitate to dine and shop here out of concern for crime, sending roughly \$1.5 billion in potential annual spending to other cities. Since 2020, pandemic-related revenue losses and rising expenses have widened the gap between the level of service Oakland wants to provide and the level it can afford — because Oakland's economic activity is a primary source of municipal revenue.

Oakland's fiscal recovery is shaped by overlapping pressures: high crime, fire risk, taxes, regulatory burden, and commercial vacancies. These raise operating costs and discourage revenue-generating activity. According to the most recent comprehensive data available, Oakland's 2024 property and violent crime rates ran as much as five to ten times higher than those of other major California cities.⁴ That year, Oakland had the highest violent crime rate and the second-highest property crime rate among the 200 largest U.S. cities.

⁴FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, Table 8, 2024. Rates per 100,000 residents: Oakland recorded 1,925 violent crimes and 7,230 property crimes. By comparison, San Jose recorded 607 violent and 2,588 property crimes, and San Diego 412 violent and 1,670 property crimes. Among California's safest large cities, Fremont recorded 196 violent and 2,327 property crimes, and Irvine 84 violent and 1,390 property crimes.



Violent and property crime per 100,000 residents, Oakland compared with San Jose, San Diego, Fremont, and Irvine (FBI UCR Table 8, 2024).

Public safety matters twice over: it shapes the daily lives of Oakland residents, and it drives away tax-paying businesses,⁵ their patrons, and other economic activity — while falling hardest on Oakland’s low-income and diverse communities. Crime has declined meaningfully since 2024, including a drop of roughly 25% in 2025⁶ and a further 22% in the first quarter of 2026.⁷ Even so, Oakland may need cumulative reductions of 80–90% just to reach where other major California cities stood in 2024. And because crime has also trended lower nationwide since 2024,⁸ still larger reductions may be needed to achieve present-day parity.

The traditional enforcement approach also carries serious equity concerns — nationally, and especially in Oakland, given the history of the “Riders” case.⁹ An Oakland example: Stanford University’s SPARQ center (Social Psychological Answers to Real-World Questions), led by Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt, conducted a multi-year data analysis in partnership with the Oakland Police Department.¹⁰ The findings were stark. Even excluding arrests, Black men in Oakland were handcuffed in roughly one of every four stops, compared with one in fifteen for white men. Black men were searched four times as often as white men — yet officers were no more likely to recover contraband from those searches.

Can’t we just add more sworn officers?

This topic is covered more thoroughly in the detailed recommendations. There are multiple ways to evaluate the question. The short answer: police are vital to Oakland’s public safety, but increasing staffing alone is not a realistic solution to the dramatic gap in crime rates between Oakland and other cities.

⁵NBC Bay Area, “Businesses Leaving Oakland, Citing Crime,” <https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/businesses-leaving-oakland-crime/3440618/>.

⁶The Oaklandside, “Oakland Homicides and Shootings Down in 2025,” December 3, 2025, <https://oaklandside.org/2025/12/03/oakland-homicides-shootings-down-2025/>.

⁷Oakland Police Department, first-quarter 2026 crime briefing, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2439242806534936>.

⁸FBI, “FBI Releases Historic Early Look at Annual Crime Data,” <https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/fbi-releases-historic-early-look-at-annual-crime-data>.

⁹Allen v. City of Oakland, No. 3:00-cv-04599 (N.D. Cal.), <https://clearinghouse.net/case/5541/>.

¹⁰Stanford SPARQ (Social Psychological Answers to Real-World Questions), multi-year analysis of Oakland Police Department stop data, conducted in partnership with OPD under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt (2016).

If we compare Oakland’s officer staffing to other cities, Oakland’s police staffing is not below other cities on a per-capita basis — yet crime rates are much higher. This suggests we need to look at the root causes that make Oakland different.

Officers vs. Crime Rates — California City Comparison (2024)

City	Sworn officers (approx.)	Population (approx.)	Officers per 1,000 residents	Violent crime per 100k (2024)	Property crime per 100k (2024)	Notes
Oakland	678	436,000	1.61	1,925	7,230	Budgeted 678 officers shown. Measure NN provides for 700.
San Jose	1,150	970,000	1.19	607	2,588	
San Diego	1,850	1,380,000	1.34	412	1,670	
Fremont	177	226,000	0.78	196	2,327	
Irvine	240	314,000	0.76	84	1,390	

Crime rates: FBI UCR Table 8 (2024). Officer counts and populations are approximate, drawn from city budgets and Census estimates.

But if sworn officer staffing were the only issue, what would it take to close Oakland’s crime gap with officers alone? Using the best available research, **violent-crime parity with San Jose (607 vs. Oakland’s 1,925 per 100,000)** requires a roughly 68% reduction. At Chalfin and McCrary’s (2018) violent-crime elasticity of -0.34 ,¹¹ that implies growing the force from about 700 to roughly **2,100 officers** — about triple — at roughly **\$420 million per year** in added cost, or half the city’s roughly \$830 million General Fund. **Property-crime parity with San Jose (2,588 vs. 7,230)** is harder still because the property-crime elasticity is only -0.17 : roughly **3,300–3,400 officers at \$780–810 million per year** — essentially the entire General Fund. This is not feasible. Just as important, those elasticities mean each additional officer buys a smaller crime reduction than the one before — a pattern of diminishing returns that argues for pairing officers with measures that address the conditions producing crime.

Three independent barriers make closing the gap with officers alone a dead letter:

- **Fiscal.** At a fully loaded cost of roughly \$300,000 per officer — salary, overtime, fringe, and CalPERS safety contribution rates that Oakland’s own Five-Year Forecast projected approaching 55% of payroll — the added officers required would consume between roughly 40% and the whole of the General Fund, in a city with a documented structural deficit where public safety already consumes about 65% of unrestricted spending, and which already collects the highest per-capita tax revenue among comparable California cities.¹²
- **Operational.** Oakland cannot hire at that pace at any price. Its academies have historically netted a few dozen graduates per year against attrition of roughly 70 officers annually, and the department currently fills only about 617 of 678 budgeted positions, with 509 deployable — it cannot yet fill the force it already funds.¹³
- **Empirical.** The elasticities themselves do not extrapolate: they were estimated from roughly 10% changes in force size, and a 150–250% expansion is far outside the observed range, so diminishing

¹¹Aaron Chalfin and Justin McCrary, “Are U.S. Cities Underpoliced? Theory and Evidence,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100, no. 1 (2018): 167–186.

¹²City of Oakland, Five-Year Financial Forecast, FY 2025–26 through FY 2029–30 (Finance Department, 2025); SPUR, Oakland’s Budget: A Path to Fiscal Health (2025).

¹³Oakland Police Department staffing reports to the Public Safety Committee (2016–2017); Chief of Police, report to City Council, February 2026.

returns would bind long before convergence. More fundamentally, the cross-city comparison argues that the between-city gap is not a staffing gap. San Jose runs one of the thinnest big-city police forces per capita in America — thinner than Oakland’s — and has one-third the crime. The gap reflects structural differences: concentrated poverty, lead-burdened housing stock, group and gang dynamics, and the geographic legacy of redlining documented in Oakland’s 2021 racial equity analysis and in the Opportunity Atlas, which found no location in Alameda County with income outcomes as poor as flatland Oakland.¹⁴

Because Oakland’s crime rate is much higher than that of comparable cities, we must look more deeply at root causes and at breaking cycles to make a lasting difference. This is why, for both property crime and violent crime, we have looked to the best peer-reviewed academic research and to the experience of other cities that have had success in these areas. That research and experience is the basis for our recommendations.

While there has been much focus on the number of officers, effective deployment of officers may be more important. Measure NN calls for 700 officers. The current budget provides for 678, which is 3% less. A larger gap comes from a 9% vacancy rate, leaving 617 officers on payroll. Of the 617 officers on payroll, the Chief of Police reports that 17% are non-deployable.

Other qualitative factors also affect deployment. The City Auditor’s 911 report shows that outdated bureau structures and hiring challenges for budgeted 911 dispatcher positions affect response times. In addition, Oakland has an unusual policy called “Patrol Draw” that allows officers to choose patrol assignments based on seniority rather than OPD leadership assigning them. The impact of this policy is not well understood and should be documented transparently. Many sworn officers are also filling jobs defined as civilian jobs, taking them away from their assigned duties, and some sworn jobs may be able to be converted to lower-cost civilian jobs. Addressing these issues can help Oakland make better use of valuable sworn officer talents.

Recommendation:

Focus on not just on number of officers but also on effectiveness of deployment, recognizing finite resources, and benefit of all approaches

Some OPD Challenges

Officers	Issue	Source: Feb 26 OPD OT Report
700	Measure NN	
	Sworn Authorized (3% less than NN)	
678		
	Sworn Filled (9% Vacant- even with vacancies still higher than San Jose)	
617		
	Deployable (17% on payroll, but non deployable)	
509		
Qualitative	> Outdated Bureau Structure Impacts Response times (see Auditor's 911 Report)	
Qualitative	> "Patrol Draw" -Officers assign themselves to Patrols by seniority	
	> Sworn Officers are now filling civilian positions- more cost effective civilian positions could be defined	

Work Force and Economic Development Budget since Cut 60% since 2023

- FY 2023/24 \$62 million
- FY 2024-25 \$35.2 million
- FY 2025-26 \$24.9 million
- FY 2026-27 \$24.2 million
- 17% Non deployable = more than the entire economic development and DVP budget
- We want sworn officers to be well compensated, but we also need to ask for performance accountability

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Confronting the trade-offs: focus not just on the number of officers but on effectiveness of deployment, recognizing finite resources and the benefit of all approaches.

¹⁴Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie R. Jones, and Sonya R. Porter, “The Opportunity Atlas: Mapping the Childhood Roots of Social Mobility,” NBER Working Paper 25147 (2018), <https://www.opportunityatlas.org>; City of Oakland, Racial Equity Impact Analysis: Eliminating Lead Paint Hazards in Oakland & Alameda County (2021).

Recommendation Summary, Evaluation Criteria, and Plan of Action

Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations below are numbered to match Figure 1 (crime focus) and Figure 2 (time-phasing), and the detailed narrative that follows uses the same order and numbering.

1 Economic Development & Violence Prevention

Support economic development and violence prevention to improve public safety and quality of life. The Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) has been cut 60% since 2013 even as retail leakage and a lagging COVID recovery drain municipal revenue.

- 1.1 Fully fund EDAP with geographically and age-targeted job creation to help reduce property crime.
- 1.2 Partner with the Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development Program and sharpen its focus.
- 1.3 Leverage community colleges and the new Samuel Merritt campus for targeted job creation.
- 1.4 Expand the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program.
- 1.5 Extend Public Safety Ambassador coverage to Oakland business districts not currently served.
- 1.6 Create a more comprehensive plan for violence de-escalation education in Oakland schools, and review OPD-provided officer training.
- 1.7 Sustain and strengthen focused deterrence through Project Ceasefire and Life Line, building on Oakland's existing program for immediate impact.
- 1.8 Improve and focus job training and support for those coming out of prison (reentry).

Across all of these measures, rigorously document the crime-reduction and quality-of-life benefits to guide expansion.

2 Safe & Healthy Communities

- 2.1 Ensure funding for staff to implement lead-based paint abatement as requirements are identified through upcoming assessments.
- 2.2 Use grants, incentives, and zoning and planning policy to eliminate Oakland's food deserts and ensure access to nutrition.
- 2.3 Leverage parks, libraries, and digital access as "third places" for youth and as platforms to reach areas of highest need — offering structured activities, job resources, and physical space to grow.

3 OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Wrap-Around Services

- 3.1 Consolidate ambulance services to improve equity and capture insurance revenue for Oakland.
- 3.2 Use revenue in part to enable MACRO to achieve its envisioned purpose, and keep all fire stations open to preserve response time and wildfire readiness.

4 Improved Deployment of OPD Sworn Officers

Sworn officers are a vital part of our public safety ecosystem. Use the meet-and-confer process to address not just the number of officers but also deployment efficiency, as detailed in this report, and request follow-up reports from the City Auditor.

5 Public Education & Engagement

Build public awareness and understanding of these approaches. Convene public forums — including town halls in each of the seven Council districts — well before the 2027–2028 budget cycle.

The recommendations differ in which crime problem they most directly address. Workforce and employment measures are aimed principally at property crime, consistent with the Raphael and Winter-Ebmer and Thompson and Jozefowicz findings. Violence de-escalation, focused deterrence, lead-based paint abatement, and nutrition access are aimed principally at violent crime, consistent with the University of Chicago Crime Lab’s finding that much gun violence arises from in-the-moment conflict rather than premeditation.¹⁵ Figure 1, on the following page, maps each measure.

¹⁵ Jens Ludwig, *Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of American Gun Violence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2025).

Figure 1. Which Recommendations Address Property Crime, Violent Crime, or Both (rotate page to read)

Which Recommendations Address Property Crime, Violent Crime, or Both			
Recommendation		Property Crime	Violent Crime
Status quo	Sworn officer staffing (law enforcement)	●	●
1 Economic Development & Violence Prevention			
1.1	EDAP funding & geographically and age targeted job creation	●	●
1.2	Chamber Workforce Development partnership and focus	●	●
1.3	Leverage community colleges and new Samuel Merritt campus for targeted job creation	●	●
1.4	Expand Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program	●	●
1.5	Public Safety Ambassadors in business districts	●	●
1.6	Violence de-escalation education in schools; OPD training review	●	●
1.7	Focused Deterrence: Project Ceasefire & Life Line	●	●
1.8	Improve & focus job training and support for those coming out of prison (reentry)	●	●
2 Safe & Healthy Communities			
2.1	Lead-based paint abatement	●	●
2.2	Fresh food access / nutrition	●	●
2.3	Leverage parks, libraries & digital access as "third places" for youth and platforms to reach areas of highest need	●	●
3 OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Wrap-Around Services			
3.1	Consolidate ambulance services to improve equity and capture insurance revenue for Oakland	●	●
3.2	Use revenue in part to enable MACRO to achieve envisioned purpose, and keep all fire stations open to preserve response time	●	●
4 Improved Deployment of OPD Sworn Officers			
5 Public Education & Engagement (Enabling)			
		●	●
● Primary focus ● Indirect/supportive contribution			

Property-crime ratings follow Stephen Raphael & Rudolf Winter-Elmer, "Identifying the Effect of Unemployment on Crime," *Journal of Law and Economics* 44, no. 1 (2001): 259-283, and Alexi Thompson & James J. Jozefowicz, "Property Crimes and the Marginally Employed," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics* (2024); violent-crime ratings follow Jens Ludwig (University of Chicago Crime Lab), "Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of American Gun Violence (2025)", along with lead-crime and nutrition research. Workforce measures also reduce violent crime indirectly.

Source: Oakland Budget Advisory Commission, based on the report narrative and cited research. Ratings are illustrative.

Figure 1. Primary and indirect/supportive crime focus of each recommendation. Source: Oakland Budget Advisory Commission, based on the report narrative and cited research. Ratings are illustrative.

Proposed Evaluation Criteria

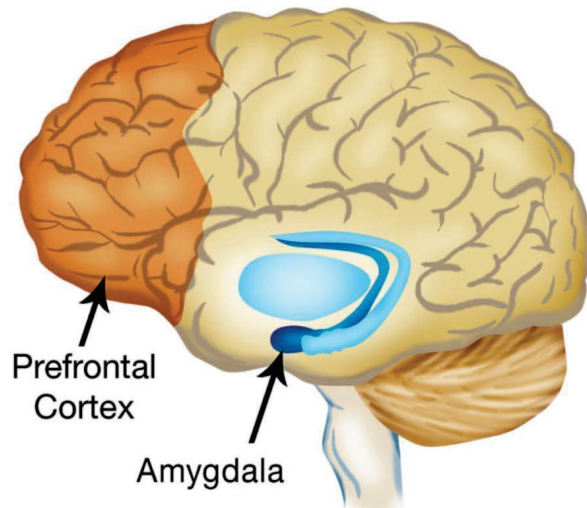
- **Effectiveness:** Preferred options should reduce violent and/or property crime while improving citywide prosperity and municipal revenue. Effective strategies should also reduce the fear of shopping and dining in Oakland and support a healthier environment for local businesses.
- **Equity:** Preferred options should avoid inequitable impacts on Oakland's diverse racial and ethnic communities and should benefit those historically underserved — or disproportionately harmed — by enforcement-centered approaches. This is especially important given OPD's documented racial disparities in enforcement and the Oakland "Riders" case, which contributed to federal oversight of the department.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Options should be evaluated on incremental cost, since these alternatives are adjustments rather than stand-alone solutions. Cost-effectiveness should also account for whether an option expands residents' economic opportunity and strengthens Oakland's revenue base.
- **Political feasibility:** A measure must be feasible within the budget process and responsive to the common public assumption that public safety depends primarily on the number of police officers. Because sworn staffing is among the most expensive options, politically feasible strategies must also account for the timing and influence of police union negotiations. The Oakland Police Officers' Association (OPOA) has often negotiated in the months before City Council elections, when its political leverage may be greatest.
- **Timing:** The timing of implementation and the timing of impact.

Political Feasibility: The Key Obstacle

Measured against the evaluation criteria, one thing is clear: political feasibility is the pivotal issue. Oakland's persistent crime is well known — but perhaps not well understood. In the minds of many Oaklanders, the number of sworn officers is the variable most closely associated with crime. That single-minded focus has crowded out funding for other important, but less familiar, initiatives.

This is not a failure of Oakland's voters; it is how human judgment works. Daniel Kahneman's research on the "availability heuristic" shows that people judge how common or dangerous something is by how easily examples come to mind — so vivid, recent, and heavily covered events feel more frequent than they are. And when a question is hard ("what actually reduces crime?"), the mind quietly substitutes an easier one ("what makes me feel safer?") and answers that instead. Fast, intuitive judgment produces "more officers"; slower, deliberate judgment is what the evidence in this report asks for. Appendix I describes this mechanism in more detail. It is the research foundation for placing public education and engagement first.¹⁶

¹⁶Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability," *Cognitive Psychology* 5, no. 2 (1973): 207–232; see also Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), chaps. 1, 9, and 12.



Fast and slow thinking. Vivid threats engage the amygdala's rapid, emotional response; weighing evidence draws on the prefrontal cortex. See Appendix I.

In fact, during the last budget cycle, the BAC observed that in the months before the budget process, negotiations of MOUs with OPD and OFD were initiated well before those agreements expired — and were approved by Council without public notice of the tentative agreements. The result: commitments exceeding projected revenue before the budget process even started. This confounds consideration of other programs that may have substantial impact on public safety, because the funds were committed before the process began.¹⁷

The table below maps the five recommendations against the evaluation criteria. The status quo faces significant challenges on both equity and cost-effectiveness — yet public perception gives it high political feasibility, while more cost-effective and more equitable alternatives face feasibility challenges simply because they are not well understood. The conclusion follows directly: public education and engagement is the key step to breaking Oakland's old cycles, so that other alternatives can be considered on their merits.

¹⁷Budget Advisory Commission, "BAC Memo on Budget Process" (2023), https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-OQ2SAVnshXqHLxMiEZNdKJoCz-gWA09Af_Qybt28UU/.

How the Options Meet the Evaluation Criteria — Before Public Engagement (Political Feasibility Is the Key Obstacle)

Recommendation	Effectiveness	Equity	Cost-Effectiveness	Political Feasibility	Timing
Status Quo	Limited	Weak	Weak	High	Immediate
1. Economic Development & Violence Prevention	Strong	Strong	Strong	Low	Near-term
2. Safe & Healthy Communities	Strong	Strong	Strong	Low	Longer-term
3. OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Support	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Longer-term
4. OPD Deployment Optimization	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Low	Near-term
5. Public Education & Engagement	Enabling	Strong	Strong	High	Immediate

Illustrative ratings: green = strong, yellow = moderate, red = weak.

The picture changes dramatically after public engagement. If public education informs voters of the full range of alternatives, those alternatives can be weighed on their merits.

How the Options Change After Implementing Recommendation 5 — Public Education and Engagement

Recommendation	Effectiveness	Equity	Cost-Effectiveness	Political Feasibility	Timing
Status Quo	Limited	Weak	Weak	Moderate	Immediate
1. Economic Development & Violence Prevention	Strong	Strong	Strong	High	Near-term
2. Safe & Healthy Communities	Strong	Strong	Strong	High	Longer-term
3. OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Support	Strong	Strong	Strong	High	Longer-term
4. OPD Deployment Optimization	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Near-term
5. Public Education & Engagement	Enabling	Strong	Strong	High	Immediate

Illustrative ratings: green = strong, yellow = moderate, red = weak.

Public education and engagement must come first among the five recommendations. It enables the others by helping Oakland address the root causes of its unusually high crime rates. Once this work begins, the budget process can consider a broader set of measures, because Council members will be evaluating options their constituents understand.

Once all of these measures can be properly considered, time-phasing becomes important. Recommendations 1 and 4 can be implemented in the near term, and Recommendation 1.7 (focused deterrence) can begin immediately because it builds on Oakland's existing Ceasefire program. Recommendations 2 and 3 have longer implementation timelines but are equally important to Oakland's long-term health. Because these problems are long-standing, the public needs to understand that some measures — while essential — will take longer to bear fruit.

Recommendation 5, Public Education and Engagement, will itself evolve. Its focus will need to shift from educating Oaklanders about the full range of measures toward helping Oaklanders and the wider public understand what Oakland is doing to address these issues — overcoming the stigma that is itself a contributing factor to the problems.

This argues for a time-phased approach:

- Start public education and engagement immediately, including a first round of town halls in all seven Council districts before budget adoption and a second round to report back on adopted decisions and early results.
- As public understanding grows, take further action on economic development and violence prevention, and on safe and healthy communities — recognizing that the healthier-communities initiatives will take more time to complete.

Time-Phased Implementation Plan

Figure 2 translates the narrative above into a time-phased implementation plan. Public education and engagement (Recommendation 5) begins immediately in fall 2026 and continues throughout — first building public understanding of the full range of alternatives, then shifting to counter stigma by telling the story of what Oakland is doing. The Mayor–Council comprehensive sessions run from fall 2026 through winter 2027, feeding directly into the FY 2027–28 budget: proposed May 1, 2027, and adopted by June 30, 2027. Recommendation 1.7 starts immediately; Recommendations 1 and 4 launch in the near term with the new budget. Recommendations 2 and 3 begin at the same time but carry longer implementation timelines, phasing in through 2030.

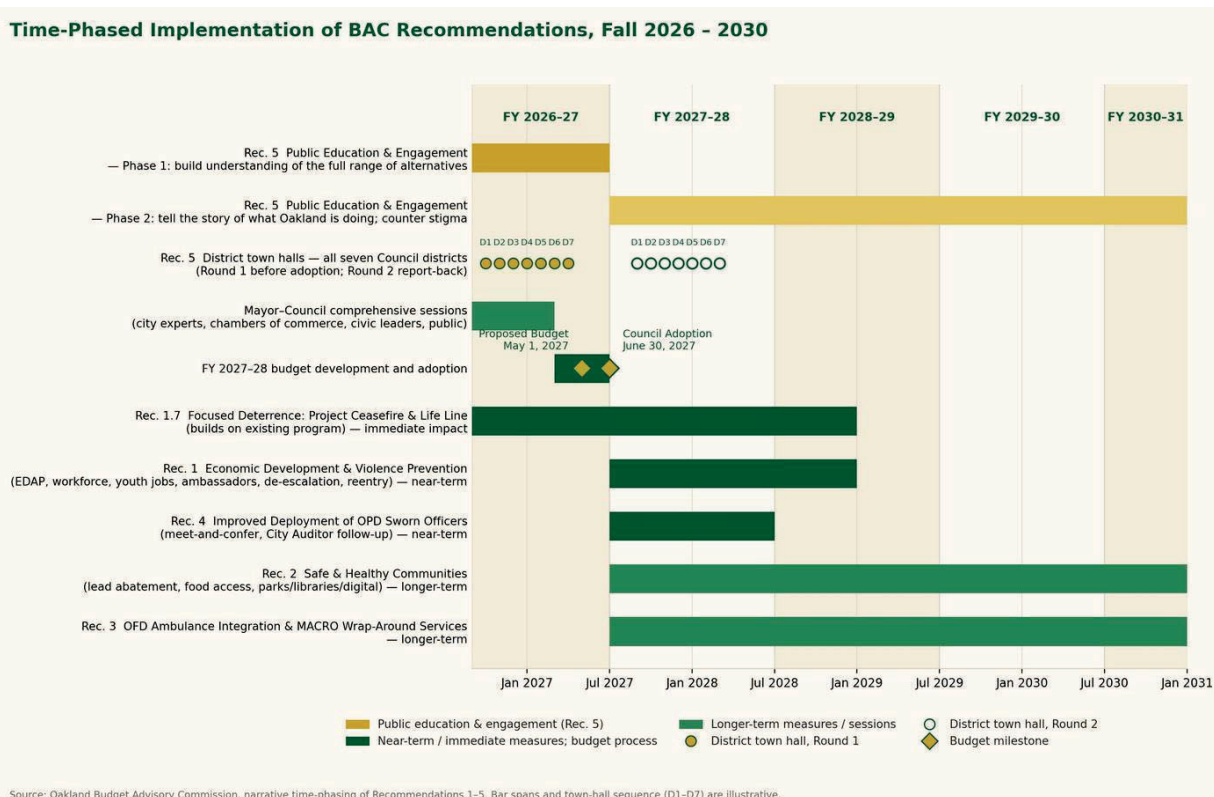


Figure 2. Time-phased implementation of BAC recommendations, fall 2026 through 2030. Diamonds mark budget milestones (Proposed Budget, May 1, 2027; Council adoption, June 30, 2027); circles mark district town halls.

We believe these recommendations represent meaningful opportunities for Oakland’s future. They still need to be refined through engagement with city departments and agencies. **The BAC therefore makes a wrap-around recommendation: convene a fall 2026 session or series of sessions to develop these recommendations further, so that staff can consider them and they can be included in the Mayor’s budget proposed in May 2027 and approved by Council by June 30, 2027.**

Detailed Recommendations

Why a Portfolio Approach Rather Than a Single Measure

The recommendations that follow are deliberately a portfolio. Focusing on any single measure — most often the number of sworn officers — cannot close the gap between Oakland and comparable cities, for four reasons that come directly from the evidence in this report.

- **The arithmetic does not work with one lever, and returns diminish.** Oakland needs cumulative crime reductions of 80–90% to reach where peer cities stood in 2024. Officer staffing has ranged from roughly 600 to 825 over the years, and across that entire range Oakland has remained at or near the top of the 200 largest cities for violent crime. The research elasticities cited above imply that closing the gap with officers alone would require tripling or quadrupling the force at a cost approaching the entire General Fund — and that each additional officer produces a smaller reduction than the last. A single lever runs into diminishing returns long before it reaches the goal. And as the Introduction shows, three independent barriers — fiscal, operational, and empirical — make an enforcement-only path to parity unfeasible: the money is not there, the officers cannot be hired at that pace, and cities with thinner forces than Oakland's have one-third the crime because their underlying conditions differ.
- **Prevention is upstream; enforcement is downstream.** Raphael and Winter-Ebmer and Thompson and Jozefowicz establish that unemployment and marginal employment drive property crime. Lead exposure, nutrition, and the absence of safe “third places” shape who is at risk and when. Enforcement addresses crime after the conditions that produce it already exist; the other measures shrink the pipeline. A city that funds only the back end will keep paying for the back end.
- **The measures reinforce one another.** Ambassadors make business districts feel safer, which supports EDAP's goal of recapturing retail leakage, which creates the jobs that workforce programs place people into. Libraries and digital access become the platform for publicizing job training and lead-abatement assistance in the neighborhoods that need them most. Focused deterrence lowers violence in the near term while lead abatement and school de-escalation lower it in the long term. These synergies mean the portfolio delivers more than the sum of its parts — the opposite of the diminishing returns that a single measure faces.
- **The feedback loop cuts both ways, so prevention partly pays for itself.** Crime drives \$1.5 billion in retail leakage, which drives revenue loss, which constrains the budget that funds everything — including OPD. Measures that reduce fear in business districts return revenue that a sworn-officer line item does not. Ambulance integration generates revenue outright. The portfolio partially funds itself; headcount alone is pure cost. That is a budget commission's argument, and one the BAC is well positioned to make.
- **Equity is a cost of the single-lever approach, not a side issue.** The SPARQ findings show that an enforcement-only strategy imposes concentrated costs on Black Oaklanders and generates federal-oversight expense. Prevention measures do not carry that cost, which makes equity a cost-effectiveness point as well as a value.

None of this diminishes the role of sworn officers. The point is that well-deployed officers and the conditions that make fewer of them necessary are complementary, not competing, investments. The detailed recommendations follow in the same order and numbering as the Summary of Recommendations and Figure 1.

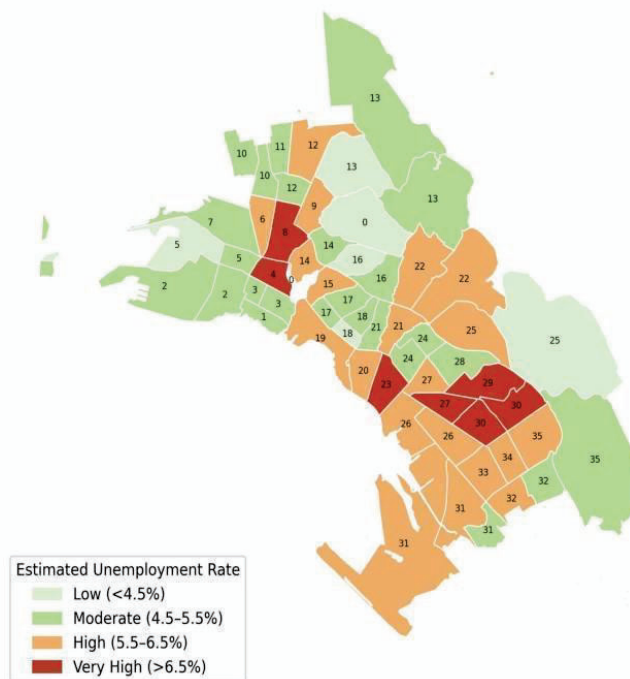
1 Economic Development & Violence Prevention

Unemployment is strongly correlated with crime, especially property crime, and in Oakland it is geographically concentrated. Crime also tends to be more prevalent among vulnerable youth age groups. Workforce development plans should therefore prioritize high-crime, high-unemployment areas and align with the Economic Development Action Plan, the Oakland chambers of commerce, and existing workforce development efforts.

Economic and workforce development funding in Oakland has been cut by more than 60% since 2013, often because of competing public safety pressures. Reinvesting in targeted workforce development can reduce crime over the long term while improving residents' quality of life. The eight measures below work together: EDAP and the chambers create demand for workers; community colleges, youth employment, and reentry programs prepare the supply; ambassadors, school de-escalation, and focused deterrence address the violence and disorder that hold the economy back.

1.1 Fully fund EDAP with geographically and age-targeted job creation

Understanding unemployment by police beat can help Oakland focus workforce development where it is most likely to improve public safety. Other cities provide useful examples. Boston, for instance, found that summer jobs for students were associated with a 35% reduction in violent crime and a 29% reduction in property crime among participants.¹⁸ Oakland can use similar evidence to better target Economic Development Action Plan investments.



Estimated unemployment rate by area in Oakland, showing geographic concentration. Map credit: Timour Khalid, UC Berkeley, Goldman School of Public Policy; Capstone Project.

Effective workforce development requires successful businesses and is aided by a thriving economy. Oakland has had chronic retail leakage for many years and lags California and the U.S. in COVID recovery. While crime is a weakness and perception of crime is a threat to economic growth, Oakland also has strengths, including its remarkable cultural diversity and a widely regarded food scene, which represent growth opportunities.

¹⁸Brookings Institution, "How Can Summer Jobs Reduce Crime Among Youth?" <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-can-summer-jobs-reduce-crime-among-youth/>.

Appendix B provides examples of cities that have made successful COVID recoveries; the common denominator was not a desire to return to “normal” but the use of the crisis as a catalyst to reinvent themselves — through digital transformation, green investment, or changing how people live, commute, and work in urban centers.

The connection matters to municipal revenue as well as public safety. Sales tax revenue is driven by economic activity. And though Oakland receives only a share of the sales tax generated within its boundaries, the Hotel Occupancy Tax generated within Oakland is 100% allocated to Oakland’s budget — and the most recent revenue forecast shows Hotel Occupancy Tax as the second-highest revenue shortfall, despite Condé Nast readers selecting Oakland as the #1 foodie destination in the U.S. two years in a row, and Oakland’s array of cultural diversity and events. Other revenue line items have similar impacts on the budget from impacts to economic activity. Just as economic boom and bust cycles cause rise and fall in municipal budgets overall, so too does sustained economic growth improve various forms of municipal revenue.

Recommendation: Fully fund EDAP and target its workforce component by geography and age, using unemployment and crime data at the beat level. Appendix A provides examples of cities reducing crime through workforce development.

1.2 Chamber Workforce Development partnership and focus

It is important for the City to partner closely with the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and Oakland’s many culturally oriented local chambers. The Chamber has identified health care as a traditional strength of Oakland and artificial intelligence as a potential growth area. Aligning the Chamber’s workforce development program with the City’s geographic and age targeting — so that training leads to jobs that actually exist in Oakland’s growth sectors — sharpens both efforts.

Recommendation: Formalize a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development Program, focused on Oakland’s growth sectors and on the neighborhoods with concentrated unemployment. Include the chambers in the fall 2026 planning sessions.

1.3 Leverage community colleges and the new Samuel Merritt campus for targeted job creation

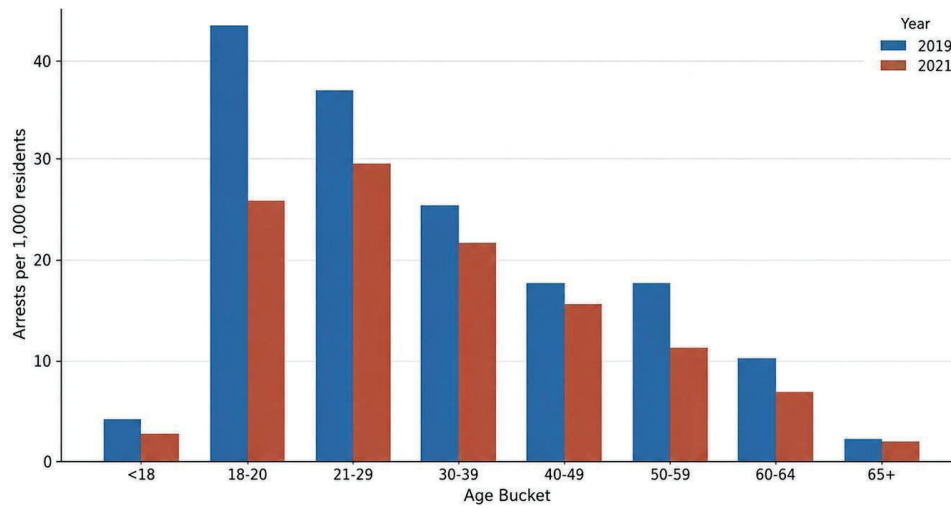
Oakland is unusually well served by post-secondary training capacity. The Peralta Community College District’s campuses offer career-technical pathways in health care, trades, and technology, and Samuel Merritt University’s new downtown Oakland campus is a major economic development opportunity that anchors the health-care sector the Chamber has identified as a traditional strength. Connecting these institutions to EDAP targeting and to the Chamber’s workforce program gives Oakland residents — especially young adults in high-unemployment areas — a visible pathway from training to employment close to home.

Recommendation: Bring the Peralta colleges and Samuel Merritt University into the fall 2026 planning sessions, and align their career-technical programs with EDAP’s geographic and sector targets.

1.4 Expand the Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program

Arrest data show that justice-system contact peaks among young adults, making the late-teen and early-twenties years the highest-leverage window for employment programs. The Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program is an important initiative that should be expanded, drawing on the Boston and Chicago evidence that summer jobs reduce both violent and property arrests among participants (Appendix A).

Oakland OPD Arrests by Age Group



Source: OPD Arrests by Age & Gender workbook, Census ACS 2021 5-Year Oakland city population. Rates use total arrests, not unique persons arrested.

Arrest data reflect justice-system contact and enforcement patterns as well as alleged offending. They should be considered together with victimization, employment, education, and neighborhood-condition data.

Oakland OPD arrests per 1,000 residents by age group, 2018 and 2023. Arrest data reflect justice-system contact and enforcement patterns as well as alleged offending.

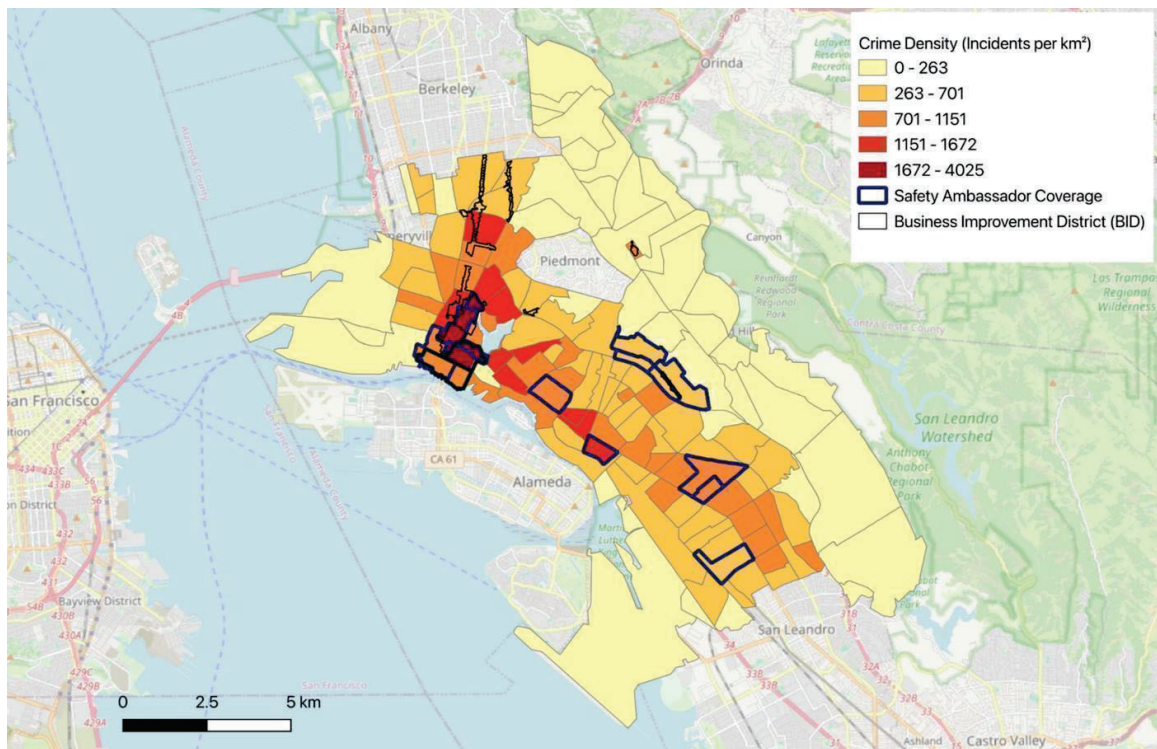
Recommendation: Expand the Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program, prioritizing youth from the neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of unemployment and crime.

1.5 Public Safety Ambassadors in business districts

Oakland should expand the Public Safety Ambassadors program to cover all major business districts. The presence of “eyes on the street” can deter criminal behavior¹⁹ and help address antisocial or mental-health-related behavior by de-escalating situations, deterring misconduct, or calling for non-sworn assistance when appropriate. The program currently serves Uptown/Downtown, Chinatown, Jack London Square, Dimond, Laurel, Montclair, San Antonio, Little Saigon, Fruitvale, Elmhurst, Havenscourt, and Hegenberger business corridors.²⁰ Because the program has been cost-effective, expansion to areas not now covered could extend its benefits. Past implementation has shown that a tailored approach is needed for each district, taking into account the nature of each business district, differences in funding sources, and varying needs. Time is therefore needed to evaluate the best approach and funding source for each district in time for inclusion in the Mayor’s Proposed 2027–2028 budget.

¹⁹“Eyes on the Street” and deterrence, *Journal of Public Economics* (2025), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272725000143>.

²⁰Oakland City Council Resolution No. 90936 C.M.S., <https://oakland.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7704363>.



Existing and potentially expanded coverage for Public Safety Ambassadors in Oakland business districts. Map credit: Shiori Hirano.

Recommendation: Extend Public Safety Ambassador coverage to business districts not currently served, with a district-by-district plan and funding approach ready for the FY 2027–28 budget. Appendix C highlights cities that have successfully deployed ambassador programs.

1.6 Violence de-escalation education in schools; OPD training review

Oakland's violence prevention efforts have shown promise. The research case for school-based de-escalation is strong. The University of Chicago Crime Lab's work, synthesized in Jens Ludwig's *Unforgiving Places*, shows that much violence arises from in-the-moment conflicts in which people act before they think — which is why programs that teach young people to slow down and de-escalate reduce violence even without changing their circumstances.²¹ The Crime Lab's randomized trials of Chicago's Becoming a Man program found 45–50% fewer violent-crime arrests among participants,²² and long-term follow-up of Seattle's elementary-school social development program found lower rates of crime and violence into adulthood.²³ Oakland's own restorative justice program in OUSD schools was found to reduce suspensions and narrow the discipline gap.²⁴ However, key funding for violence prevention education programs within Oakland's public school system is scheduled to expire this year, and it is unclear whether it is sufficient. The City should review these programs for effectiveness and coverage, then update and expand them as needed. Young people should also help shape these programs: the City and Oakland schools should include students — especially youth from neighborhoods most affected by violence, unemployment, and disinvestment — in reviewing existing programs and designing future violence-prevention and de-escalation efforts. This will require coordination between the City Council, the Oakland School Board, and the boards of charter schools.

²¹Jens Ludwig, *Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of American Gun Violence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2025).

²²Sara B. Heller, Anuj K. Shah, Jonathan Guryan, Jens Ludwig, Sendhil Mullainathan, and Harold A. Pollack, "Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some Field Experiments to Reduce Crime and Dropout in Chicago," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132, no. 1 (2017): 1–54.

²³J. David Hawkins et al., "Promoting Positive Adult Functioning through Social Development Intervention in Childhood," *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 159, no. 1 (2005): 25–31.

²⁴Sonia Jain, Henrissa Bassey, Martin A. Brown, and Preeti Kalra, *Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Implementation and Impacts* (Oakland Unified School District, 2014).

In parallel, OPD-provided officer de-escalation training should be reviewed so that the approaches taught to youth and to officers are complementary, and so that officers also benefit from reduced injuries, as noted in Recommendation 4.²⁵

Recommendation:
Focus on not just on number of officers but also on effectiveness of deployment, recognizing finite resources, and benefit of all approaches

Some OPD Challenges

Officers	Issue	Source: Feb 26 OPD OT Report
700	Measure NN	
	Sworn Authorized (3% less than NN)	
678		
	Sworn Filled (9% Vacant- even with vacancies still higher than San Jose)	
617		
	Deployable (17% on payroll, but non deployable)	
509		
Qualitative	> Outdated Bureau Structure Impacts Response times (see Auditor's 911 Report)	
Qualitative	>"Patrol Draw" -Officers assign themselves to Patrols by seniority	
	>Sworn Officers are now filling civilian positions- more cost effective civilian positions could be defined	

Work Force and Economic Development Budget since Cut 60% since 2023

- FY 2023/24 \$62 million
- FY 2024-25 \$35.2 million
- FY 2025-26 \$24.9 million
- FY 2026-27 \$24.2 million
- 17% Non deployable = more than the entire economic development and DVP budget
- We want sworn officers to be well compensated, but we also need to ask for performance accountability

22

Some OPD challenges: 17% of officers on payroll are non-deployable, in part because of injuries — a gap that effective de-escalation training can help close.

Recommendation: Create a comprehensive plan for violence de-escalation education in Oakland schools, co-designed with students, and review OPD officer de-escalation training. Appendix D highlights U.S. cities that have implemented these programs and their tracked outcomes.

1.7 Focused Deterrence: Project Ceasefire & Life Line

What the program is. Oakland Ceasefire–Lifeline is the city’s focused-deterrence strategy and has been one of Oakland’s most successful public safety programs since its founding in 2012. It concentrates both services and enforcement on the fewer than one percent of residents who drive the majority of shootings. The name reflects two interwoven parts: the Ceasefire enforcement arm, led by uniformed officers of the Oakland Police Department, and the Lifeline services arm, delivered by civilian staff of the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP).²⁶ The two arms work off the same weekly data. OPD’s Shooting Review identifies who is at highest risk of shooting or being shot in the coming days. Those individuals receive a direct message — in a group call-in or a one-on-one custom notification — that the community cares about them, that the violence must stop, and that help is available. Those who accept are assigned a DVP life coach for twelve months of intensive engagement: daily contact, in-person meetings at least twice a week, a written life plan, and connections to jobs, housing, and cognitive behavioral therapy. DVP violence interrupters work alongside the coaches to mediate active conflicts before they turn into retaliation. Enforcement is reserved for the small number who continue to shoot after receiving the message.²⁷

²⁵Robin S. Engel, Nicholas Corsaro, Gabrielle T. Isaza, and Hannah D. McManus, “Assessing the Impact of De-escalation Training on Police Behavior,” *Criminology & Public Policy* 21, no. 2 (2022).

²⁶City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention, “Evidence on the Effectiveness of Ceasefire–Lifeline” (June 2025), <https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/evidence-on-ceasefire-final-06.17.25.pdf>, citing Anthony A. Braga, Lisa M. Barao, Gregory Zimmerman, et al., *Oakland Ceasefire Evaluation: Final Report to the City of Oakland* (California Partnership for Safe Communities and Northeastern University, May 2019).

²⁷California Partnership for Safe Communities and National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, *Oakland Ceasefire Assessment: Final Report* (December 2023), <https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/violence-prevention/cpsc-audit-december->

Why it works. The evidence is unusually strong for a city program. Independent researchers at Northeastern University evaluated Oakland Ceasefire from 2012 to 2017 and found the strategy directly responsible for about 32 percent of the city's near-50 percent reduction in homicides over that period — roughly 140 lives saved in five years and the longest sustained decline in homicides Oakland had seen in half a century.²⁸ Oakland then ran the experiment in reverse. Beginning around 2019, the city shifted its focus from high-risk people to high-risk places and families, cut Ceasefire staffing, and let the weekly management meetings lapse. Homicides rose from 67 in 2018 to 119 in 2023. The 2023 audit by the California Partnership for Safe Communities concluded that Oakland had not effectively implemented Ceasefire since 2020 and that the drivers of violence had not changed: risk remained hyper-concentrated among justice-involved adult men connected to identifiable street groups.²⁹ When the city rebuilt the strategy in early 2024 — restoring the Shooting Review, restructuring DVP life coaching under Dr. Holly Joshi, and holding OPD and DVP accountable at bimonthly performance reviews — homicides fell 34 percent and non-fatal shootings 33 percent in a single year, one of the largest one-year reductions in the city's history.³⁰ The same underlying conditions, the same neighborhoods, the same police force; what changed was the focus.

National research points the same way. A systematic review of 24 focused-deterrence evaluations found a statistically significant, moderate reduction in crime, and a USAID meta-review of more than 1,400 studies identified only two community-violence strategies with moderate-to-strong effects: focused deterrence and cognitive behavioral therapy — both of which Ceasefire-Lifeline uses.³¹ The University of Chicago Crime Lab's recent synthesis reaches a consistent conclusion: much gun violence grows out of in-the-moment conflict, so interventions that interrupt escalation and reach the people most likely to be involved can reduce shootings quickly.³²

Why it should be expanded. The strategy is working but is undersized for the problem. The 2023 audit estimated that about 350 people in Oakland are identifiable as at very high risk of involvement in gun violence in any given year, and recommended 30 intensive life coaches and 15 violence interrupters to reach them. As of June 2025, DVP had 10 life coaches, 5 violence interrupters, and 5 supervisors on the Lifeline strategy.³³ Chief of Violence Prevention Dr. Holly Joshi told BAC members that DVP currently has the resources to work with roughly 150 of the 350.³⁴ Focused deterrence depends on dosage: the message must reach enough members of a social network for the group — not just the individual — to change its behavior. Before the pandemic, Oakland delivered direct communications to an average of 316 people per year; from 2020 to 2023 that fell to 169, and the audit called for a return to 300–350. Increasing resources to reach 240 of the 350 highest-risk individuals moves the strategy from covering fewer than half the network to covering two-thirds of it — the critical mass at which group behavior changes. At the audit's standard of eight clients per coach, the increment is on the order of a dozen life coaches plus proportional violence interrupters and supervision; staff should develop precise estimates in the fall 2026 sessions.

Expansion also fits every criterion in this report:

2023.pdf.

²⁸DVP, "Evidence on the Effectiveness of Ceasefire-Lifeline."

²⁹CPSC and NICJR, Oakland Ceasefire Assessment.

³⁰Reygan Cunningham, Vaughn Crandall, and Marina Gonzalez, The Return of Oakland Ceasefire: Rebuilding Key Capacities to Reduce Community Violence (California Partnership for Safe Communities, January 2025), <https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/violence-prevention/cpsc-audit-update-2025.pdf>.

³¹Anthony A. Braga, David L. Weisburd, and Brandon Turchan, "Focused Deterrence Strategies and Crime Control: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Evidence," *Criminology & Public Policy* 17, no. 1 (2018): 205–250; Thomas Abt and Christopher Winship, What Works in Reducing Community Violence: A Meta-Review and Field Study for the Northern Triangle (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2016).

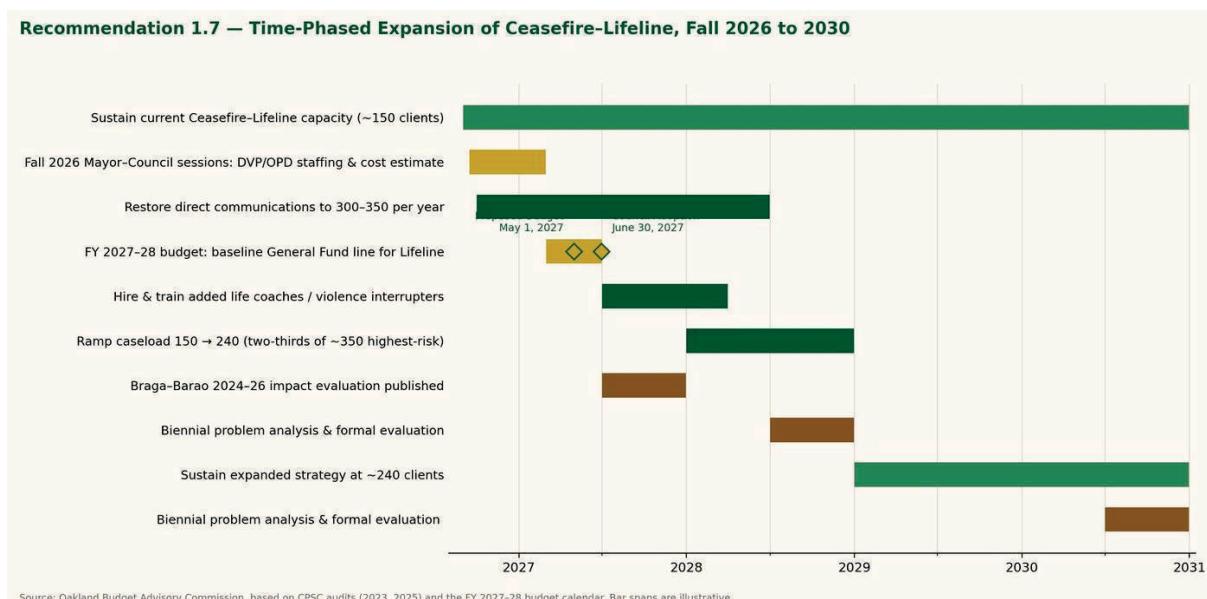
³²Jens Ludwig, *Unforgiving Places* (2025).

³³CPSC and NICJR, Oakland Ceasefire Assessment; DVP, "Evidence on the Effectiveness of Ceasefire-Lifeline."

³⁴Dr. Holly Joshi, Chief of Violence Prevention, City of Oakland, meeting with Budget Advisory Commission members, August 28, 2026.

- **Effectiveness.** This is the single intervention with the strongest Oakland-specific evidence of reducing homicides — the crime that most shapes Oakland’s reputation and its retail leakage.
- **Equity.** Rather than broad enforcement across neighborhoods of color, it narrows police attention to the few hundred people actually driving violence and leads with services. Most of those people are shooting survivors themselves.
- **Cost-effectiveness.** The management structure, weekly meetings, OPD Ceasefire unit, and evaluation partners already exist. The incremental cost is civilian staff, and each prevented homicide saves the city, county, and state millions in medical, investigative, and court costs.
- **Timing.** Life coaches can be hired and trained within months of the FY 2027–28 budget; the 2024 relaunch produced measurable results within a year. This is the one measure in the portfolio that begins delivering results immediately.

Funding stability is the risk. Most DVP life coaching for high-risk individuals has been paid for by state and federal grants, and the Partnership’s 2025 report warned this is not sustainable, recommending a baseline city budget for city-employed life coaches and violence interrupters.³⁵ That warning has since come true. In 2025 the U.S. Department of Justice terminated roughly \$500 million in already-awarded community violence intervention grants, American Rescue Plan funds must be spent by the end of 2026, and California’s CalVIP program has about half the money for the 2026–2029 cycle that it had for 2022–2025 while applications tripled. The state’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention now recommends that cities with persistently high gun violence provide dedicated, stable local funding for exactly this kind of strategy, and it uses Oakland as a case study.³⁶ Measure NN gives Oakland a funding base most cities lack; the budget question is whether Council will direct it to the strategy with the best evidence.



Time-phased expansion of Ceasefire-Lifeline, fall 2026 through 2030: current capacity sustained, staffing and cost estimates developed in the fall 2026 sessions, a baseline General Fund line adopted with the June 30, 2027 budget, and caseload ramped from 150 to 240 during 2028, with independent evaluation checkpoints.

Recommendation: Fund DVP to expand the Lifeline services arm of Ceasefire-Lifeline from roughly 150 clients to roughly 240 — about two-thirds of the estimated 350 people most responsible for gun violence

³⁵Cunningham, Crandall, and Gonzalez, The Return of Oakland Ceasefire.

³⁶California Department of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, A Strategic Plan to Sustain California’s Record Progress Against Gun Violence, Part I (April 2026), Oakland case study beginning p. 61, <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-AB1252-Report-2026.pdf>.

in Oakland — establish a baseline General Fund line so the strategy no longer depends on expiring grants, and document shooting and homicide outcomes annually so results are visible to the public.

1.8 Improve and focus job training and support for those coming out of prison (reentry)

Reentry employment is the sharpest version of the Raphael and Winter-Ebmer finding: it targets the population whose link between unemployment and property crime is strongest. People returning from incarceration face the steepest barriers to employment, and employment is one of the strongest predictors of not returning to the justice system. Oakland's reentry landscape is fragmented rather than empty, so the strongest approach is not to build a new city program but to fund, target, and coordinate what already exists.

Build on proven models — and act in the first days after release. The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) already operates in Oakland; its Golden State Works partnership provides immediate paid transitional work crews for people leaving prison. CEO's transitional-jobs model is one of the few with a rigorous randomized evaluation. MDRC found meaningful reductions in recidivism, concentrated among people enrolled within roughly 90 days of release — the effects were largest for those who came to the program soonest after coming home.³⁷ That timing point matters: the first days and weeks home are when the risk of returning to old networks is highest and when a paycheck, a daily schedule, and a coach pay off most. CROP, based in West Oakland, adds housing to the mix — its Ready 4 Life program serves formerly incarcerated people who have been in the community for no longer than five years, combining residential support, case management, participant stipends, and career training. Reentry without stable housing rarely produces stable employment. The Cypress Mandela Training Center in East Oakland offers the highest-wage pathway: pre-apprenticeship training in construction and green-building trades leading to Registered Apprenticeships, and current federal Department of Labor grants favor exactly this kind of training for formerly incarcerated people in skilled trades.

Target geographically. Returning residents concentrate in the East and West Oakland census tracts shown on the redline map in Appendix H — the same tracts with concentrated property crime and unemployment. Contracting reentry slots by neighborhood rather than citywide, aligned with EDAP targeting (1.1), makes the crime-reduction logic explicit.

Route through the Chamber partnership. The binding constraint is usually employers, not trainees. The Chamber Workforce Development Program (1.2) can recruit fair-chance employers, and California's Fair Chance Act gives the City standing to lead by example as an employer.³⁸ Community colleges and Samuel Merritt (1.3) supply the credentials; libraries and digital access (2.3) can reach returning residents in the neighborhoods where they live.

Leverage county and state dollars before the General Fund. Alameda County Probation administers realignment (AB 109) funds and contracts reentry employment services, and the Alameda County Workforce Development Board administers federal WIOA funding. The City's most cost-effective role is convening, co-funding, and measuring — not duplicating.

Measure it. Track 90-day placement, 12-month retention, wages, and three-year recidivism against a comparison group. Appendix E summarizes the Oakland-area programs.

Recommendation: Improve and focus reentry job training and support by coordinating existing Oakland-area programs with EDAP and Chamber targeting, prioritizing enrollment in the first days after release, and identifying the county, state, and federal funding needed to scale the highest-performing models.

³⁷Cindy Redcross, Megan Millenky, Timothy Rudd, and Valerie Levshin, *More Than a Job: Final Results from the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Program* (MDRC, January 2012).

³⁸California Fair Chance Act, AB 1008 (2017), Gov. Code § 12952.

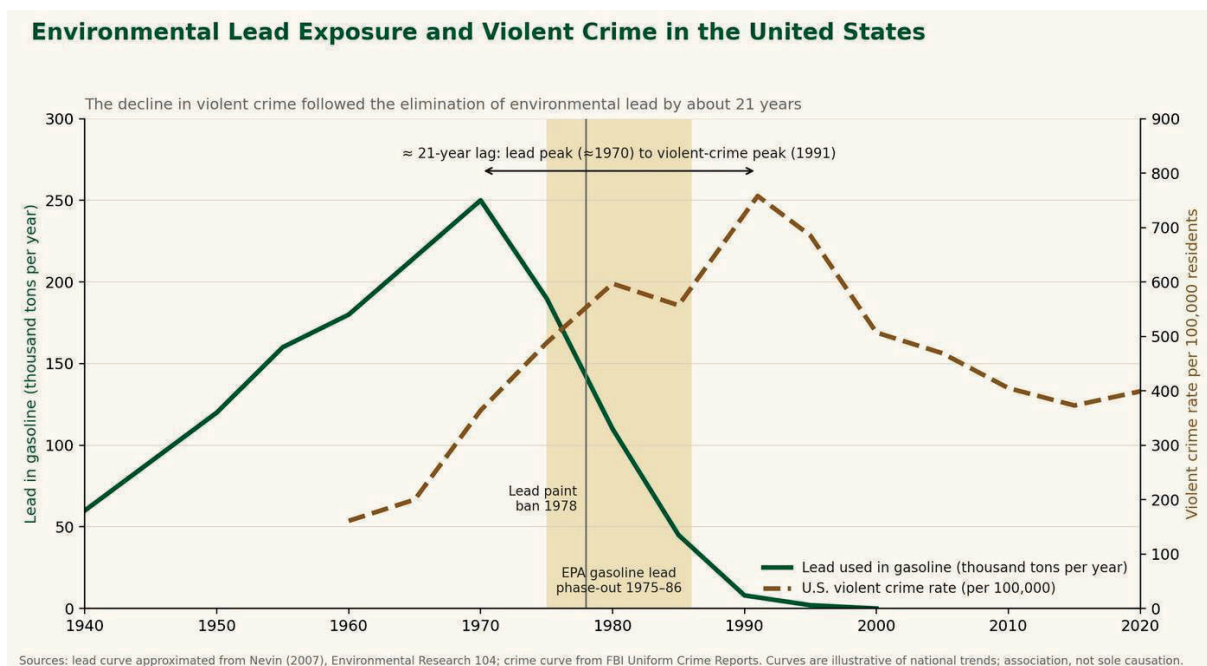
Rigorously document the benefits. Across all eight measures under Recommendation 1, the City should track crime reduction and quality-of-life outcomes, so that results — not assumptions — guide expansion in future budget cycles.

2 Safe & Healthy Communities

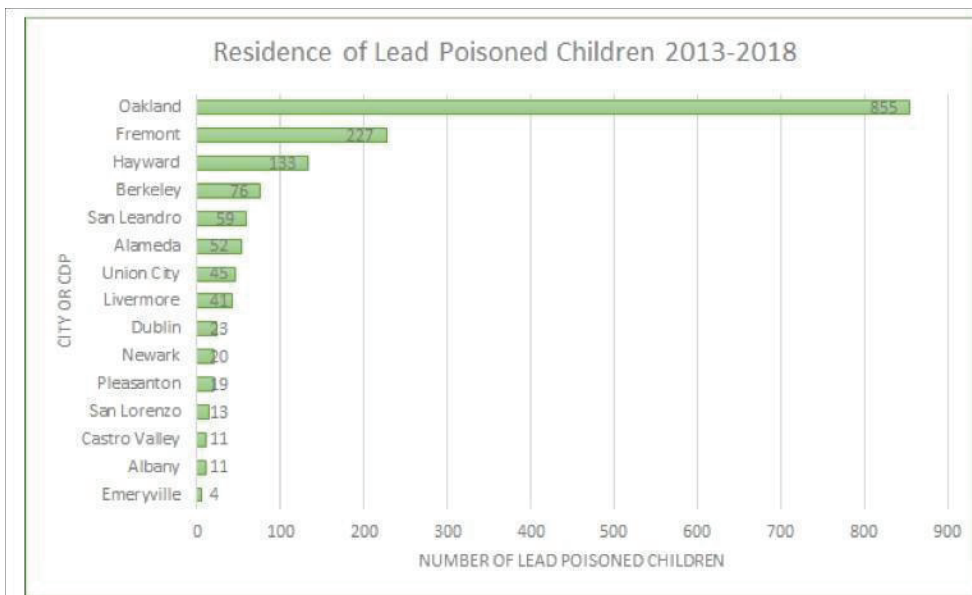
Recommendation 2 addresses the underlying neighborhood conditions that shape safety and opportunity. Each measure creates safety in a different way: lead abatement removes a neurotoxin linked to impulsive violence; food access supports the nutrition that behavioral health depends on; and parks, libraries, and digital access provide safe places and “eyes on the street” while also serving as platforms to reach the neighborhoods of highest need with information about the other measures in this report. Many of these issues show geographic correlation to historical redlining in Oakland, as can be seen by comparing the maps in this section with Appendix H.

2.1 Lead-based paint abatement — an equity and public safety issue

Lead exposure in children and pregnant mothers has been shown to be highly correlated with crime, especially violent crime, which is often behaviorally driven. Lead is a potent neurotoxin that impairs brain development, particularly in areas responsible for impulse control, emotional regulation, and executive functioning. Children’s developing nervous systems are especially sensitive. Given these findings, the U.S. mandated unleaded gasoline starting in 1976 and banned lead-based paint in 1978. One of the most significant and well-documented reductions in crime in the U.S. followed with a roughly 21-year lag — the time from toddler-age exposure to young adulthood, the age shown to be most vulnerable to crime. While the national lead bans had a significant impact, some lead-based paint remains in older buildings, especially in low-income neighborhoods. In Oakland, 80% of housing stock was built before 1978 and over 33% before 1940. This is a concern for its impact on crime as well as on health and equity.

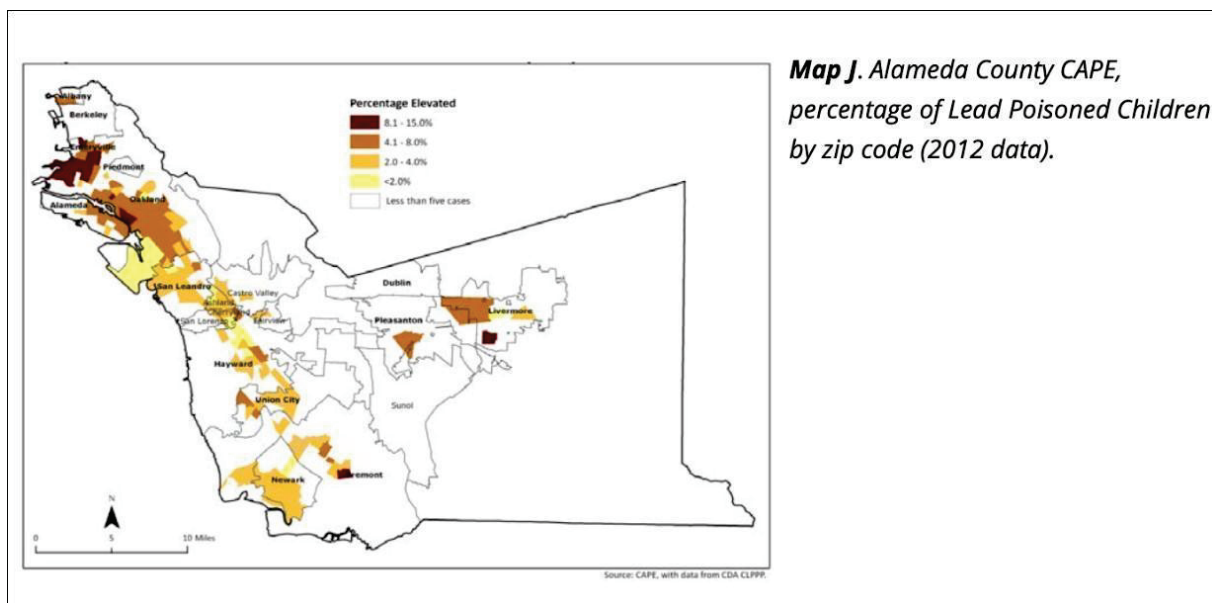


Environmental lead exposure and U.S. violent crime: the decline in violent crime followed the elimination of environmental lead by about 21 years. See Appendix F.



⁵⁷ Data provided by County of Alameda, CA Dept. of Public Health, RASSCLE database, 2011.

Residence of lead-poisoned children, 2013–2018: Oakland relative to other Alameda County cities. Data: County of Alameda, CA Department of Public Health, RASSCLE database.



Map J. Alameda County CAPE, percentage of Lead Poisoned Children by zip code (2012 data).

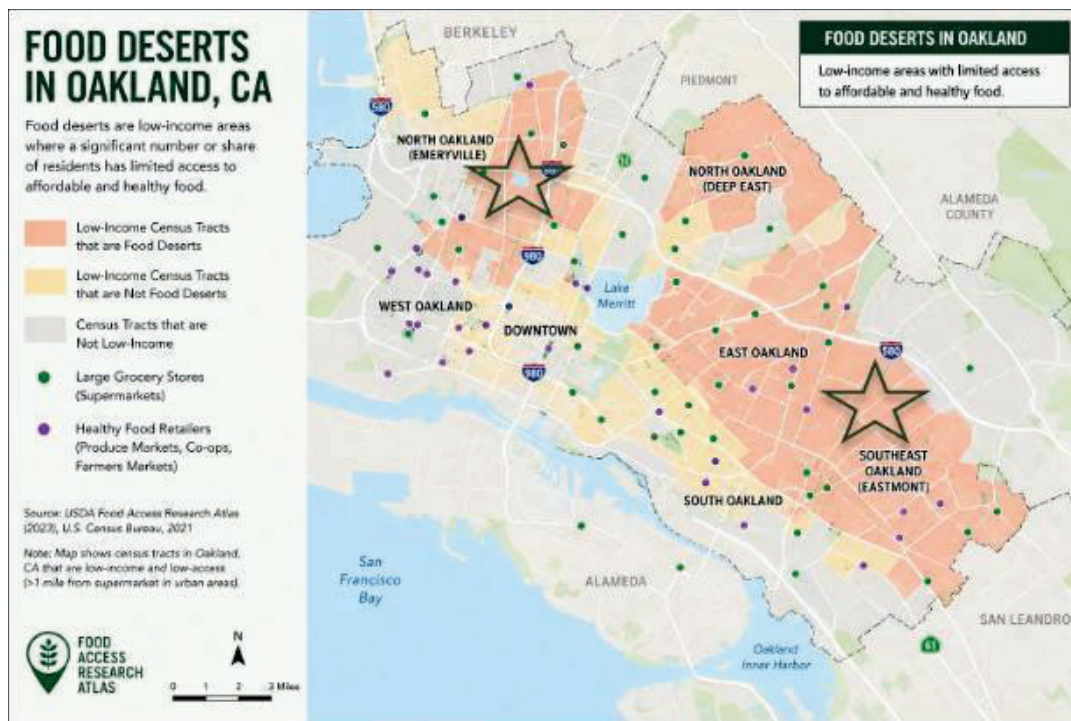
Percentage of lead-poisoned children by zip code, Alameda County (2012 data), showing strong concentration in Oakland — including areas where 8–15% of children are lead-poisoned, which correspond with areas of crime concentration.

Given this challenge, there is an opportunity. In July 2019, Alameda County, the City of Oakland, and several other California jurisdictions entered into a landmark \$305 million settlement with lead paint manufacturers. Alameda County and the City of Oakland are the only two parties to the settlement with overlapping jurisdiction and shared responsibility to reduce child lead poisoning in Oakland. Under the Lead Settlement Memorandum of Understanding, the County and the City will jointly receive 10% of the settlement abatement funds, paid out over seven years (approximately \$24 million), held in trust by the County until the County and City reach a joint agreement on the disposition of the funds.

Recommendation: The BAC supports the lead-based paint abatement program for reasons of health for our youth, crime reduction, and equity. While the settlement provides substantial funding, requirements are yet to be fully determined, and funding for staff needs to be reviewed in the 2027–2028 budget cycle.³⁹

2.2 Fresh food access and nutrition

Oakland has food deserts as defined by the USDA.⁴⁰ This is an equity, quality-of-life, health, and public safety issue. Food access belongs in this report because healthy neighborhoods support residents' well-being, family stability, economic opportunity, and quality of life. Those benefits are strong enough to support action without making a direct claim that a lack of a particular nutrient causes crime. A 2016 study of two economically deprived Oakland communities documented the scale of the food-security and access problem locally.⁴¹



Food deserts in Oakland: low-income census tracts with limited access to affordable, healthy food. Source: as shown on map.

With an increasing number of Oakland residents getting their food from dry-goods stores or liquor stores, this has become an issue of equity, quality of life, and public safety. Using omega-3 fatty acids as a marker for nutrition: they are essential to health, but dry-goods distribution channels do not preserve their sensitive nutritional value. The health impacts of omega-3s have been well documented for many years, including cardiovascular health. Newer research points to their importance for behavioral health: the brain is composed of nearly 60% fat and relies on omega-3s to regulate emotion and impulse control, and research associates omega-3 supplementation with reduced aggression across populations: a randomized trial in a UK young-offender institution found that nutritional supplementation reduced disciplinary offenses by about

³⁹City of Oakland, Racial Equity Impact Analysis: Eliminating Lead Paint Hazards in Oakland & Alameda County (2021), https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/housing-comm-dev/documents/lead/lead-paint-reia_9-23-21_final.pdf.

⁴⁰U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food Access Research Atlas, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/>.

⁴¹Kathryn Mook, Barbara A. Laraia, Vanessa M. Oddo, and Jessica C. Jones-Smith, "Food Security Status and Barriers to Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Two Economically Deprived Communities of Oakland, California, 2013–2014," *Preventing Chronic Disease* 13 (2016): 150402.

26% and violent offenses by about 37%, and a randomized trial of omega-3 supplementation in children found reductions in externalizing and aggressive behavior.⁴² Appendix G reviews this evidence and its limits.

In addition, the growth of dollar stores has tended to crowd out suppliers of quality fresh food. While dollar stores provide inexpensive, shelf-stable goods, their aggressive expansion strategies can destabilize local food systems — particularly in low-income communities. Over the last several years, dozens of U.S. municipalities have passed zoning ordinances and dispersal laws aimed at limiting dollar-store density in order to protect community food access.⁴³ Oakland has begun to address its food deserts through specific grants and programs, but could look at this issue more comprehensively.

Many cities have used their general plans and zoning ordinances to encourage adequate access to fresh, healthy food.⁴⁴ Because the community impacts of dollar-store growth are now well documented, those impacts can be considered as part of project impact review, with mitigations defined and enforced as conditions of approval — the same process commonly used when traffic, environmental, or infrastructure impacts are identified. Tulsa (2018) and Birmingham (2019), for example, adopted ordinances requiring new dollar stores to be at least a mile apart in affected neighborhoods unless they devote a defined share of floor space to fresh produce and meat.⁴⁵ Mitigations such as a fresh-food section within a store or partnerships with local fresh-food providers may be required as part of project-specific review, so long as there is a “nexus” between the impact and the mitigation and the condition is roughly proportional to it.⁴⁶

Recommendation: Strengthen Oakland’s approach to food deserts by evaluating gaps citywide and using a combination of grants, incentives, and zoning and planning policy to ensure nutrition access — paired with demand-side measures such as CalFresh and WIC matching at farmers’ markets and produce-prescription programs, since evidence shows new store access alone changes diets less than expected.⁴⁷ The public safety benefit is indirect, consistent with the rating in Figure 1. Appendix G summarizes the evidence.

2.3 Parks, libraries, and digital access as “third places” for youth and platforms to reach areas of highest need

Parks and libraries provide an important safe space for youth, improving quality of life and providing alternatives to crime. At the same time, digital access helps youth and all residents reach information and opportunity — and can be focused on Oakland-specific opportunities such as the job training programs and lead-abatement assistance described in this report. There is synergy here: libraries can be the platform that delivers digital access to the neighborhoods most in need. Urban design and digital infrastructure are

⁴²C. Bernard Gesch, Sean M. Hammond, Sarah E. Hampson, Anita Eves, and Martin J. Crowder, “Influence of Supplementary Vitamins, Minerals and Essential Fatty Acids on the Antisocial Behaviour of Young Adult Prisoners: Randomised, Placebo-Controlled Trial,” *British Journal of Psychiatry* 181, no. 1 (2002): 22–28; Adrian Raine, Jill Portnoy, Jianghong Liu, Tashneem Mahomed, and Joseph R. Hibbeln, “Reduction in Behavior Problems with Omega-3 Supplementation in Children Aged 8–16 Years: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Stratified, Parallel-Group Trial,” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 56, no. 5 (2015): 509–520.

⁴³Institute for Local Self-Reliance, *The Dollar Store Invasion* (2023), <https://ilsr.org/articles/dollar-store-invasion/>, documenting more than 50 local ordinances restricting new dollar-store development.

⁴⁴American Planning Association, *A Planners Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning*, Planning Advisory Service Report 554 (2008); ChangeLab Solutions, *Getting to Grocery: Tools for Attracting Healthy Food Retail to Underserved Neighborhoods* (2012), <https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/getting-grocery>.

⁴⁵City of Tulsa, Ordinance No. 23948 (April 2018), creating the Healthy Neighborhoods Overlay District; City of Birmingham, Ordinance amending the Zoning Code to regulate small-box discount stores (July 2019); both summarized in Institute for Local Self-Reliance, *The Dollar Store Invasion* (2023).

⁴⁶*Nollan v. California Coastal Commission*, 483 U.S. 825 (1987) (essential nexus); *Dolan v. City of Tigard*, 512 U.S. 374 (1994) (rough proportionality); see also California Mitigation Fee Act, Gov. Code § 66000 et seq.

⁴⁷Steven Cummins, Ellen Flint, and Stephen A. Matthews, “New Neighborhood Grocery Store Increased Awareness of Food Access but Did Not Alter Dietary Habits or Obesity,” *Health Affairs* 33, no. 2 (2014): 283–291.

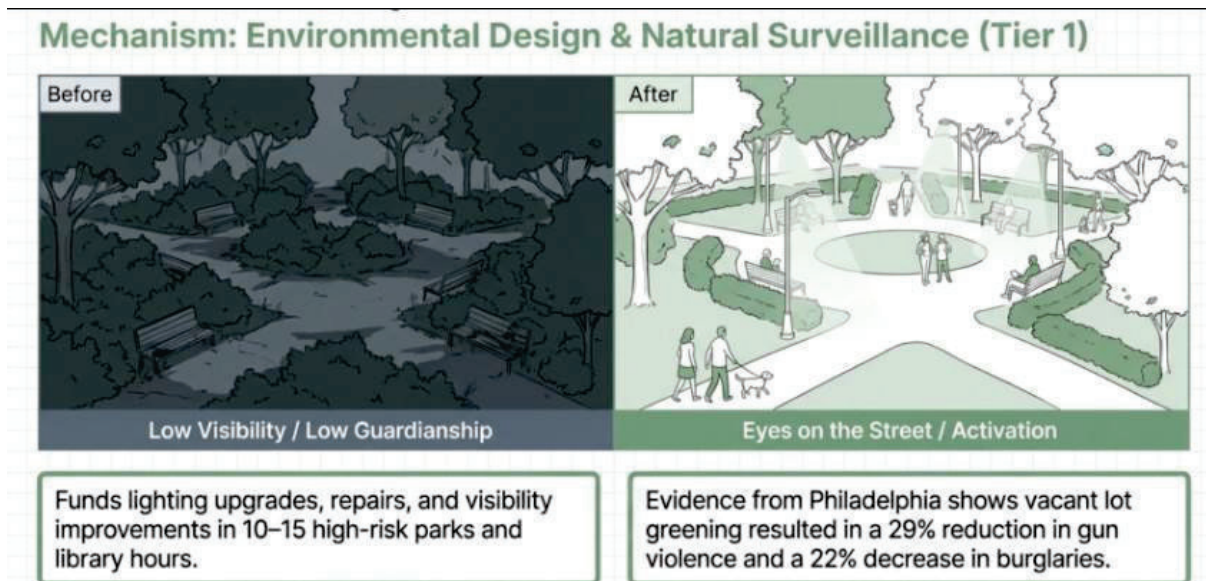
powerful tools for public safety, often more cost-effective than enforcement alone. By changing the environment and how people interact with it, cities can naturally deter illicit activity.

A. Libraries as social infrastructure

Public libraries do much more than lend books; they act as critical “third places” that provide structured activities, job resources, and a physical local-government presence. A recent study of new library branches in Kansas City found that the immediate vicinity of a branch experienced a measurable reduction in burglaries, vandalism, robberies, fraud, and assaults.⁴⁸ Libraries act as neighborhood hubs that increase pedestrian foot traffic, putting more “eyes on the street,” and by providing free access to educational and labor-market resources they raise the opportunity cost of committing a crime.

B. Parks and green spaces

Transforming vacant lots into maintained parks and green spaces is a proven place-based strategy for reducing neighborhood violence. Restoring neglected spaces eliminates hiding spots for illicit activity and signals that residents are actively monitoring and caring for their neighborhood. In a landmark citywide randomized controlled trial in Philadelphia, researchers led by Charles Branas restored vacant, blighted lots by removing debris, planting grass and trees, and installing low wooden fences; neighborhoods that received this greening treatment saw gun assaults drop by more than 27%, alongside significant reductions in overall crime and residents’ fear of violence. Foundational research on Chicago public housing by Frances Kuo and William Sullivan found that buildings surrounded by trees and greenery experienced roughly half as many crimes as identical buildings surrounded by barren land.



Environmental design and natural surveillance: before and after. Funds lighting upgrades, repairs, and visibility improvements in high-risk parks; Philadelphia evidence shows vacant-lot greening reduced gun violence.

C. Digital access and broadband

Bridging the digital divide is most often framed as an economic imperative, but recent data show an association between high-speed internet access and lower crime. Researchers have proposed several reasons — changes in how people spend their time, greater access to work and education, and improved access to information and services — though these remain proposed mechanisms rather than settled explanations. One study using U.S. state-level data from 2000 to 2012 found an association between greater

⁴⁸ Amir B. Ferreira Neto, Jacob Nowicki, and Shishir Shakya, “Do Public Libraries Help Mitigate Crime? Evidence from Kansas City, MO,” *Journal of Cultural Economics* 49 (2023): 141–161, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10824-023-09497-4>.

broadband access and lower crime. Oakland should treat this as supporting evidence for digital access, while recognizing that broadband expansion is also justified on economic, education, and equity grounds.

Investments intended to create safer spaces for youth should be designed with youth, not only for youth. Oakland should create a regular process for young people to identify what makes parks, libraries, programs, and digital resources feel useful, safe, welcoming, and relevant to their lives.

Recommendation: Prioritize park and library improvements and digital access, especially for youth, in the 2027–2028 budget. As Oakland restores its Capital Improvement Program, ensure the City has expertise in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and the design of social infrastructure, and use libraries and digital access to inform residents in areas of highest need about job training, lead abatement, and other opportunities in this report.

3 OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Wrap-Around Services

The BAC thanks Fire Chief Covington and members of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force for their collaboration in this effort over time, addressing two interrelated measures that together improve service, equity, and Oakland's fiscal position.

3.1 Consolidate ambulance services to improve equity and capture insurance revenue for Oakland

Most (over 80%) of OFD calls are for non-fire emergency response. Given fire response-time requirements, OFD has resources deployed throughout the city. This typically results in OFD being closest to the location of a call for help and thus the first responder on scene, with a private ambulance company arriving afterward. In this arrangement, patients go through a handoff and the ambulance company provides transportation to the hospital or other care facility. Though OFD provides the initial response, the private ambulance company receives payment for the call from the patient's insurance. From an equity standpoint, one challenge with this system is that private, for-profit ambulance companies may have an incentive to station ambulances in areas with more lucrative insurance coverage.

In a consolidated approach, OFD would provide first response as well as transportation, eliminating the handoff, and would collect the insurance payment for ambulance services. Cities that take this approach report better service and significant revenue. While OFD is a necessary expense line in Oakland's budget, it has not been able to collect these payments; in a consolidated arrangement, OFD would provide more comprehensive service and also become a source of revenue. Cities in this arrangement have been able to keep fire stations open that would otherwise have closed, and have generated tens of millions of dollars annually — Sacramento County, for example, reports approximately \$80 million per year. Though legal restrictions were put in place through private ambulance lobbying in the 1980s, some cities were grandfathered and there are approaches that enable this model for OFD.

The initial small steps are included in the current budget cycle. In the next budget cycle, larger expenditures will be required to scale up, and it is important for the public and their Council members to understand that there is not just cost but significant revenue that can help the City on its path to fiscal health.

3.2 Use revenue to enable MACRO to achieve its envisioned purpose, and keep all fire stations open

The original intent of MACRO was to provide non-police civilian response to non-violent, non-emergency 911 calls. However, MACRO was ultimately housed in OFD, and the adopted dispatch requirements restrict MACRO from responding to residential addresses — in part because MACRO was not able to retain the mental health professionals originally envisioned. This limits MACRO's ability to serve its intended purpose of reducing the burden on OPD sworn staff. An area under discussion with OFD is using revenue from ambulance service to bring on the needed mental health professionals. MACRO could also expand its capability to provide referrals to social workers or health professionals when a need is identified. This would help the health of Oaklanders and help ensure that smaller mental health issues do not escalate into larger public safety issues, creating long-term savings.

Recommendation: Implement OFD ambulance service integration to attain revenue for Oakland, and dedicate that revenue to keeping fire stations open — preserving response time and wildfire readiness — and to helping MACRO acquire the staffing needed to fully achieve its intended purpose. Support public education and funding for these initiatives as the program grows.

4 Improved Deployment of OPD Sworn Officers

OPD and our sworn officers play a vital role in Oakland, and there is much to build on. Project Ceasefire and Life Line (Recommendation 1.7) show what well-directed police work looks like: a focused, evaluated strategy that concentrates OPD's attention on the small number of people and places driving gun violence, coordinated with services and community partners. The theme of this recommendation is that it is not just the number of officers but how they are deployed that matters — and Ceasefire is the proof that OPD can deploy to great effect when the strategy is right.

San Jose provides a useful benchmark because it has fewer officers per resident and per square mile while reporting substantially lower crime rates — and was named the safest big city in America in a 2025 SmartAsset study. That comparison suggests officer count alone does not explain public safety outcomes. Oakland and San Jose differ in important economic, demographic, geographic, and historical ways, so the comparison should be used to ask questions about deployment and broader conditions rather than to imply that one staffing model explains the difference. Indeed, if San Jose's better economic conditions are part of the explanation, that is precisely the point of Recommendation 1: investment in economic development also affects crime in Oakland.

Comparing Number of Officers and Crime Rate Oakland and San Jose

	Oakland	San Jose	SJ/OAK
Population	443,554	997,368	225%
Square Mileage	56	178	318%
Sworn Full Time Staff	678	1,172	173%
Officers/1000 Residents	1.53	1.18	
Officers/Square Mile	12.1	6.6	
Property Crime Rate	7,230	2,572	36%
Violent Crime Rate	1,925	519	27%

-It's not just # officers, but
of **deployment**
effectiveness that matters

-Economic Conditions also
matter



A 2025 Study by Smart Asset
named San Jose the safest big
city in America

<https://smartasset.com/data.../americas-safest-cities-2025>

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Comparing number of officers and crime rate, Oakland and San Jose. It is not just the number of officers but deployment effectiveness — and economic conditions — that matter.

The quantitative deployment gap

Much public discussion has focused on Measure NN's target of 700 officers. Yet the budgeted number, 678, is only 3% below that target. The far larger gaps come after the budget is adopted: about 9% of budgeted positions are not filled, leaving 617 officers on payroll, and of those, 17% are not deployable, according to the February 2026 report by the Chief of Police to Council — leaving 509 deployable officers. In other words, roughly a quarter of the sworn force the public is paying for is not on the street. A significant part of the non-deployable share stems from injuries and the resulting workers' compensation claims, and the cost of non-deployable officers is on a par with Oakland's entire workforce and economic development budget.

This is where Recommendation 1.6 connects directly to deployment. That recommendation addresses violence de-escalation education in schools and a review of OPD officer training. Research shows that effective de-escalation training also protects officers: a randomized controlled evaluation of the ICAT de-

escalation curriculum in the Louisville Metro Police Department found the training was associated with 28% fewer use-of-force incidents, 26% fewer injuries to community members, and 36% fewer injuries to officers.⁴⁹ Fewer officer injuries mean fewer officers on the non-deployable list, lower workers' compensation costs, and more of the budgeted force available for patrol — a deployment gain that costs far less than hiring.

Qualitative deployment issues

The slide below summarizes these quantitative factors alongside a set of qualitative deployment issues that the BAC, working with the City Auditor, has identified. Each is long-standing, and each affects how much public safety Oakland gets from the officers it already pays for:

- **Outdated bureau structure and 911 staffing.** The City Auditor's 911 report shows that an outdated bureau structure lengthens 911 response times, as does delayed hiring of budgeted 911 dispatcher positions. Both are administrative issues that can be addressed without adding sworn headcount.
- **Sworn officers in civilian positions.** Many sworn officers are filling positions defined as civilian — in some cases because of injuries — taking them away from patrol. There are also instances where sworn positions could be converted to more cost-effective civilian positions. The City Council has asked for over a year for an update from OPD on these issues.
- **"Patrol Draw."** Through an unusual process called Patrol Draw, officers choose their own patrol assignments based on seniority rather than being assigned where they are needed most. There is no public data on the effect, but the likely result is that the most experienced officers gravitate to lower-priority patrols, while less experienced officers — who may be the most recently and thoroughly trained in violence de-escalation — are not placed where those skills are needed most.
- **Concentration mismatch.** This report shows that the sources of Oakland's crime are geographically concentrated — in unemployment, lead exposure, food access, and historical disinvestment. Officer deployment may not be similarly concentrated. Matching deployment to where need is greatest is a deployment decision, not a headcount decision.

⁴⁹Robin S. Engel, Nicholas Corsaro, Gabrielle T. Isaza, and Hannah D. McManus, "Assessing the Impact of De-escalation Training on Police Behavior: Reducing Police Use of Force in the Louisville, KY Metro Police Department," *Criminology & Public Policy* 21, no. 2 (2022).

Recommendation:

Focus on not just on number of officers but also on effectiveness of deployment, recognizing finite resources, and benefit of all approaches

Some OPD Challenges

Officers	Issue	Source: Feb 26 OPD OT Report
700	Measure NN	
	Sworn Authorized (3% less than NN)	
678	Sworn Filled (9% Vacant- even with vacancies still higher than San Jose)	
617	Deployable (17% on payroll, but non deployable)	
509	> Outdated Bureau Structure Impacts Response times (see Auditor's 911 Report)	
Qualitative	>"Patrol Draw" -Officers assign themselves to Patrols by seniority	
Qualitative	>Sworn Officers are now filling civilian positions- more cost effective civilian positions could be defined	

Work Force and Economic Development Budget since Cut 60% since 2023

- FY 2023/24 \$62 million
- FY 2024-25 \$35.2 million
- FY 2025-26 \$24.9 million
- FY 2026-27 \$24.2 million
- 17% Non deployable = more than the entire economic development and DVP budget
- We want sworn officers to be well compensated, but we also need to ask for performance accountability

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Some OPD challenges — quantitative (Measure NN, budgeted, filled, deployable) and qualitative (bureau structure, Patrol Draw, civilian positions) — alongside the workforce and economic development budget, cut 60% since 2013.

As Oakland considers the number of officers, these are all deployment issues that need to be taken just as seriously. The BAC does not have access to complete data to assess each one, so we have suggested the following topics to be taken on by the City Auditor, recognizing the many priorities already on the Auditor's plate.

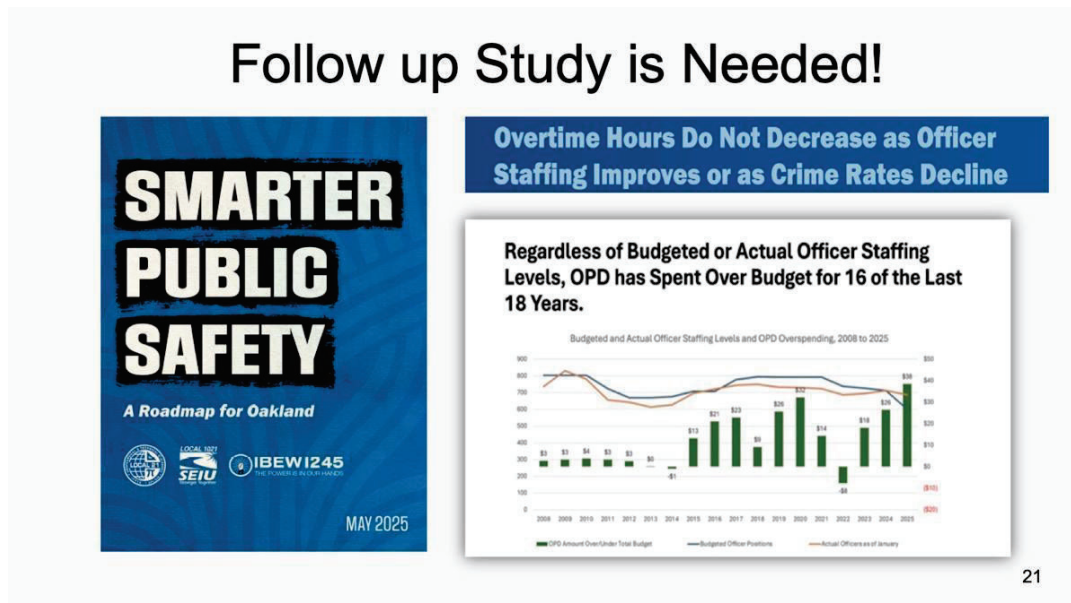
Suggested Follow up Topics in Collaboration with City Auditor

- Understanding 17% Officers on payroll but not deployable, causes and scope
 - Paid Admin leave during duplicate investigations (would ending oversight help?)
 - Workman's comp as compared to other cities
- Understand how "Patrol Draw" (officers assigning themselves to Patrols based on seniority) is impacting deployment of the right skills to the right places
- Macro Dispatch Protocols- Understand how restrictions on response to street addresses is impacting effectiveness
- Understand Sworn officers filling civilian positions
 - Sworn Officers now filling defined civilian desk jobs
 - Potential to convert existing sworn officers to civilian where appropriate
- Update of 2019 Police Overtime Audit to reflect new trends and 2025 Report by SEIU
- Follow up on Action items for 911 and Police Overtime Audit Recommendations

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Suggested follow-up topics in collaboration with the City Auditor.

Overtime is a related deployment question. While the City Auditor completed an overtime audit in 2019 — with many action items still open — SEIU issued a more recent report in 2025⁵⁰ indicating that overtime exceeded budget in 16 of the prior 18 years, regardless of approved budget, on-board sworn staffing levels, or crime rate. This is complicated by the fact that at least some overtime is making up for vacant positions. An updated audit may be appropriate.



Overtime hours did not decrease as officer staffing improved or as crime rates declined (SEIU, 2025).

The City Auditor has suggested more assertive use of the meet-and-confer process to address these very long-standing issues. We want sworn officers to be well compensated, and we also need to ask for performance accountability. Well-deployed officers and the conditions that make fewer of them necessary are complementary investments.

As the BAC noted in its 2023 Report on the Budget Process:⁵¹

Especially of concern was that during the past fiscal year, city leadership chose to reopen the OPOA contract to give wage increases to police and fire when the contracts were nowhere near expiration. This was done in a way that both avoided public input and impacted the City budget for future years, including the FY 23-25 cycle. The BAC recommends that all summaries of tentative agreements be publicly posted in advance of a vote by City Council.

The result was that projected revenues were fully committed to long-term expenses before the budget process even started, and the largest portion of the budget was decided without a public input process. We recognize the importance of collective bargaining, but hope the City will take a more holistic approach in the coming cycle.

The timing of negotiations matters. Peer-reviewed research on municipal police and fire bargaining finds that departments with collective bargaining spend measurably more where the unions are politically active in local elections.⁵² Some cities have responded by deliberately separating police contract decisions from

⁵⁰SEIU, “Smarter Public Safety: A Roadmap for Oakland” (2025), <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1WzkbKofWklvzJkULF5b4wKnye6vOtGBJ>.

⁵¹Budget Advisory Commission, “BAC Memo on Budget Process” (2023), https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-OQ2SAVnshXqHLxMiEZNdKJoCz-gWA09Af_Qybt28UU/edit?tab=t.0.

⁵²Sarah F. Anzia and Terry M. Moe, “Public Sector Unions and the Costs of Government,” *Journal of Politics* 77, no. 1 (2015): 114–127.

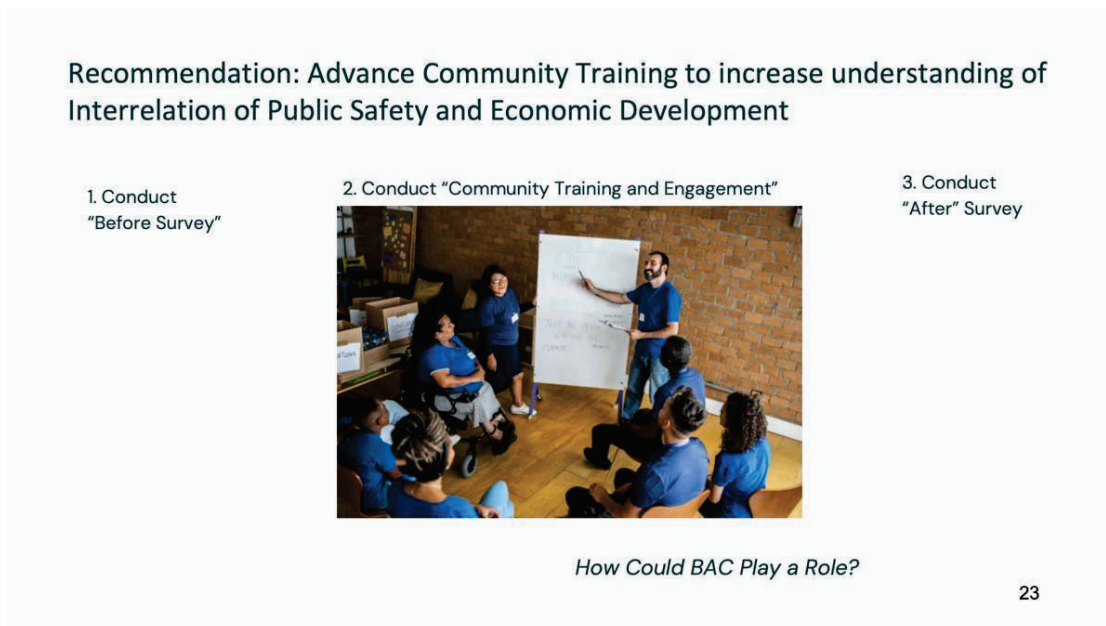
election cycles. In 2023, for example, the Austin City Council declined to vote on a tentative four-year police contract and instead extended the existing agreement for one year so that the decision would follow, rather than precede, a May election on police oversight measures.⁵³ Oakland may wish to schedule its MOU updates in non-election years, so that they are focused on the merits and less on political influence, and also to focus more comprehensively — not just on officer compensation and total staffing, but on effectiveness of deployment as well. While our officers should be well compensated, the many other factors described here are important to the public interest as well.

Recommendation: Use the meet-and-confer process assertively, as the City Auditor has suggested, to address sworn officer deployment — deployability and injury reduction, bureau structure and 911 staffing, Patrol Draw, civilianization, geographic deployment, and overtime — and request follow-up reports from the City Auditor on each.

⁵³Austin Monitor, “City, Police Union Resume Bargaining over Long-Term Police Labor Contract,” March 17, 2024, <https://austinmonitor.com/stories/2024/03/city-police-union-resume-bargaining-over-long-term-police-labor-contract/>; KXAN, “Police Union Pushes for Long Term Deal as Austin City Council Wants 1-Year Contract Extension,” February 17, 2023.

5 Public Education & Engagement

Community education is vitally important to these recommendations. Though many of them matter greatly to the Oakland community, many community members may not be aware of their interrelation. Understandably, the first thing that comes to mind for many when they think of public safety is the number of sworn officers — one important variable — but as shown above, many other factors affect both public safety and economic development. Given the scale of the problems, we need an “all hands on deck” approach that looks at every aspect, including breaking long-standing cycles of disinvestment and instability.



Advance community training to increase understanding of the interrelation of public safety and economic development: conduct a “before” survey, deliver community training and engagement, and conduct an “after” survey.

The BAC has the opportunity not only to gather information from the public but also to provide education. The BAC is planning remote meetings — and proposes town halls in each of the seven Council districts — that could include “before” and “after” surveys to give Council information on the public’s understanding of and support for these approaches. Public education is also important as these actions are taken, to let the public know that Oakland is moving beyond its past.

Recommendation: Convene public forums — including a first round of district town halls before budget adoption and a second round to report back — for education and discussion of these recommendations well in advance of the next budget cycle, so the public is well informed and policymakers can formulate specific budget initiatives to be reflected in the Mayor’s 2027–2028 Proposed Budget, in Council members’ priorities, and in the budget adopted by June 30, 2027.

Links for further information

[SEIU. “Smarter Public Safety: A Roadmap for Oakland” \(2025\)](#)

[The Economics of Crime: Identifying the Causal Effect of Unemployment](#)

[BAC Memo on Budget Process \(2023\)](#)

[Approach to Public Safety and Economic Development \(presentation\)](#)

Appendices

The appendices provide additional detail — mostly examples of other cities that have had success in the same areas — in the same order as the recommendations: workforce development and economic recovery (1.1–1.3), ambassadors (1.5), school de-escalation (1.6), reentry (1.8), lead abatement (2.1), nutrition (2.2), and the historical genesis of neighborhood conditions (Recommendation 2).

Appendix A — Cities Reducing Crime Through Workforce Development

City	Workforce Initiative / Program	Primary Target Demographic	Key Outcomes & Crime Reduction Metrics
Chicago, IL	One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC+)	Opportunity youth and justice-involved young adults	A randomized evaluation found that eight weeks of summer employment with behavioral mentoring reduced violent-crime arrests by 43% over 16 months, with most of the effect coming after the summer ended; later replications found reductions on the order of one-third. ⁵⁴
New York City, NY	Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	Formerly incarcerated individuals transitioning back into the community	MDRC’s randomized evaluation of CEO’s transitional-jobs model found reduced recidivism, with the largest effects for participants enrolled soon after release. Separately, a national study found that every 10 additional community nonprofits per 100,000 residents was associated with a 9% drop in the murder rate, a 6% drop in violent crime, and a 4% drop in property crime. ⁵⁵
Philadelphia, PA	PowerCorpsPHL	Out-of-school or out-of-work young adults (18–30), many justice-involved	A 4- to 24-month paid program in energy, green-infrastructure, and community careers; the program reports that roughly 90% of graduates move into career-pathway employment and that justice-involved members average an 8% one-year recidivism rate, against citywide re-arrest rates in the 34–45% range depending on the measure. ⁵⁶

⁵⁴Sara B. Heller, “Summer Jobs Reduce Violence among Disadvantaged Youth,” *Science* 346, no. 6214 (2014): 1219–1223; Sara B. Heller, “When Scale and Replication Work: Learning from Summer Youth Employment Experiments,” *Journal of Public Economics* 209 (2022).

⁵⁵Redcross et al., *More Than a Job* (MDRC, 2012); Patrick Sharkey, Gerard Torrats-Espinosa, and Delaram Takyar, “Community and the Crime Decline: The Causal Effect of Local Nonprofits on Violent Crime,” *American Sociological Review* 82, no. 6 (2017): 1214–1240.

⁵⁶PowerCorpsPHL program outcomes as reported in The Philadelphia Citizen, “PowerCorpsPHL,” <https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/powercorpsphl-philadelphia>; Philadelphia Reentry Coalition, *Calculating a Unified Recidivism Rate for Philadelphia* (March 2018).

City	Workforce Initiative / Program	Primary Target Demographic	Key Outcomes & Crime Reduction Metrics
Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (LARRP)	Formerly incarcerated individuals and those experiencing housing insecurity	A countywide network of more than 400 reentry providers combining housing, job training, and clinical services. LARRP's advocacy raised the share of county AB 109 realignment funding going to community-based providers from 11% to over 27%, and it now delivers place-based workforce services alongside housing. Outcomes are program-reported; no independent crime evaluation has been published. ⁵⁷
Boston, MA	Boston Summer Youth Employment Program	At-risk youth and out-of-school young adults	A randomized lottery evaluation found that summer employment reduced violent-crime arraignments by 35% and property-crime arraignments by 29% in the 17 months after the program, with the largest effects for youth with prior justice involvement. ⁵⁸
Detroit, MI	Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT); Detroit at Work C.H.O.I.C.E.S.; Mayor's Workforce Development Board returning-citizens initiative	Youth 14–24 citywide; justice-involved 18–24-year-olds; returning citizens	GDYT employs more than 8,000 Detroit youth each summer in a tiered 120-hour program; C.H.O.I.C.E.S. provides intensive case management, job readiness, and placement for young adults affected by the justice system or community violence; the Workforce Development Board coordinates training and employer partnerships for returning citizens. These workforce programs operate alongside Detroit's ShotStoppers community violence intervention zones — whose strategies include training opportunities for adults — and expanded police hiring. Detroit recorded 203 homicides in 2024, the fewest since 1965 and 33% below 2022, with non-fatal shootings down 25% and property crime down 3%. ⁵⁹

Key mechanisms behind the data

- **Economic substitution:** Economic opportunity can be a protective factor. Stable work, income, mentoring, and structured time can reduce some of the conditions associated with property crime and

⁵⁷Council on Criminal Justice, biography of Troy F. Vaughn, Executive Director, Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership, <https://counciloncj.org>; Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, grant to LARRP for homelessness prevention “inclusive of place-based workforce development services” (November 2024).

⁵⁸Alicia Sasser Modestino, “How Do Summer Youth Employment Programs Improve Criminal Justice Outcomes, and for Whom?” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 38, no. 3 (2019): 600–628.

⁵⁹City of Detroit, “Detroit Partnerships Result in Another Historic Drop in Violent Crime in 2024; Fewest Homicides since 1965,” January 3, 2025, <https://detroitmi.gov/news/detroit-partnerships-result-another-historic-drop-violent-crime-2024-fewest-homicides-1965-shootings>; Detroit at Work, “Year-Round Youth Services,” <https://detroitatwork.com/year-round-youth-services>; Detroit Mayor's Workforce Development Board, <https://workforcedetroit.com>; Associated Press, “Detroit Sees a Drop in Homicides and Violent Crime, According to Preliminary 2024 Data,” January 3, 2025.

justice-system involvement. This does not mean unemployment explains why any individual commits a crime, but expanding opportunity can be one useful part of a broader public-safety strategy — especially for Oakland.

- **The “soft skills” spillover:** Workforce programs build skills that last beyond the job itself. Programs that include mentoring, conflict resolution, self-management, and workplace expectations help participants strengthen skills that support long-term employment and reduce future justice-system involvement.

Appendix B — Global Cities with Successful Post-COVID Economic Recoveries

The table below highlights cities that implemented standout recovery strategies, along with the metrics that showed their plans worked.

City & Country	Primary Recovery Strategy / Focus	Key Success Metrics & Outcomes
Miami, USA	Fast-tracked digitization of city services, leveraged data-driven reopenings, and aggressively courted tech and finance migration.	Achieved a record-low unemployment rate of 1.4%, alongside top-tier national job growth.
Singapore	Leveraged pre-existing post-SARS health infrastructure to reopen safely, while investing heavily in sustainable tech and green infrastructure.	Ranked globally as one of the fastest and most stable post-pandemic economic turnarounds.
Houston, USA	Invested in light rail connecting major employment hubs (such as the Texas Medical Center) to downtown, while incentivizing high-rise residential cores; leaned into leisure and hospitality recovery.	Ranked among the large metros with the biggest gains in the Milken Institute's 2024 Best-Performing Cities index, with 8–15% job growth in leisure and hospitality driving the improvement. ⁶⁰
Denver, USA	Reconfigured the relationship between downtown and the suburbs, investing in urban hub revitalization (such as Union Station) to keep foot traffic local.	Accelerated employment recovery well ahead of the national baseline, insulating hospitality and retail.
Salt Lake City, USA	Sustained pre-pandemic growth momentum and concentrated downtown investment in housing, entertainment, and sports venues so that visitors and residents — not only office workers — anchor downtown activity.	The most recovered major downtown in North America in the University of Toronto–UC Berkeley “Death of Downtown?” study: 155% of 2019 visitor activity by May 2022 and 139% by spring 2023, while most U.S. downtowns remained below pre-pandemic levels. ⁶¹
Nashville and San Diego, USA	Built downtown recovery on face-to-face industries — entertainment, hospitality, leisure, and food service — that draw daily visitors regardless of office return.	Led the Urban Land Institute's 26-city analysis of overall downtown recovery (with San Jose), having both the highest share of daily downtown visitors and the greatest share of jobs in leisure and hospitality. ⁶²
Oslo, Norway	Launched a targeted \$380M+ stimulus package aimed at green energy infrastructure and localized industrial productivity.	Maintained a resilient GDP and achieved a faster, more robust rebound than European forecasts predicted.
Helsinki, Finland	Decentralized municipal decision-making and created financial lifelines tailored to protect creative and cultural industries.	Mitigated systemic small-business closures and preserved the city's cultural economy.

The recovery blueprint

The common denominator among these cities was not simply a desire to return to “normal.” The most successful regions used the crisis as a catalyst to reinvent themselves — through digital transformation,

⁶⁰Milken Institute, Best-Performing Cities 2024 (February 2024), <https://milkeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/BestPerformingCities2024.pdf>.

⁶¹Karen Chapple et al., “The Death of Downtown? Pandemic Recovery Trajectories across North American Cities,” University of Toronto School of Cities and UC Berkeley, <https://downtownrecovery.com>; Axios Salt Lake City, “Salt Lake’s Downtown Is No. 1 for Pandemic Recovery,” August 31, 2022.

⁶²Urban Land Institute, “America’s Downtown Recovery: What Does the Data Say?” Urban Land Magazine, September 4, 2024, <https://urbanland.uli.org/economy-markets-trends/americas-downtown-recovery-what-does-the-data-say>.

green investment, or changing how people live, commute, and work in urban centers. The U.S. downtown data point in a consistent direction for Oakland: the downtowns that recovered fastest were those that drew daily visitors for dining, entertainment, and hospitality — precisely the strengths Oakland already has, if safety concerns can be addressed.

Appendix C — Public Safety Ambassador Programs in Business Districts

Many cities use public safety and hospitality ambassador programs — often funded through Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or public-private partnerships — to deter low-level crime, assist visitors, and boost the perception of safety in commercial areas. The table below highlights several notable examples.

City	Program Name	Primary Target Districts	Key Roles & Responsibilities	Reported Impact / Success Metric
Los Angeles, CA	Business Improvement Districts (30 BIDs, 1996–2003)	Commercial districts citywide	Property-owner-funded “clean and safe” services: unarmed safety patrols, sidewalk maintenance, graffiti removal, lighting and parking improvements.	The most rigorously evaluated ambassador-style model. Peer-reviewed studies found BID implementation associated with a 12% reduction in robbery and an 8% reduction in violent crime, and an 11% decline in serious crime with the largest effect on robbery (18%), at a cost that compared favorably with the crime reduction achieved; a 2024 systematic review found 8 of 9 quantitative BID evaluations reported reductions in one or more crime types. Rated “Promising” by the National Institute of Justice. ⁶³
San Francisco, CA	Urban Alchemy community ambassadors (Mid-Market / Tenderloin), Welcome Ambassadors	Downtown, Union Square, Mid-Market, Tenderloin, SoMa, transit stations	Daily unarmed presence (225 ambassadors across 80 block faces in the Mid-Market/Tenderloin contract), de-escalation, welfare checks, overdose reversal, connection to services; staffed largely by people with lived experience of incarceration or homelessness.	The Board of Supervisors, citing Stanford and City reports, credits the program with a 52% drop in overall crime and an 82% drop in drug-related crime where ambassadors are stationed versus where they are not, and a more than 60% drop in disorder-related calls for service on some blocks. The underlying Stanford study had not been peer-reviewed as of early 2024. ⁶⁴

⁶³John MacDonald, Daniela Golinelli, Robert J. Stokes, and Ricky Bluthenthal, “The Effect of Business Improvement Districts on the Incidence of Violent Crimes,” *Injury Prevention* 16, no. 5 (2010): 327–332; Philip J. Cook and John MacDonald, “Public Safety through Private Action: An Economic Assessment of BIDs,” *Economic Journal* 121 (2011): 445–462; National Institute of Justice CrimeSolutions, “Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Los Angeles”; “A Review of the Impacts of Business Improvement Districts on Crime and Disorder,” *Crime Prevention and Community Safety* (2024).

⁶⁴San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Resolution No. 534-25 (File No. 251060), 2025, <https://www.sfbos.org/sites/default/files/r0534-25.pdf>; San Francisco Examiner, “Urban Alchemy Touts Success, Inches Closer to City Contract,” November 2022, and “San Francisco Crime Study Early Results Have Stark Findings,” January 2024.

City	Program Name	Primary Target Districts	Key Roles & Responsibilities	Reported Impact / Success Metric
San Diego, CA	Downtown Partnership Clean & Safe Program	Downtown San Diego (275 blocks)	Safety ambassadors 24 hours a day, seven days a week: welfare checks, safe-walk escorts, business check-ins, reporting illegal activity, and an unhoused-care team; maintenance ambassadors for cleaning and beautification.	Operating for more than 20 years as a property-and-business improvement district; not affiliated with law enforcement but works with SDPD neighborhood policing. Regarded as a model for bridging the gap between local businesses and police. ⁶⁵
St. Louis, MO	Downtown Public Safety Ambassador Program	Downtown & Downtown West	Unarmed, uniformed patrols (foot, bike, vehicle), business checks, pedestrian escorts, and minor ordinance reporting.	Backed by a \$5 million multi-year investment; works alongside St. Louis Metropolitan Police to layer visible safety.
Oakland, CA	Community Ambassador Program	Downtown, Uptown, Chinatown, Jack London Square, and additional corridors funded by Council	Pedestrian/umbrella escorts, business engagement, graffiti/litter removal, and quick reporting of suspicious behavior.	Local merchants report increased foot traffic and a higher sense of safety; a vital tool during police staffing shortages. Council Resolution No. 90936 C.M.S. funded expansion to additional business corridors. ⁶⁶
Minneapolis, MN	Uptown Safety Ambassadors	Uptown Business District	High-visibility patrols, late-night/weekend presence, de-escalation, and connecting people to resources.	Launched to combat post-pandemic property crime and revitalize nightlife foot traffic.

Common features of these programs

- **Unarmed and de-escalation focused:** Ambassadors are almost never armed law enforcement. They are trained in conflict resolution, mental health awareness, and first aid.
- **The “eyes and ears” model:** Instead of making arrests, they serve as a visible deterrent and maintain direct lines of communication with local police to report active crimes.
- **Dual focus on safety and cleanliness:** Most programs recognize that a clean environment — free of graffiti, broken glass, and litter — improves the public perception of safety and deters crime.

⁶⁵Downtown San Diego Partnership, “Clean & Safe Program” and “Safety Ambassadors,” <https://downtownsandiego.org>.

⁶⁶Oakland City Council Resolution No. 90936 C.M.S., <https://oakland.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7704363>.

Appendix D — De-Escalation and Violence Intervention Programs in Schools

Using violence de-escalation, conflict resolution, and restorative practices in schools has become a prominent strategy for cities aiming to lower both in-school incidents and community-level youth violence. The table below highlights several U.S. cities that have implemented targeted programs, along with their tracked outcomes.

City	Program / Initiative	Core Implementation & Focus	Reported Impact / Key Outcome
Chicago, IL	Becoming a Man (BAM)	Weekly in-school group sessions using cognitive behavioral therapy and de-escalation practice to help male students slow down decision-making in high-stakes, high-conflict situations.	Two randomized controlled trials by the University of Chicago Crime Lab found BAM reduced violent-crime arrests by 45–50% and total arrests by 28–35% during the program, and raised on-time graduation by 12–19%, at roughly \$1,850 per participant per year. ⁶⁷
Oakland, CA	Oakland Unified School District Restorative Justice (RJ) program	District-wide, three-tier model since 2010: community-building circles in classrooms (Tier 1), restorative conferencing and harm circles instead of suspension (Tier 2), and supported re-entry after suspension, expulsion, or incarceration (Tier 3). Adopted under a voluntary agreement with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.	A 2014 evaluation for the Office for Civil Rights found suspensions fell faster in RJ schools than in non-RJ schools, the Black-white discipline gap narrowed, and chronic absenteeism in RJ middle schools dropped 24% while rising 62% in non-RJ middle schools. Funding has since been reduced and staff shifted among schools — the coverage gap Recommendation 1.6 asks the City and OUSD to review. ⁶⁸
Denver, CO	Denver Public Schools restorative practices	District-wide introduction of restorative approaches to discipline in place of suspension.	Suspension rates dropped for all racial groups and the Black-white discipline gap narrowed nearly in half, from 9 to 5 percentage points. ⁶⁹
San Francisco, CA	School Crisis Support Initiative (SCSI)	Places trained School Violence Interrupters in public schools to use de-escalation and conflict resolution before tensions spill into the community.	Interrupted and resolved multi-student threats and fights; provided direct behavioral intervention pathways to reduce repeat offenses.
Albuquerque, NM	School-Based Violence Intervention Program (SBVIP)	Combines de-escalation workshops, safe-passage routing, and on-site intervention specialists for students with high exposure to gun violence and trauma.	A 40% drop in school suspensions at flagship campuses and decreased community-level youth violence risk.

⁶⁷Sara B. Heller, Anuj K. Shah, Jonathan Guryan, Jens Ludwig, Sendhil Mullainathan, and Harold A. Pollack, “Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some Field Experiments to Reduce Crime and Dropout in Chicago,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132, no. 1 (2017): 1–54; University of Chicago Crime Lab, “Becoming a Man,” <https://crimelab.uchicago.edu/projects/becoming-a-man-bam/>.

⁶⁸Sonia Jain, Henrissa Bassey, Martin A. Brown, and Preeti Kalra, Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Implementation and Impacts (Oakland Unified School District, prepared for the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014); Results for America, “School-Based Restorative Justice: Oakland, CA,” <https://catalog.results4america.org/case-studies/rj-in-schools-oakland>.

⁶⁹Anne Gregory, Francis L. Huang, Yolanda Anyon, Eldridge Greer, and Barbara Downing, “An Examination of Restorative Interventions and Racial Equity in Out-of-School Suspensions,” *School Psychology Review* 47, no. 2 (2018): 167–182, as summarized in Trevor Fronius et al., Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: An Updated Research Review (WestEd, 2019).

City	Program / Initiative	Core Implementation & Focus	Reported Impact / Key Outcome
Seattle, WA	Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP)	Universal elementary-school program teaching emotional self-awareness, communication skills, and conflict de-escalation to students, with parallel training for teachers and parents.	The longest-running study of its kind: participants followed into adulthood showed significantly lower rates of crime and violence, along with better school and mental-health outcomes, and benefit-cost analyses find the program returns more in avoided justice costs than it costs. ⁷⁰
Los Angeles, CA	School Climate Bill of Rights (2013) & restorative justice policy	Shifted from traditional school policing toward training campus staff and safety advocates in de-escalation and restorative diversion.	Dramatic reduction in school-based arrests and citations, lowering the “school-to-prison pipeline” trajectory for high-risk youth.

Key takeaways from these programs

- **Community spillover:** Data from the CDC and the Community Preventive Services Task Force show that when students learn to de-escalate conflicts inside the classroom, those behaviors carry over into their neighborhoods, producing a measurable drop in community-level violent crime.
- **Proactive vs. reactive:** Rather than relying on physical restraint or immediate law enforcement intervention, these programs emphasize identifying early warning signs of distress and agitation to neutralize a crisis before it turns physical.

⁷⁰J. David Hawkins, Rick Kosterman, Richard F. Catalano, Karl G. Hill, and Robert D. Abbott, “Promoting Positive Adult Functioning through Social Development Intervention in Childhood,” *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 159, no. 1 (2005): 25–31.

Appendix E — Reentry Workforce Programs Serving Oakland

Recommendation 1.8 calls for improving and focusing job training and support for people returning from incarceration. Oakland and Alameda County already host several programs that apply the evidence-based transitional-jobs and pre-apprenticeship models. The table below summarizes them as a starting point for the coordination and scaling the BAC recommends; program details should be confirmed with each organization and with City staff.

Program	Model	Relevance to Oakland
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) — Oakland	Immediate paid transitional work crews following release, paired with job coaching, industry-specific training (warehouse/logistics, construction), and placement; CEO Oakland opened in 2011 and serves people recently released from incarceration. ⁷¹	The most rigorously evaluated reentry-employment model in the country; MDRC's randomized evaluation found reduced recidivism, with the largest effects for participants enrolled soon after release.
CROP — Ready 4 Life	Year-long residential reentry program at a live-in career campus in West Oakland combining housing, personal development, career training (including technology and UX-design tracks), employment services, and a monthly stipend. Launched in 2023 with a \$27 million three-year state pilot to serve more than 200 formerly incarcerated Californians. ⁷²	Addresses housing and employment together, the two conditions most associated with successful reentry; state-funded pilot data will be available to inform City decisions.
Cypress Mandela Training Center	East Oakland pre-apprenticeship program in construction and green-building trades, with soft-skills and life-skills components; a long-standing City of Oakland workforce contractor serving justice-involved and underemployed residents. ⁷³	Direct pipeline into union apprenticeships and Oakland's construction and infrastructure work — the highest-wage reentry pathway.
Rubicon Programs — Center of Reentry Excellence (CORE)	Transitional employment, on-the-job training, job-readiness, retention support, financial coaching, and legal assistance for justice-impacted residents, delivered under Alameda County Probation's AB 109 Direct Services Employment Program; operates a Rubicon Education Partnership site at Roots Community Health Center on International Boulevard in East Oakland. ⁷⁴	Already county-funded through realignment dollars and co-located in a high-need East Oakland neighborhood — a natural anchor for geographically targeted reentry slots.

⁷¹Center for Employment Opportunities, "CEO Oakland," <https://www.ceoworks.org/locations/oakland>; Second Chance Business Coalition, "Center for Employment Opportunities," <https://secondchancebusinesscoalition.org/center-for-employment-opportunities>.

⁷²Office of Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo, "Assemblymember Carrillo Champions Grand Opening of CROP's Re-Entry Success Program," February 13, 2023, <https://a52.asmdc.org>; Figma, "Meet the Nonprofit Training Formerly Incarcerated People for Careers in UX Design."

⁷³City of Oakland, Office of the Mayor, agenda report on the Oakland Green Jobs Initiative, Resolution authorizing contracts including Cypress Mandela Training Center (November 16, 2010).

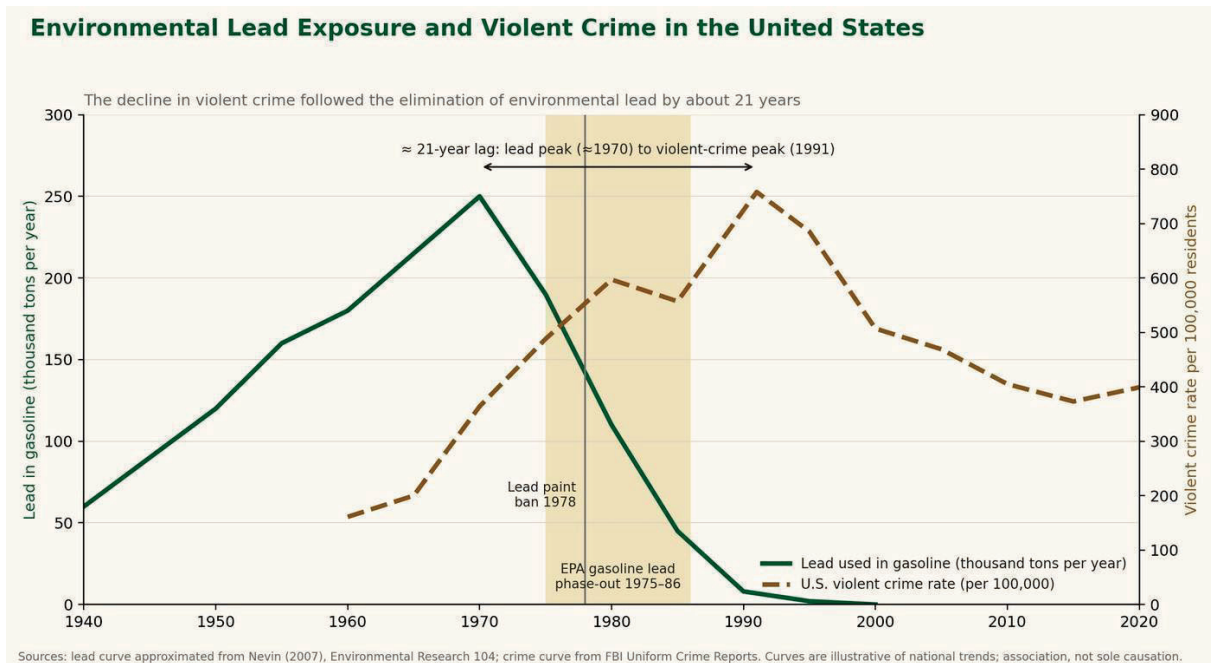
⁷⁴Alameda County Probation Department, "Resources for Justice-Impacted Individuals: Employment Program Flyers" (AB 109 Direct Services Employment Program, Master Contract No. 901813), <https://alamedacountyca.gov/probation/documents/EmploymentProgramFlyers.pdf>.

Program	Model	Relevance to Oakland
Roots Community Health Center — Emancipators Initiative	Wraparound support, paid job training with stipends, and living-wage job placement for low-income, reentry, and marginalized residents of Oakland and Alameda County, integrated with primary and behavioral health care. ⁷⁵	Pairs employment with health care in the neighborhoods shown on the lead, food-desert, and redline maps in this report.
Civicorps — Professional Pathway	Paid job training combined with a high-school diploma program and trauma-informed wraparound services for low-income Oakland young adults ages 18–26.	Serves the age group with the highest arrest rates (see the arrests-by-age chart under 1.4) and overlaps with the reentry population.
Alameda County & Oakland Workforce Development Boards	Administer federal WIOA funding and coordinate America's Job Centers; fund and refer to reentry-focused providers.	The natural coordinating body for aligning reentry programs with EDAP targeting and the Chamber's workforce program.

Common features of the most effective programs are early enrollment after release, paid work from the first week, a credential or apprenticeship pathway, and wrap-around support for housing and transportation. Appendix A's CEO and PowerCorpsPHL examples show how these features translate into lower recidivism and localized reductions in property crime.

⁷⁵Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership, 2017–2019 Programs and Services (City of Oakland Human Services Department), https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/human-services/documents/ac-ocap/2018_acocap_grantees_programservices_external_4.2.18.pdf.

Appendix F — Lead-Based Paint Abatement and the Lead-Crime Research



Environmental lead exposure and U.S. violent crime: the decline in violent crime followed the elimination of environmental lead by about 21 years.

- **The lead curve:** Environmental lead levels rose steadily from the 1940s through the 1960s as a result of the widespread use of leaded gasoline and lead-based paint, peaking around 1968–1970.
- **The crime curve:** The U.S. violent crime rate followed a broadly similar long-term pattern in later decades, with a roughly 21-year lag. Violent crime rose sharply in the late 1960s and 1970s, reached an all-time peak in 1991, and then fell dramatically through the 1990s and 2000s.
- **Why the time lag:** Childhood exposure affects outcomes years later as exposed children reach adolescence and young adulthood (ages 18–24). The timing is notable, though it does not by itself establish that lead exposure alone caused later crime trends.
- **Policy interventions:** The EPA gasoline lead phase-out (1975–1986) forced the transition to unleaded fuel and catalytic converters, causing a rapid collapse in atmospheric lead. The 1978 federal ban on lead-based paint curtailed the other major source of residential childhood lead poisoning — but paint applied before 1978 remains in older housing.

The research base

The literature on lead and crime has a clean three-tier structure: individual-level studies that establish the biological and behavioral mechanism, population-level studies that establish that the mechanism scales to crime rates, and a third tier of causal-econometric and synthesis work that calibrates the size of the effect and shows that intervention works.

Tier 1: Individual-level epidemiology (exposure → behavior in the same person)

- The foundational study found that bone lead in Pittsburgh boys predicted teacher- and parent-reported aggression and delinquency, controlling for covariates; a follow-up found adjudicated delinquents had markedly higher bone lead than controls.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Herbert L. Needleman, Julie A. Riess, Michael J. Tobin, Gretchen E. Biesecker, and Joel B. Greenhouse, "Bone Lead Levels and Delinquent Behavior," *JAMA* 275, no. 5 (1996): 363–369; Herbert L. Needleman et al., "Bone Lead Levels in Adjudicated Delinquents," *Neurotoxicology and Teratology* 24, no. 6 (2002): 711–717.

- The single best individual-level citation is the Cincinnati Lead Study, a prospective birth cohort with blood lead measured prenatally and throughout childhood and linked to adult arrest records: each 5 µg/dL increase in childhood blood lead raised the rate of arrests for violent offenses specifically, on the order of 30–50% per 5 µg/dL — a prospective design, objective outcomes, and a dose-response relationship.⁷⁷
- A Christchurch, New Zealand birth-cohort replication using a different exposure measure (tooth lead) found associations with later criminal behavior that survive covariate adjustment, though attenuated.⁷⁸
- The mechanism paper, from the same Cincinnati cohort, used MRI to show childhood lead exposure associated with reduced gray matter specifically in the prefrontal regions governing impulse control and executive function — the neuroanatomical bridge between exposure and violence.⁷⁹
- The Dunedin cohort provides the best evidence on long-run cognitive and socioeconomic effects, and also a useful caution: its follow-ups found weaker criminal-outcome associations than Cincinnati, which honest citation should acknowledge.⁸⁰

Tier 2: Population-level studies (aggregate lead → aggregate violent crime)

- The origin of the lead-crime hypothesis at scale: gasoline-lead consumption predicts violent crime about 20 years later, and the 2007 paper shows the same lagged fit across nine countries with different phase-out timings — the strongest purely time-series evidence, since each country's crime peak follows its own lead peak.⁸¹
- The standard economics citation exploits state-by-state variation in the Clean Air Act gasoline-lead phase-down as a natural experiment, attributing a substantial share (her estimate: roughly half) of the 1990s violent-crime decline to lead removal — critically, with effects on violent but not property crime, matching the impulsivity mechanism.⁸²
- The city-level version: air lead in six U.S. cities predicts aggravated assault 22 years later with remarkable fit — the right citation when the unit of analysis is a city like Oakland.⁸³
- The historical out-of-sample test: cities that installed lead water pipes (for quasi-random reasons of distance to lead refineries and water acidity) had higher homicide rates decades later — powerful because it is a completely different era, exposure route, and identification strategy reaching the same conclusion.⁸⁴

⁷⁷John Paul Wright, Kim N. Dietrich, M. Douglas Ris, Richard W. Hornung, Stephanie D. Wessel, Bruce P. Lanphear, Mona Ho, and Mary N. Rae, "Association of Prenatal and Childhood Blood Lead Concentrations with Criminal Arrests in Early Adulthood," *PLoS Medicine* 5, no. 5 (2008): e101.

⁷⁸David M. Fergusson, Joseph M. Boden, and L. John Horwood, "Dentine Lead Levels in Childhood and Criminal Behaviour in Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood," *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 62, no. 12 (2008): 1045–1050.

⁷⁹Kim M. Cecil et al., "Decreased Brain Volume in Adults with Childhood Lead Exposure," *PLoS Medicine* 5, no. 5 (2008): e112.

⁸⁰Aaron Reuben et al., "Association of Childhood Blood Lead Levels with Cognitive Function and Socioeconomic Status at Age 38," *JAMA* 317, no. 12 (2017): 1244–1251.

⁸¹Rick Nevin, "How Lead Exposure Relates to Temporal Changes in IQ, Violent Crime, and Unwed Pregnancy," *Environmental Research* 83, no. 1 (2000): 1–22; Rick Nevin, "Understanding International Crime Trends: The Legacy of Preschool Lead Exposure," *Environmental Research* 104, no. 3 (2007): 315–336.

⁸²Jessica Wolpaw Reyes, "Environmental Policy as Social Policy? The Impact of Childhood Lead Exposure on Crime," *B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy* 7, no. 1 (2007): Article 51.

⁸³Howard W. Mielke and Sammy Zahran, "The Urban Rise and Fall of Air Lead (Pb) and the Latent Surge and Retreat of Societal Violence," *Environment International* 43 (2012): 48–55.

⁸⁴James J. Feigenbaum and Christopher Muller, "Lead Exposure and Violent Crime in the Early Twentieth Century," *Explorations in Economic History* 62 (2016): 51–86.

- A county-level cross-sectional analysis across roughly 3,100 U.S. counties found that air-lead concentrations predict homicide rates controlling for sociodemographics — the within-country geographic complement to the time-series work.⁸⁵

Tier 3: Quasi-experimental causal studies and synthesis (the strongest modern citations)

- The best modern causal micro-study links Rhode Island administrative data on individual blood-lead tests to later school discipline and juvenile detention, with identification from proximity-to-roadway variation in exposure — bridging the individual and policy levels.⁸⁶
- **The policy-critical finding:** comparing children just above versus just below the CDC intervention threshold, those who received lead remediation and services showed dramatically lower later antisocial behavior and crime — evidence that abatement plus intervention actually reverses the trajectory. This is the citation that justifies spending money.⁸⁷
- **The essential honesty citation:** a meta-analysis of 24 studies found evidence of publication bias and concluded the true effect is real but smaller than headline claims — lead explains a meaningful share, but likely well under the largest figures; its central estimates suggest lead accounts for perhaps 7–28% of the 1990s violent-crime decline rather than half. Any rigorous document should cite this alongside Reyes.⁸⁸
- A Chicago birth-cohort analysis by criminology’s leading figure — and, for the redlining thread in Appendix H, its companion paper documenting that lead exposure in Chicago was as racially segregated as any social outcome ever measured: the direct empirical link between redlining-era housing geography and the lead burden.⁸⁹

For Oakland-specific purposes, the most useful set is: Wright et al. (2008) for individual-level violent arrests; Cecil et al. (2008) for mechanism; Reyes (2007) and Mielke and Zahran (2012) for population and city-level effects; Aizer and Currie (2019) and Billings and Schnepel (2018) for causal identification and evidence that intervention works; Higney et al. (2022) for a calibrated effect size; and Sampson and Winter (2016) for racial-geographic concentration — grounded locally by the City of Oakland’s 2021 Racial Equity Impact Analysis and the Alameda County Public Health Department’s lead-surveillance data.⁹⁰

⁸⁵Paul B. Stretesky and Michael J. Lynch, “The Relationship between Lead Exposure and Homicide,” *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 155, no. 5 (2001): 579–582.

⁸⁶Anna Aizer and Janet Currie, “Lead and Juvenile Delinquency: New Evidence from Linked Birth, School, and Juvenile Detention Records,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 101, no. 4 (2019): 575–587.

⁸⁷Stephen B. Billings and Kevin T. Schnepel, “Life after Lead: Effects of Early Interventions for Children Exposed to Lead,” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 10, no. 3 (2018): 315–344.

⁸⁸Anthony Higney, Nick Hanley, and Mirko Moro, “The Lead-Crime Hypothesis: A Meta-Analysis,” *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 97 (2022): 103826.

⁸⁹Robert J. Sampson and Alix S. Winter, “Poisoned Development: Assessing Childhood Lead Exposure as a Cause of Crime in a Birth Cohort Followed Through Adolescence,” *Criminology* 56, no. 2 (2018): 269–301; Robert J. Sampson and Alix S. Winter, “The Racial Ecology of Lead Poisoning,” *Du Bois Review* 13, no. 2 (2016): 261–283.

⁹⁰City of Oakland, Racial Equity Impact Analysis: Eliminating Lead Paint Hazards in Oakland & Alameda County (2021), https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/housing-comm-dev/documents/lead/lead-paint-reia_9-23-21_final.pdf; Alameda County Public Health Department, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program surveillance data (RASSCLE database).

Appendix G — Nutrition and Public Safety: The Evidence and Its Limits

Recommendation 2.2 rests on three separate claims that are not equally supported, and the BAC believes the report is stronger for saying so. First, that Oakland has food deserts concentrated in the same East and West Oakland tracts as the other maps in this report — well documented. Second, that nutrition affects impulse control and aggression — supported by randomized trials, though of supplementation rather than of food-environment change. Third, that fixing food deserts reduces crime — not directly demonstrated. The evidence is organized below in the same three-tier structure as Appendix F. The public safety benefit of food access is rated as indirect in Figure 1 for exactly this reason; the case for action rests primarily on equity, health, and quality of life.

Tier 1: Oakland's food-access problem (documented)

- The USDA Economic Research Service defines and maps low-income, low-access census tracts; the food-desert map in Recommendation 2.2 is drawn from these designations.⁹¹
- A 2013–2014 study of two economically deprived Oakland communities found high rates of food insecurity and identified cost, distance, and store quality as barriers to fruit and vegetable consumption.⁹²
- “Food swamps” — dense concentrations of fast-food, liquor, and convenience stores — predict obesity better than food deserts do. This matters for Oakland, where the problem is as much the density of liquor and dollar stores as the absence of grocers.⁹³
- Alameda County Public Health Department community health data show the same neighborhood-level concentration of diet-related disease and of low-income, low-access tracts within Oakland.⁹⁴

Tier 2: Nutrition and behavior (randomized trials)

- A randomized, placebo-controlled trial in a UK young-offender institution found that supplementation with vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids reduced disciplinary offenses by about 26% and violent offenses by about 37% relative to placebo.⁹⁵
- A Dutch replication in adult prisons found a similar reduction in reported incidents among the supplemented group.⁹⁶
- A randomized, double-blind trial of omega-3 supplementation in children aged 8–16 found reductions in externalizing and aggressive behavior, with effects persisting after supplementation ended.⁹⁷

⁹¹U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food Access Research Atlas, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/>.

⁹²Kathryn Mook, Barbara A. Laraia, Vanessa M. Oddo, and Jessica C. Jones-Smith, “Food Security Status and Barriers to Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Two Economically Deprived Communities of Oakland, California, 2013–2014,” *Preventing Chronic Disease* 13 (2016): 150402, <https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd13.150402>.

⁹³Kristen Cooksey-Stowers, Marlene B. Schwartz, and Kelly D. Brownell, “Food Swamps Predict Obesity Rates Better Than Food Deserts in the United States,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 14, no. 11 (2017): 1366.

⁹⁴Alameda County Public Health Department, Community Assessment, Planning, and Evaluation Unit, Alameda County Health Data Profiles, <https://acphd.org/data-reports/>.

⁹⁵C. Bernard Gesch, Sean M. Hammond, Sarah E. Hampson, Anita Eves, and Martin J. Crowder, “Influence of Supplementary Vitamins, Minerals and Essential Fatty Acids on the Antisocial Behaviour of Young Adult Prisoners: Randomised, Placebo-Controlled Trial,” *British Journal of Psychiatry* 181, no. 1 (2002): 22–28.

⁹⁶Ap Zaalberg, Henk Nijman, Erik Bulten, Luwe Stroosma, and Cees van der Staak, “Effects of Nutritional Supplements on Aggression, Rule-Breaking, and Psychopathology among Young Adult Prisoners,” *Aggressive Behavior* 36, no. 2 (2010): 117–126.

⁹⁷Adrian Raine, Jill Portnoy, Jianghong Liu, Tashneem Mahomed, and Joseph R. Hibbeln, “Reduction in Behavior Problems with Omega-3 Supplementation in Children Aged 8–16 Years: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Stratified, Parallel-Group Trial,” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 56, no. 5 (2015): 509–520.

- **The calibration citation:** a meta-analysis of omega-3 supplementation and aggression finds a modest but statistically significant effect — real, but smaller than the individual trials suggest and not a substitute for other violence-prevention measures.⁹⁸

Tier 3: Policy tools and honest limits

- **The honesty citation:** an evaluation of a new supermarket opened under Pennsylvania’s Fresh Food Financing Initiative found that residents’ awareness of food access improved, but their diets and obesity rates did not change within two years. Access is necessary but not sufficient; demand-side measures — CalFresh and WIC matching at farmers’ markets, produce prescriptions, nutrition education — need to travel with it.⁹⁹
- More than 50 U.S. localities have adopted ordinances restricting new dollar-store development, most commonly dispersal requirements or conditions requiring fresh-food sections, to protect community food access — the zoning-and-planning tools Recommendation 2.2 asks Oakland to evaluate.¹⁰⁰
- Funding vehicles exist for the “grants and incentives” component: the federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative and California FreshWorks provide loans and grants for grocery and fresh-food retail in underserved areas.¹⁰¹

Taken together: Oakland’s food-access problem is real and geographically concentrated; nutrition measurably affects behavior; and the tools to improve access are known. The BAC recommends acting on those grounds while describing the public safety benefit as indirect and supportive, and pairing access with demand-side measures so that new stores actually change what residents eat.

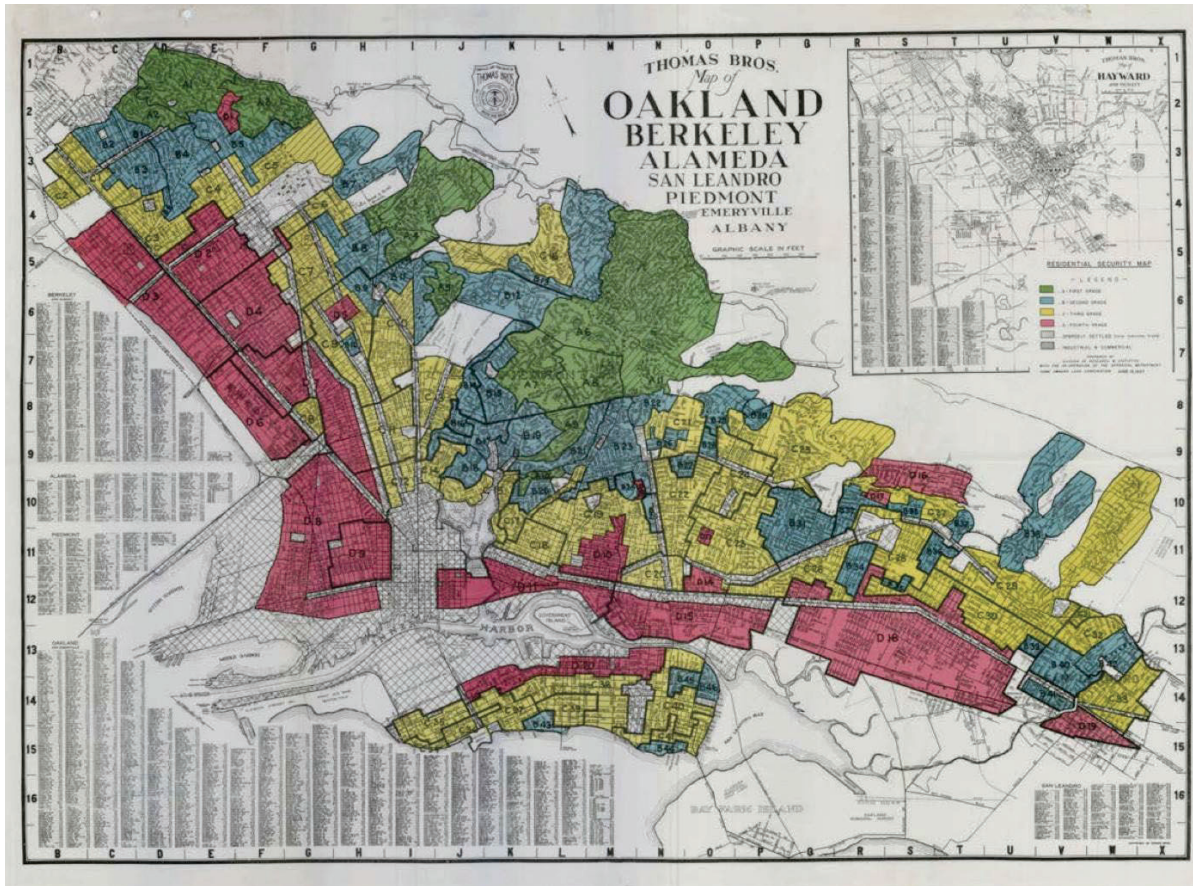
⁹⁸Jamie M. Gajos and Kevin M. Beaver, “The Effect of Omega-3 Fatty Acids on Aggression: A Meta-Analysis,” *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* 69 (2016): 147–158.

⁹⁹Steven Cummins, Ellen Flint, and Stephen A. Matthews, “New Neighborhood Grocery Store Increased Awareness of Food Access but Did Not Alter Dietary Habits or Obesity,” *Health Affairs* 33, no. 2 (2014): 283–291.

¹⁰⁰Institute for Local Self-Reliance, *The Dollar Store Invasion* (2023), <https://ilsr.org/articles/dollar-store-invasion/>.

¹⁰¹U.S. Department of Agriculture, Healthy Food Financing Initiative, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/hffi>; California FreshWorks (administered by the Public Health Institute and the California Endowment), <https://cafreshworks.com>.

Appendix H — Redline Map Showing Historic Genesis of Community Challenges

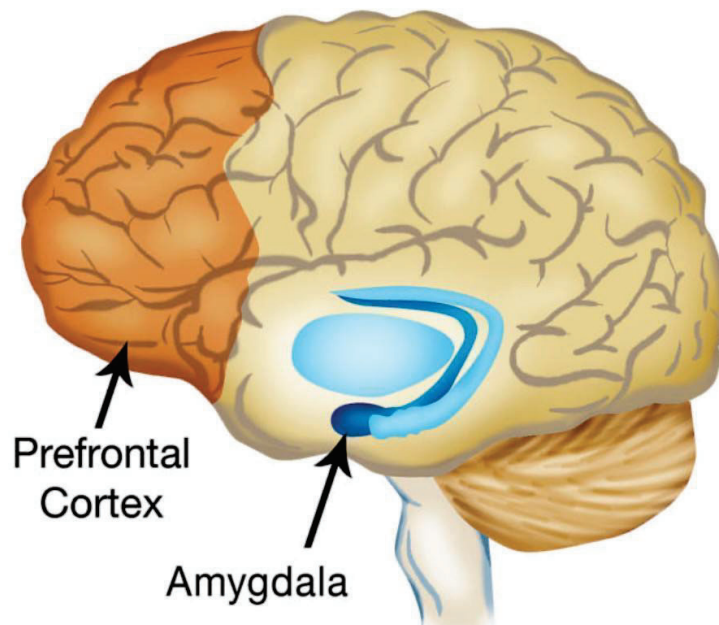


Home Owners' Loan Corporation "Residential Security Map" of Oakland and Berkeley (1937).

A report by the Oakland Department of Race and Equity demonstrates the connection to “redlining” through this Residential Security Map created by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation in 1937. The neighborhoods graded lowest on this map correspond closely to today’s concentrations of unemployment, lead-poisoned children, food deserts, and crime shown throughout this report — the historic genesis of the community challenges the recommendations aim to address.¹⁰²

¹⁰²City of Oakland, Racial Equity Impact Analysis: Eliminating Lead Paint Hazards in Oakland & Alameda County (2021), https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/housing-comm-dev/documents/lead/lead-paint-reia_9-23-21_final.pdf.

Appendix I — Why Public Perception Favors a Single Lever: Fast and Slow Thinking



Two modes of judgment. The amygdala drives fast, emotional responses to vivid threats; the prefrontal cortex supports slow, deliberate weighing of evidence and base rates.

The political feasibility problem described in this report — that the number of sworn officers is the variable most Oaklanders associate with crime, even though the evidence points to a portfolio of measures — has a well-documented cognitive basis. Daniel Kahneman, awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2002 for this body of work with Amos Tversky, describes two modes of judgment. System 1 is fast, automatic, and effortless; it runs on impressions, associations, and whatever is easiest to recall. System 2 is slow, deliberate, and effortful; it can weigh evidence and base rates, but it is lazy and defers to System 1 unless prompted. The diagram above is illustrative of the same distinction in neurological terms: fear responses to vivid threats engage the amygdala almost instantly, while weighing evidence draws on the prefrontal cortex — notably, the same region that childhood lead exposure damages (Appendix F).¹⁰³

Three System 1 patterns are directly relevant to how Oakland debates public safety:

- **The availability heuristic.** People judge how likely or common something is by how easily examples come to mind. Vivid, recent, or heavily covered events feel more frequent than they are. Kahneman specifically discusses how media coverage distorts public perception of risks like crime — which is one reason Oakland's crime is, as this report says, well known but not well understood.¹⁰⁴
- **Substitution.** When a question is hard ("how safe is my city?" or "what will reduce crime?"), System 1 quietly swaps in an easier one ("how easily can I recall crime stories?" or "what makes me feel safer?") and answers that instead. A visible police car answers the substituted question; lead abatement, job training, and focused deterrence answer the original one — but they do not come to mind.¹⁰⁵
- **What you see is all there is (WYSIATI).** People build confident stories from whatever limited information is in front of them. If the only public safety information a resident has seen is officer

¹⁰³Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), chap. 1.

¹⁰⁴Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability," *Cognitive Psychology* 5, no. 2 (1973): 207–232; Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, chap. 12, "The Science of Availability."

¹⁰⁵Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, chap. 9, "Answering an Easier Question."

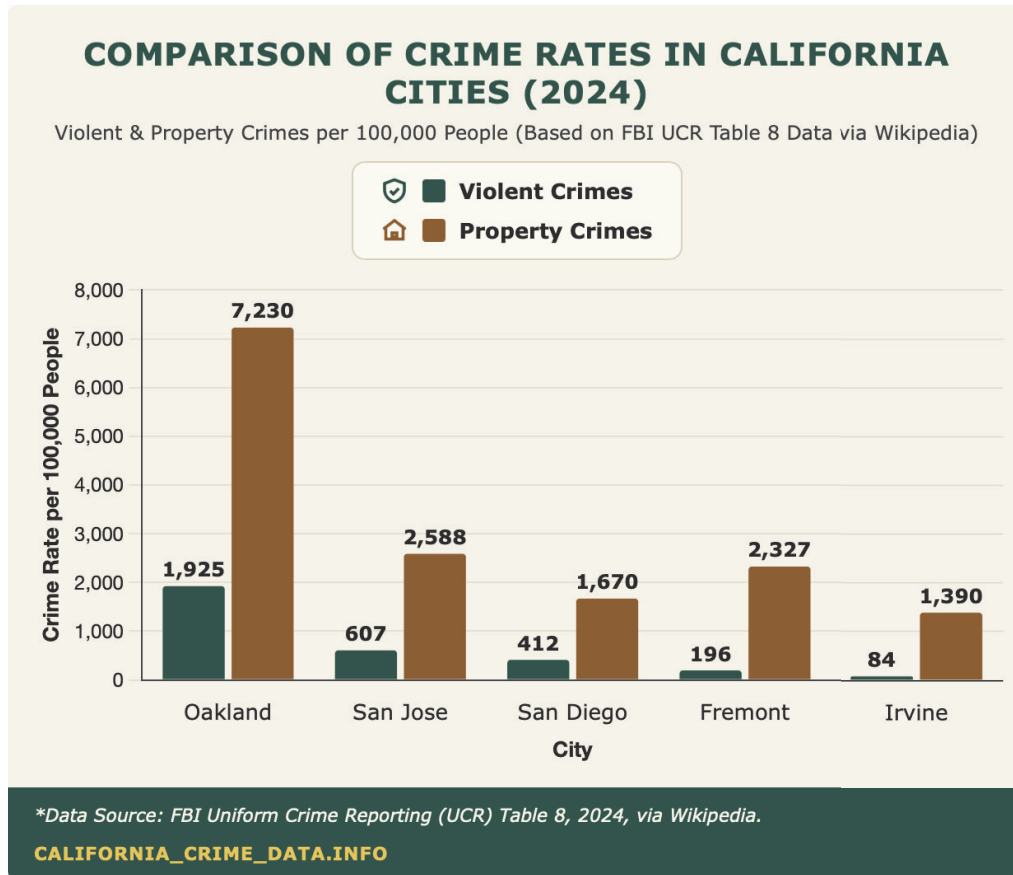
headcount, a confident conclusion about headcount follows. This is why the report's evaluation tables show political feasibility changing dramatically after public engagement: the information set changes, and so does the judgment.¹⁰⁶

The implication for the BAC is practical rather than philosophical. Public education and engagement (Recommendation 5) is not a courtesy added to the other recommendations; it is the step that engages System 2. District town halls, before-and-after surveys, and plain-language presentation of the evidence give residents and Council members the base rates and comparisons that intuitive judgment does not supply on its own. Kahneman's work also cautions the BAC itself: the same biases apply to commissioners and staff, which is why this report relies on peer-reviewed research, comparison cities, and explicit evaluation criteria rather than on the vividness of any single example.

¹⁰⁶Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, chap. 7, "A Machine for Jumping to Conclusions."

Oakland's Crime Rate Outpaces Its Neighbors.

What If We Addressed Root Causes?



Violent & property crimes per 100,000 people — FBI UCR Table 8 data (2024)

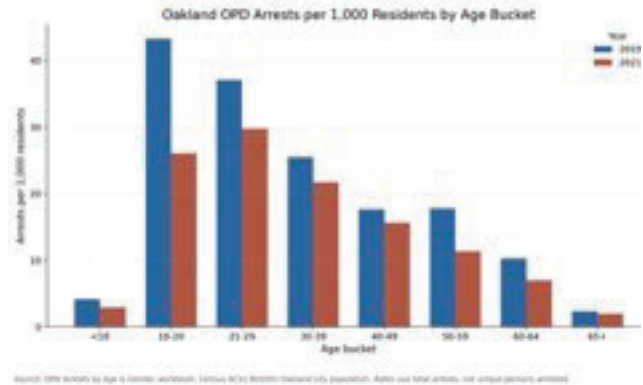
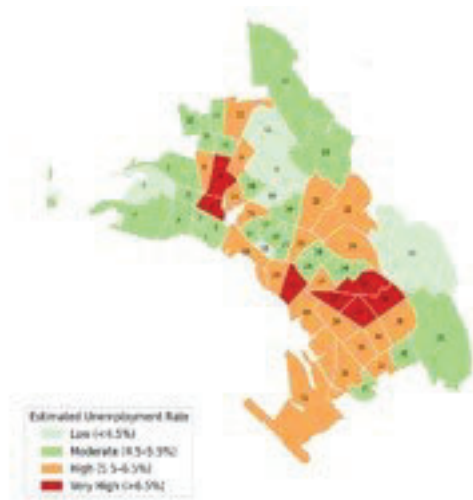
Unemployment. Food access. Lead exposure. Policing. Redlining's legacy — each concentrated in the East and West Oakland flatlands, and each pointing to a solution.



A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Root Causes of Crime in Oakland • Poster 1 of 7

Where Unemployment Concentrates, So Does Crime



Left: estimated unemployment rate by neighborhood. Right: OPD arrests per 1,000 residents by age — Oakland's youth are most vulnerable.

Unemployment is strongly linked to property crime.



Raphael & Winter-Ebmer (2001); UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy

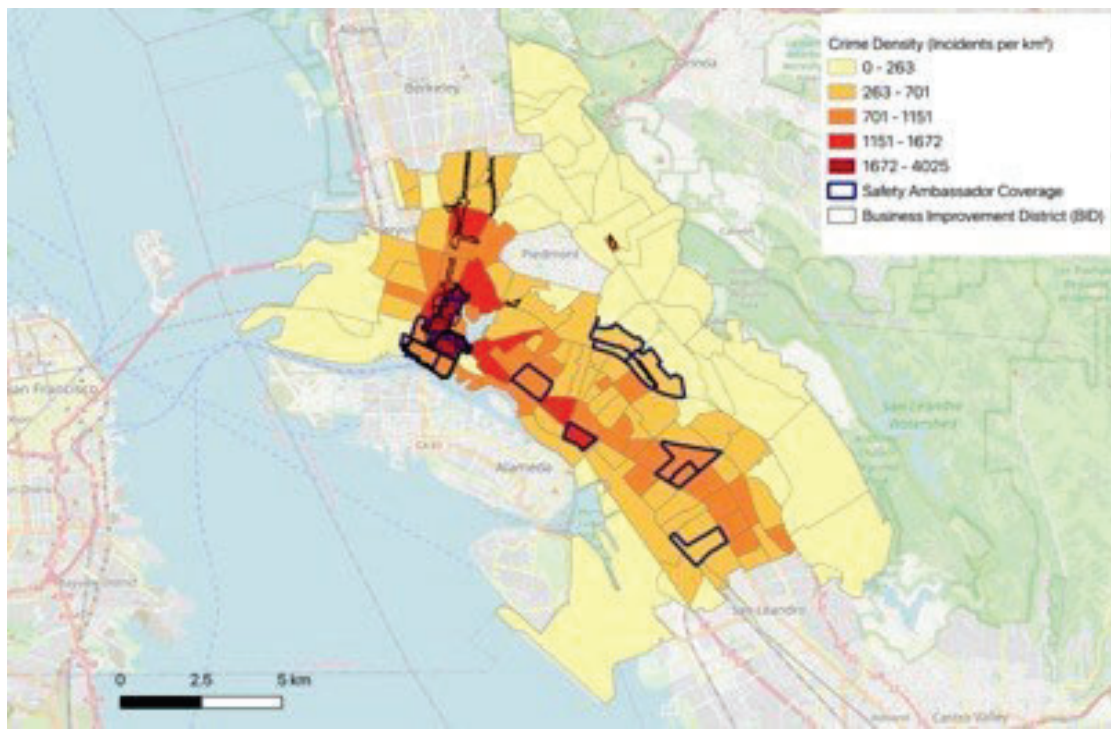
RECOMMENDATION

Targeted workforce development to reduce property crime

ROOT CAUSE 1

Root Causes of Crime in Oakland • Poster 2 of 7

Crime Clusters in East and West Oakland — Proven Programs Cut It



Crime density with Public Safety Ambassador coverage and Business Improvement Districts

Public Safety Ambassadors reduce property crime in business districts (Oakland, 2020).
School-based violence de-escalation training reduces violent crime (Ludwig, 2026).



University of Chicago Crime Lab — Ludwig (2026)

RECOMMENDATION

Expand Public Safety Ambassadors and school-based de-escalation training

ROOT CAUSE 2

Root Causes of Crime in Oakland • Poster 3 of 7

Food Deserts Map Onto the Same Neighborhoods



Left: USDA-defined food deserts in Oakland. Right: health & public-safety impacts of nutrition.

Food access shapes both quality of life and public safety. The brain is nearly 60% fat, and a growing body of research links nutrients such as Omega-3s to cardiovascular health and to behavioral regulation — with implications for public safety.

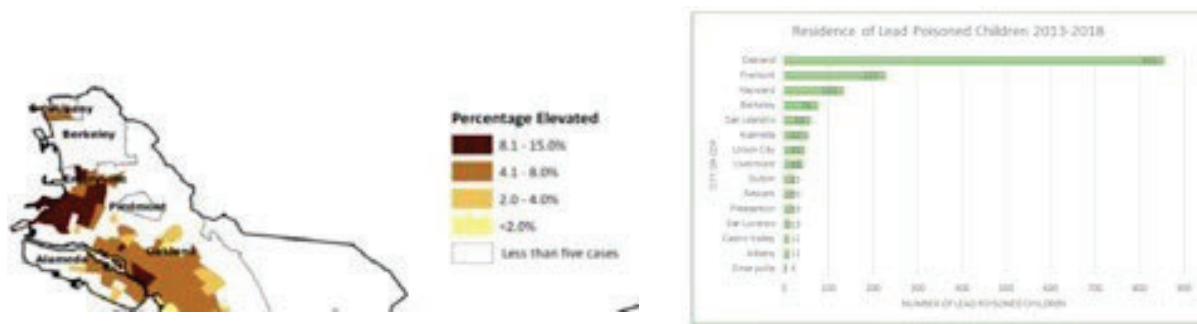
RECOMMENDATION

Assess food access citywide — fill the gaps with zoning policy and grant support

ROOT CAUSE 3

Root Causes of Crime in Oakland • Poster 4 of 7

Lead Poisons Oakland's Children — and Its Future



¹⁷ Data provided by County of Alameda, CA Dept. of Public Health, R00SCLE database, 2011.

Left: elevated lead levels concentrate in Oakland. Right: lead-poisoned children by Alameda County city, 2013–2018.



Left: lead and the developing brain. Right: the lead-crime hypothesis — violent crime fell as environmental lead was eliminated.

Lead damages children's developing nervous systems, with impacts on violent crime as those children reach young adulthood (Oakland, 2021).

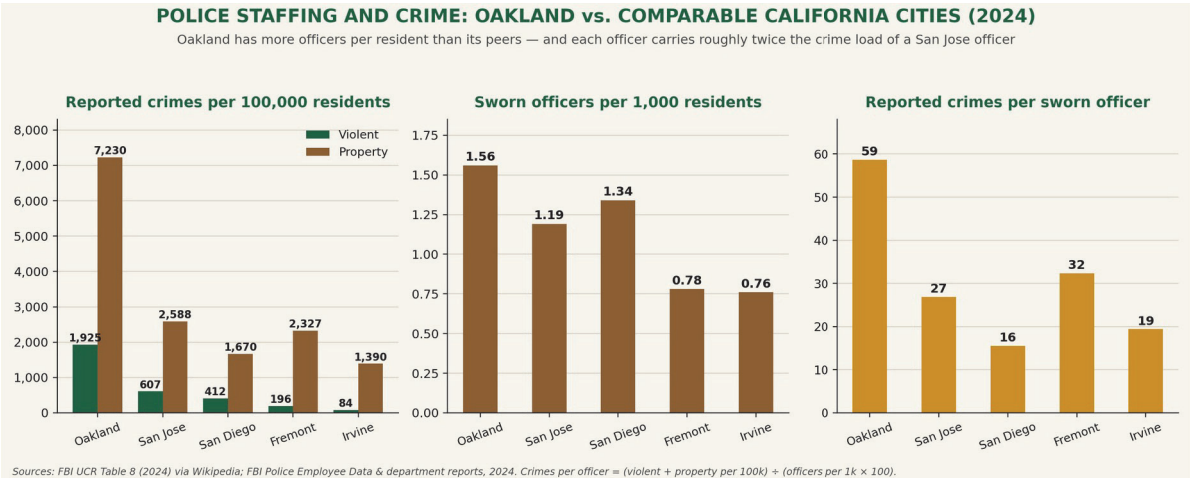
RECOMMENDATION

Support lead-based paint abatement in Oakland

ROOT CAUSE 4

Root Causes of Crime in Oakland • Poster 5 of 7

More Officers Per Resident Than Our Neighbors — Staffing Alone Isn’t the Answer



Each Oakland officer handles about 59 reported crimes a year — roughly double San Jose (27) and nearly four times San Diego (16). FBI UCR Table 8 & Police Employee Data (2024).

Structural constraints on OPD capacity

Measure NN staffing target	700 officers
Sworn authorized (3% below NN)	678
Sworn filled (9% vacant)	617
Available for deployment (17% on leave, light duty or admin)	508

Findings from City Auditor and OPD reports

- An outdated bureau structure slows 911 response times (City Auditor)
- Seniority-based patrol assignment (“patrol draw”) limits the City’s ability to match staffing to need
- Sworn officers fill roles that could be civilian positions, keeping trained officers off the street

Source: OPD Overtime Report, Feb. 2026

Workforce & Economic Development budget — cut 60% since 2023

FY 2023–24	\$62.0 million
FY 2024–25	\$35.2 million
FY 2025–26	\$24.9 million
FY 2026–27	\$24.2 million

The cost of the 17% of sworn staff unavailable for deployment exceeds the entire economic development and violence prevention budget combined.

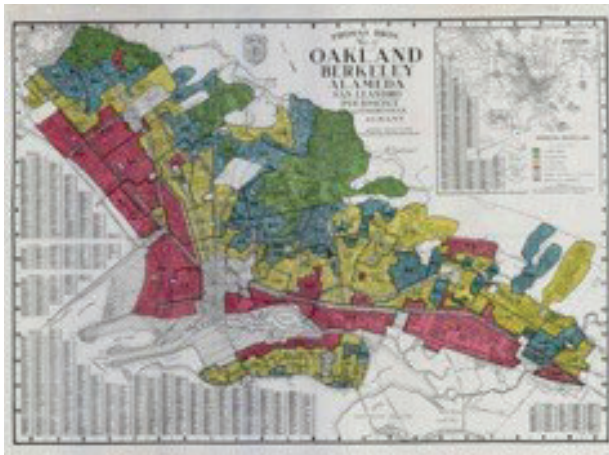
Officers deserve fair pay and structures that let them succeed; residents deserve accountability for how public-safety dollars are deployed.

RECOMMENDATION

Confront the tradeoffs: give officers the structure and deployment they need — and measure results, not just headcount

PUBLIC SAFETY RESOURCES

Every Map Traces Back to Redlining



Left: 1937 Home Owners' Loan Corporation "residential security map." Right: household income at age 35 follows the same lines today (Oakland, 2021).



A comprehensive community approach

RECOMMENDATION

A comprehensive community approach — restorative, effective, and supportive of *all* Oaklanders

...and then tell the Oakland story.

THE COMMON THREAD

Root Causes of Crime in Oakland • Poster 7 of 7

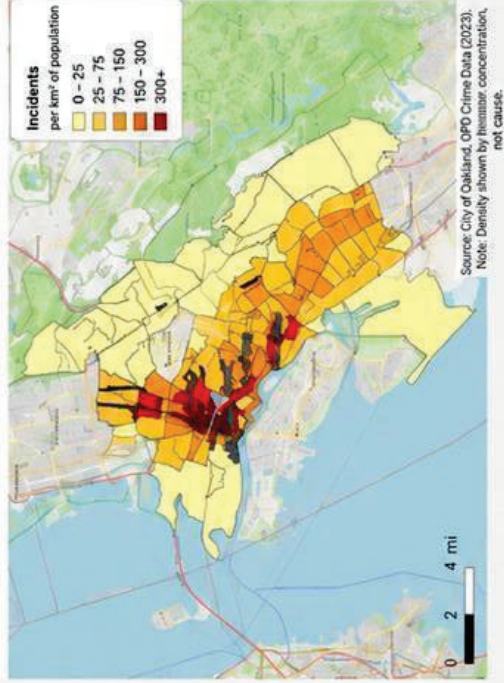
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Nexus of Public Safety and Economic Development

Chronic Crime – 5–6 times higher than other cities

Crime Density by Neighborhood (incidents per km²), City of Oakland



Goal:
Improve Public Safety

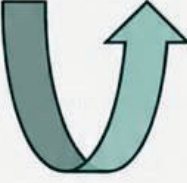
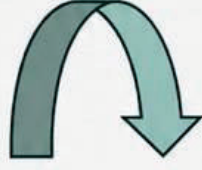
Safer neighborhoods. Stronger communities.



When we invest in opportunity, safety, and healthy neighborhoods together, Oakland becomes a better place for everyone to live, work, and thrive.

**Irony “Retail Leakage”
\$1.5B+ / Year**

Residents, visitors, and businesses want and deserve to feel safe and stay.



Limited economic opportunity can contribute to conditions associated with crime.



Goal:
Improve Top Line City Revenue

More local spending. Stronger local economy.

Addressing Oakland's Interrelated Crime, Economic Development, and Budget Stability Challenges

In Keeping with Oakland's Culture and Diversity · In Advance of the FY 2027–28 Budget Cycle

With thanks to our collaborators

Berkeley
Public Policy
The Goldman School



Proactive recommendations, well before the budget cycle

- The BAC normally comments on the Mayor's Proposed Budget after it is submitted May 1, 2027 — and will again.
- This report comes earlier, on purpose: so the public can learn about, weigh in on, and shape these ideas first.
- Many of the ideas could deliver real benefits, yet are not widely known.
- Early publication gives staff, the Mayor's office, and Council time to develop precise budget estimates.
- **Immediate action: convene a session or series of sessions in fall 2026 / early winter 2027 with city experts, chambers of commerce, civic leaders, and the public.**

Key dates

- **Sep 15, 2026**
BAC meeting — this draft
- **Fall 2026**
Public education & engagement begins
- **Fall 2026 – Winter 2027**
Mayor–Council comprehensive sessions
- **May 1, 2027**
Mayor's Proposed Budget
- **June 30, 2027**
Council adopts FY 2027–28 budget

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Two challenges that are really one problem

5-10×

Oakland's 2024 property and violent crime rates vs. other major California cities

\$1.5B

Annual retail leakage — Oaklanders shopping and dining elsewhere, partly out of safety concerns

Lagging

COVID recovery trails California and the nation, depressing revenue and deepening the structural deficit

These problems reinforce one another

- Unemployment contributes to higher crime — especially property crime.
- Safety concerns discourage job-creating businesses, visitors, and residents from shopping and dining in Oakland, even as Oakland is recognized as a leading dining destination.
- Fear of crime produces calls for more sworn officers — the costliest response, which can crowd out other strategies that also improve safety and economic stability.
- Oakland's economic activity is the primary source of municipal revenue. Lost activity means lost services.

Economic conditions are part of the public safety landscape

The most effective crime-prevention program in existence is a robust labor market.

Jobs = Safety

Policies aimed at improving baseline employment prospects are not just economic tools; they are direct, highly effective property crime reduction mechanisms.

Focus on the Vulnerable

Because crime is a rational economic choice for those at the margins, targeted job training and placement programs for youth and low-wage workers offer the highest ROI for public safety.

The Ultimate Dual Benefit

Employment-based anti-crime policies achieve community safety and economic growth—simultaneously—bypassing the massive social and fiscal costs of high incarceration rates.

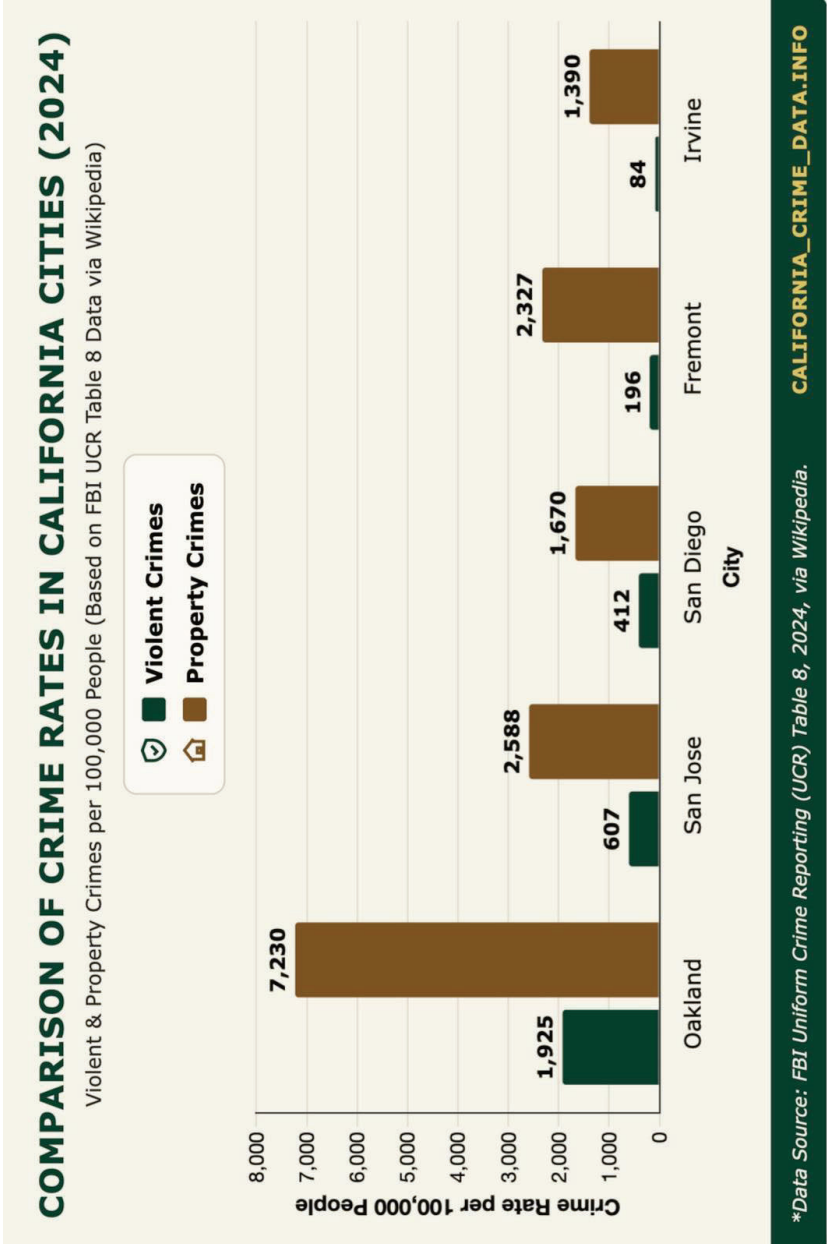
The most effective crime-prevention program is a robust labor market — jobs = safety; focus on the vulnerable; dual benefit.

Berkeley
Public Policy
The Goldman School



- **Raphael & Winter-Ebmer (2001), Journal of Law and Economics — 1,800+ citations**
 - Identified the causal effect of unemployment on crime, especially property crime.
- **Thompson & Jozefowicz (2024), U.S. data 1993–2022**
 - Unemployment, underemployment, and marginal attachment to the workforce are associated with higher theft and burglary.
- Unemployment does not automatically cause crime — but economic stability and access to jobs are clearly part of public safety.

Oakland's crime rates dwarf comparable California cities



2024, per 100,000 residents

- Oakland: 1,925 violent, 7,230 property
- San Jose: 607 / 2,588
- San Diego: 412 / 1,670
- Fremont: 196 / 2,327
- Irvine: 84 / 1,390
- In 2024 Oakland had the highest violent crime rate and second-highest property crime rate among the 200 largest U.S. cities.

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, Table 8, 2024.

Oakland Budget Advisory Commission · Draft for 15 September 2026 BAC Meeting

Crime is falling — but parity is still far away

-25%

Oakland crime reduction in 2025

-22%

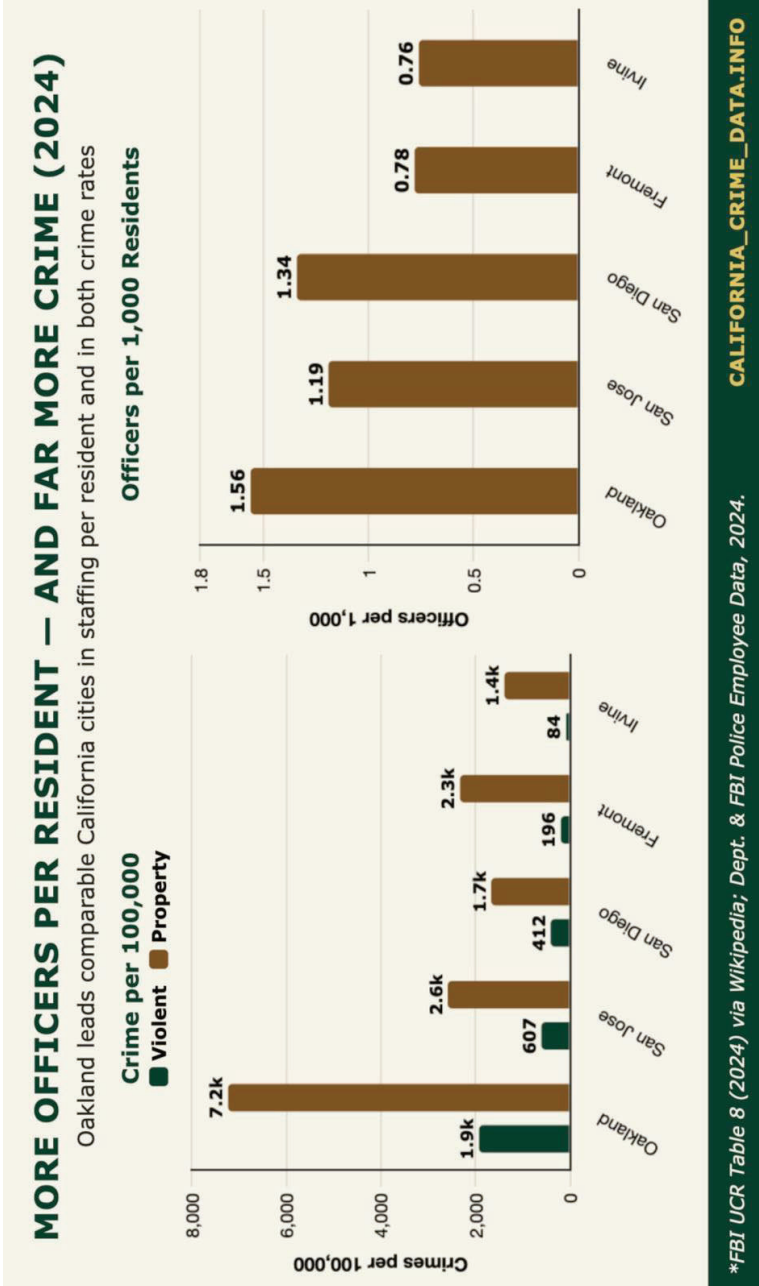
Further reduction, first quarter of 2026

80-90%

Cumulative reduction still needed to reach where other major CA cities stood in 2024

- Because crime has also trended lower nationwide since 2024, even larger reductions may be needed for present-day parity.
- High crime falls hardest on Oakland's low-income and diverse communities, and drives away tax-paying businesses, their patrons, and other economic activity.
- Sworn staffing has ranged from roughly 600 to 825 officers over time. Law enforcement is vital — but reductions of this scale require confronting root causes and breaking long-standing cycles.

More officers per resident — and far more crime

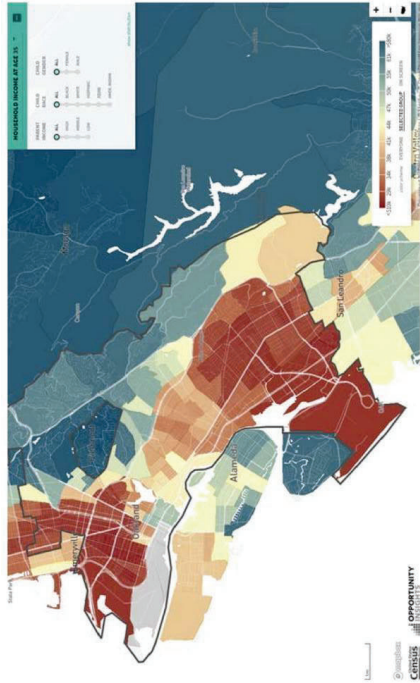


	Oakland	San Jose
Population	443,554	997,368
Square miles	56	178
Sworn full-time staff	678	1,172
Officers / 1,000 residents	1.53	1.18
Officers / square mile	12.1	6.6
Property crime rate	7,230	2,572
Violent crime rate	1,925	519

San Jose was named America's safest big city in a 2025 SmartAsset study. It is not just the number of officers — deployment effectiveness and economic conditions matter.

Sources: FBI UCR Table 8 (2024); Dept. & FBI Police Employee Data (2024); Feb 2026 OPD Overtime Report.

The enforcement-only approach carries serious equity costs



Maps G & H. 'Household Income at Age 35' in Oakland and Alameda County, U.S. Census [Opportunity Atlas](#).

Taken as a whole, no other location in **Alameda County** had income outcomes as poor as Oakland.

Opportunity Atlas: household income at age 35. No other location in Alameda County had income outcomes as poor as Oakland — a legacy of redlining (see Appendix G).

Enforcement-centered approaches are also the costliest option. This report treats equity as a cost-effectiveness question: dollars spent upstream on prevention can reduce both crime and disparate impacts at the same time.

Stanford SPARQ analysis of OPD stop data

Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt, multi-year study in partnership with OPD

1 in 4 **1 in 15**

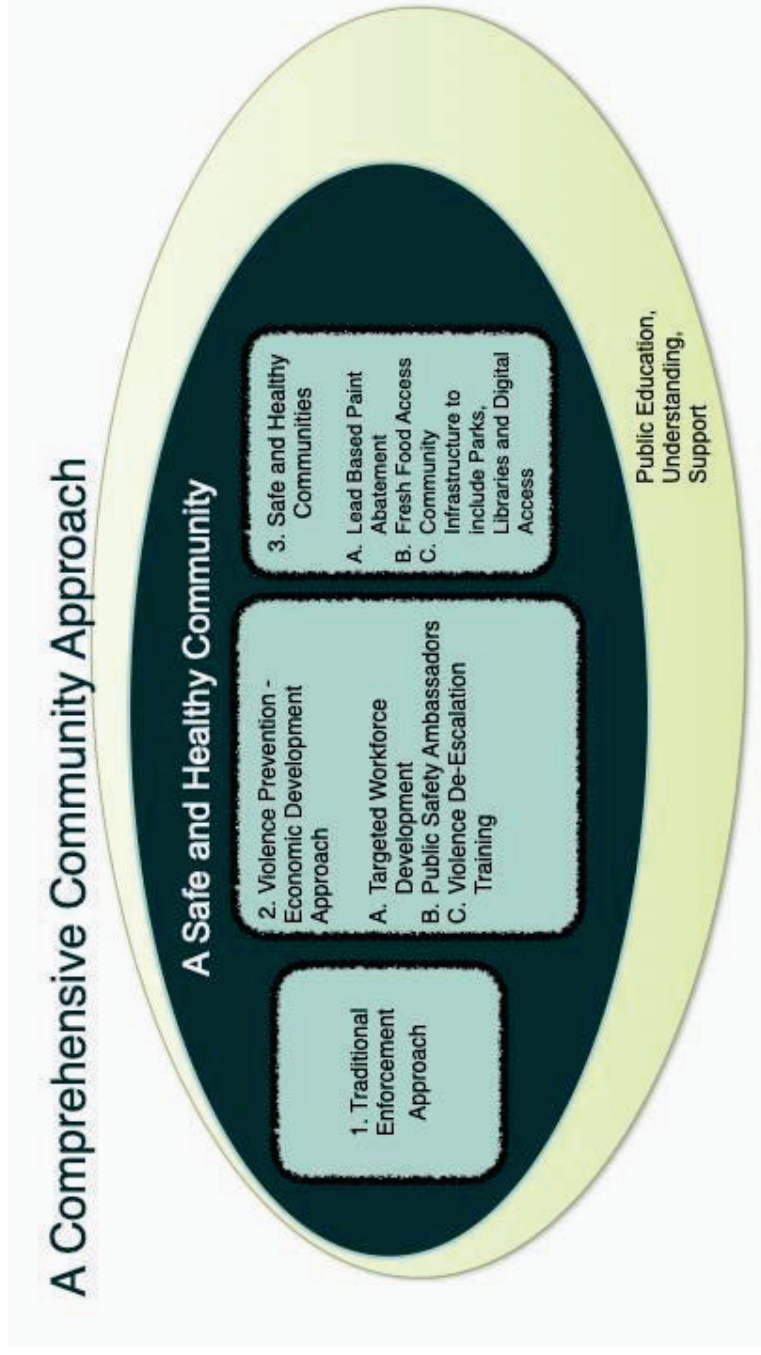
Black men handcuffed during stops (excluding arrests)

White men handcuffed during stops

Black men were searched 4x as often as white men — yet officers were no more likely to recover contraband.

The Oakland "Riders" case contributed to federal oversight of OPD. Equity is both a moral obligation and a cost-effectiveness question.

A comprehensive community approach



- Traditional enforcement, well deployed
- Violence prevention and economic development
- Safe and healthy communities
- OFD ambulance integration and MACRO
- Public education, understanding, and support — the enabler for all of the above

"We need well-deployed officers — and the conditions that make fewer of them necessary."

Five evaluation criteria

1

Effectiveness

Reduces violent and/or property crime, improves prosperity and municipal revenue, and reduces fear of shopping and dining in Oakland.

2

Equity

Avoids inequitable impacts on Oakland's diverse communities; benefits those historically underserved or harmed by enforcement-centered approaches.

3

Cost-effectiveness

Judged on incremental cost, and on whether the option expands economic opportunity and strengthens the revenue base.

4

Political feasibility

Workable within the budget process — and responsive to the assumption that safety depends mainly on officer headcount, and to the timing of OPOA negotiations.

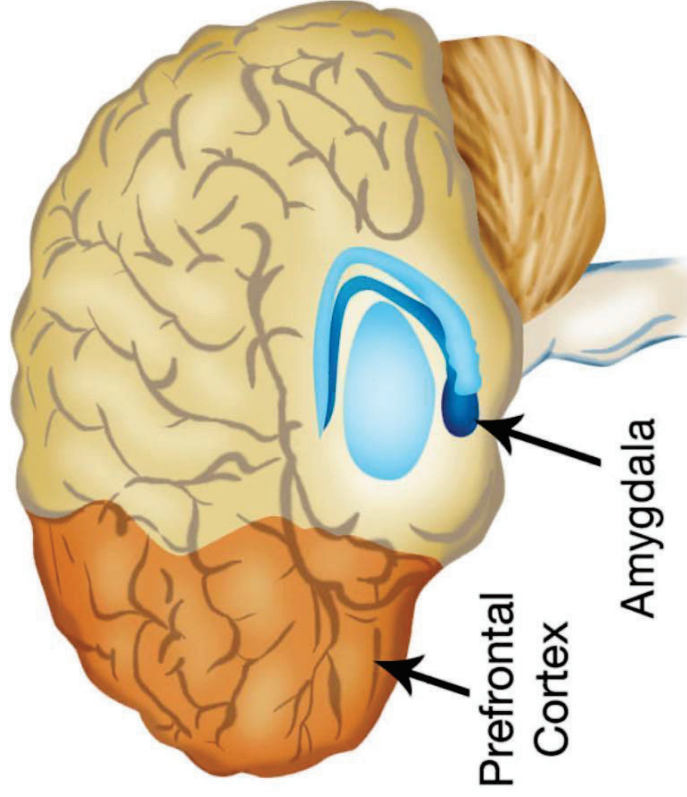
5

Timing

Timing of implementation and timing of impact.

Political feasibility is the pivotal criterion. Well-known crime, less well-understood causes, and a single-minded focus on headcount have crowded out other initiatives.

How does human nature shape political feasibility?



Availability heuristic

- We judge how likely or common something is by how easily examples come to mind. Vivid, recent, or heavily covered events feel more frequent than they are.
- Crime in Oakland is well known — but perhaps not well understood. Headcount is the variable most people associate with crime.
- In the last cycle, OPD and OFD MOUs were negotiated before expiration and approved without public notice of the tentative agreements — committing funds beyond projected revenue before the budget process began.
- **Result: less familiar, more cost-effective, more equitable options never get a fair hearing.**

Before public engagement: political feasibility is the obstacle

How the Options Meet the Evaluation Criteria — Before Public Engagement (Political Feasibility Is the Key Obstacle)

Recommendation	Effectiveness	Equity	Cost-Effectiveness	Political Feasibility	Timing
Status Quo	Limited	Weak	Weak	High	Immediate
1. Economic Development & Violence Prevention	Strong	Strong	Strong	Low	Near-term
2. Safe & Healthy Communities	Strong	Strong	Strong	Low	Longer-term
3. OPD Deployment Optimization	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Low	Near-term
4. OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Support	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Longer-term
5. Public Education & Engagement	Enabling	Strong	Strong	High	Immediate

Illustrative ratings: green = strong, yellow = moderate, red = weak.

Status quo: weak on equity and cost, yet high feasibility.

Stronger options: low feasibility only because they are not well understood.

After Recommendation 5: the picture changes dramatically

How the Options Change After Implementing Recommendation 5 — Public Education and Engagement

Recommendation	Effectiveness	Equity	Cost-Effectiveness	Political Feasibility	Timing
Status Quo	Limited	Weak	Weak	Moderate	Immediate
1. Economic Development & Violence Prevention	Strong	Strong	Strong	High	Near-term
2. Safe & Healthy Communities	Strong	Strong	Strong	High	Longer-term
3. OPD Deployment Optimization	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Near-term
4. OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Support	Strong	Strong	Strong	High	Longer-term
5. Public Education & Engagement	Enabling	Strong	Strong	High	Immediate

Illustrative ratings: green = strong, yellow = moderate, red = weak.

Public education and engagement must come first. It is the enabler that lets every other option be weighed on its merits.

Which recommendations address which crime problem

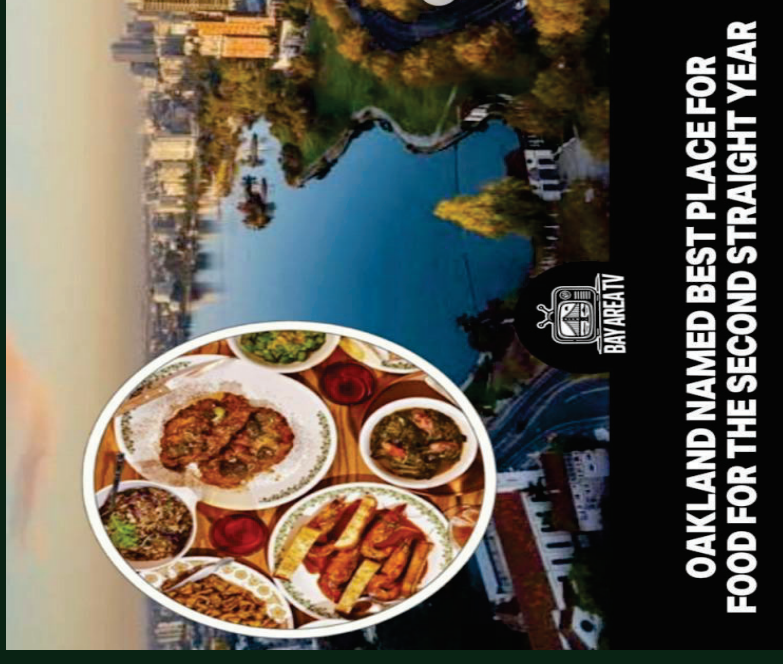
Which Recommendations Address Property Crime, Violent Crime, or Both				
Recommendation		Property Crime	Violent Crime	
Status quo	Sworn officer staffing (law enforcement)	●	●	●
1 Economic Development & Violence Prevention				
1.1	EDAP funding & geographically and age targeted job creation	●	●	●
1.2	Chamber Workforce Development partnership and focus	●	●	●
1.3	Leverage community colleges and new Samuel Merritt campus for targeted job creation	●	●	●
1.4	Expand Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program	●	●	●
1.5	Public Safety Ambassadors in business districts	●	●	●
1.6	Violence de-escalation education in schools; OPD training review	●	●	●
1.7	Focused Deterrence: Project Ceasefire & Life Line	●	●	●
1.8	Improve & focus job training and support for those coming out of prison (reentry)	●	●	●
2 Safe & Healthy Communities				
2.1	Lead-based paint abatement	●	●	●
2.2	Fresh food access / nutrition	●	●	●
2.3	Leverage parks, libraries & digital access as "third places" for youth and platforms to reach areas of highest need	●	●	●
3 OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO Wrap-Around Services				
3.1	Consolidate ambulance services to improve equity and capture insurance revenue for Oakland	●	●	●
3.2	Use revenue in part to enable MACRO to achieve envisioned purpose, and keep all fire stations open to preserve response time	●	●	●
4 Improved Deployment of OPD Sworn Officers				
5 Public Education & Engagement (Enabling)				
●	Primary focus	●	●	●
●	Indirect/supportive contribution	●	●	●
Property-crime ratings follow Stephen Raphael & Rudolf Winter-Ebmer, "Identifying the Effect of Unemployment on Crime," Journal of Law and Economics 44, no. 1 (2001): 259-283; and Alexi Thompson & James J. Jozefowicz, "Property Crimes and the Marginally Employed," Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics (2024); violent-crime ratings follow Jens Ludwig (University of Chicago Crime Lab), Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of American Gun Violence (2025), along with lead-crime and nutrition research. Workforce measures also reduce violent crime indirectly. Source: Oakland Budget Advisory Commission, based on the report narrative and cited research. Ratings are illustrative.				

Five recommendations for the FY 2027–28 budget

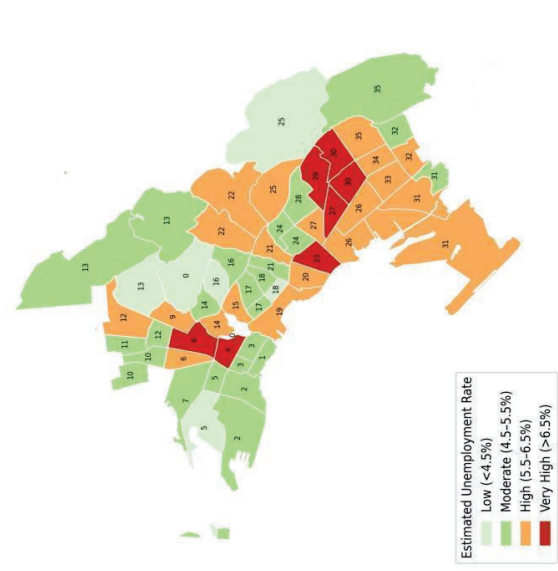
1	Economic Development & Violence Prevention	Fully fund EDAP; target job creation; Chamber and community college partnerships; expand MSVEP; ambassadors; de-escalation and focused deterrence; reentry job training; document results.
2	Safe & Healthy Communities	Lead-based paint abatement; fresh food access; parks, libraries, and digital access as "third places."
3	OFD Ambulance Integration & MACRO	Capture revenue; improve service and equity, invest in MACRO wrap-around services, keep fire stations open.
4	Improve Deployment of OPD Sworn Officers	Use meet-and-confer on deployment efficiency; request follow-up reports from the City Auditor.
5	Public Education & Engagement	Build awareness of these approaches; convene public forums well before the budget cycle.

Economic Development and Violence Prevention

Address root causes of crime through targeted prevention strategies that break old cycles — workforce development where crime and unemployment concentrate, Public Safety Ambassadors in business districts, and comprehensive violence de-escalation education.



Fully fund the Economic Development Action Plan

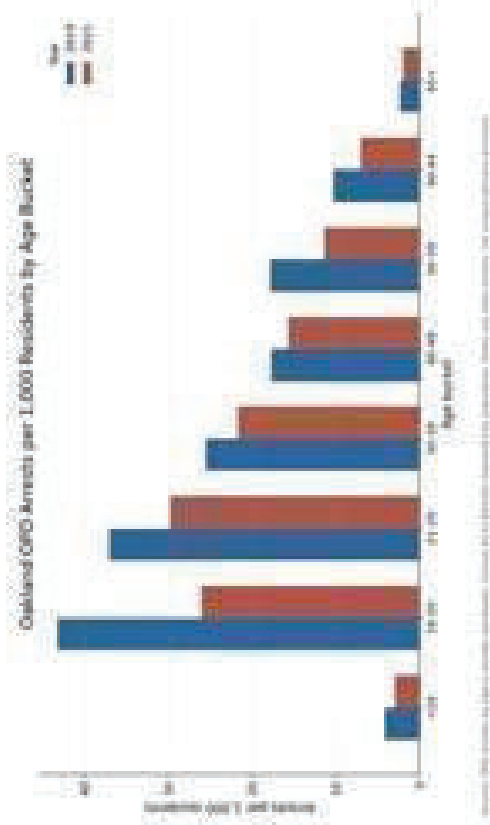


Estimated unemployment rate by Oakland neighborhood — where crime and unemployment concentrate.

Workforce & economic development budget	
FY 2023–24	\$62.0 M
FY 2024–25	\$35.2 M
FY 2025–26	\$24.9 M
FY 2026–27	\$24.2 M
Cut roughly 60% while retail leakage and the COVID-recovery lag persist.	

- Fully fund EDAP to address retail leakage and the COVID-recovery lag
- Target EDAP geographically and by age — job creation where crime and unemployment concentrate
- Partner with the Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development Program
- Leverage community colleges and the new Samuel Merritt campus for targeted job creation
- Expand the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP)
- Rigorously document crime-reduction and quality-of-life benefits

Transitional-age youth are most vulnerable — and jobs work



Oakland OPD arrests per 1,000 residents by age bucket — arrests peak among transitional-age youth.

How Boston's Summer Employment Program Affects Youth Criminal Justice Outcomes

Summer youth employment reduces crime

-35% **-29%**

Violent-crime arrests, Boston SYEP (Modestino 2019) Property-crime arrests, Boston SYEP (Modestino 2019)

- Heller (2014), Science: Chicago's One Summer Plus cut violent-crime arrests by 43% among participants over 16 months.
- Effects persisted well after the summer job ended — the benefit is not just "keeping kids busy."
- Oakland's MSYEP is the proven vehicle: expand it rather than build anew.

Early arrests close doors; early employment opens them

Early arrests hinder job prospects

- Pager (2003): a criminal record cut employer callbacks roughly in half — and the penalty was far larger for Black applicants.
- Bernburg & Krohn (2003): official intervention in adolescence reduces later education and employment, raising adult crime through labeling and exclusion.

Early employment strengthens future prospects

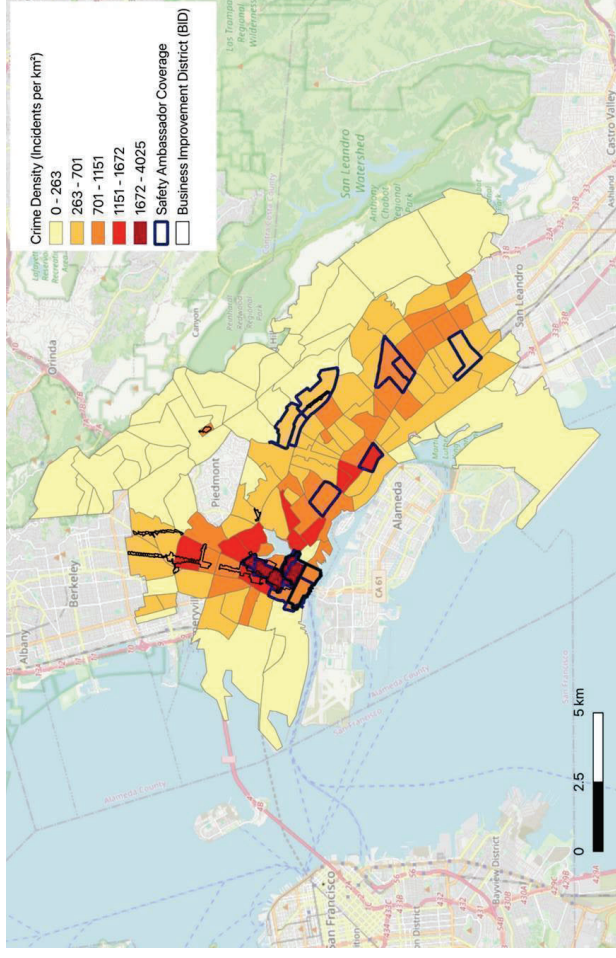
- Heller (2014) and Modestino (2019): summer jobs reduce violent-crime arrests by 35–43%, with effects lasting beyond the program.
- Employment builds attachment to the labor market — the mechanism Raphael & Winter-Ebmer and Thompson & Jozefowicz link to lower property crime.

What this means for Oakland

- Improve and focus job training for people coming out of incarceration (reentry) — build on proven models such as CEO's Golden State Works, Cypress Mandela, and CROP's Ready 4 Life rather than creating new programs.
- Target geographically, and leverage county and state workforce funding before general fund dollars.

Extend ambassador coverage to business districts not yet served

- Business districts concentrate social activity — and thus crime.
- Last cycle the BAC recommended, and Council approved, expansion of the Safety Ambassador pilot.
- **Result: reduced crime and an increased feeling of comfort for customers.**
- Some business districts are still not covered.
- **Recommendation: evaluate indicated areas for further coverage in the next cycle; coordinate with merchants and Business Improvement Districts.**
- Focus on data gathering and documentation during implementation (Appendix C).



Crime density by neighborhood with current Safety Ambassador coverage outlined; uncovered business districts remain.

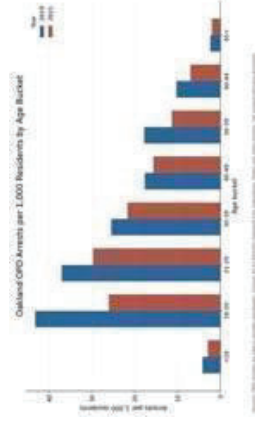
Comprehensive violence de-escalation education

- **Focused deterrence: support and expand Oakland's successful Project Ceasefire and Life Line.**
- Evaluate coverage and expand de-escalation education comprehensively for youth in Oakland schools — e.g., Youth ALIVE!
- Funding has been cut and application has been sporadic; a comprehensive plan needs coordination with schools. It is an important life skill.
- Also review de-escalation training at the Oakland Police Academy and for sworn staff — research shows fewer officer injuries and disability claims.
- Rigorously document results (Appendix D).



Preventing the "10 minutes of regret"

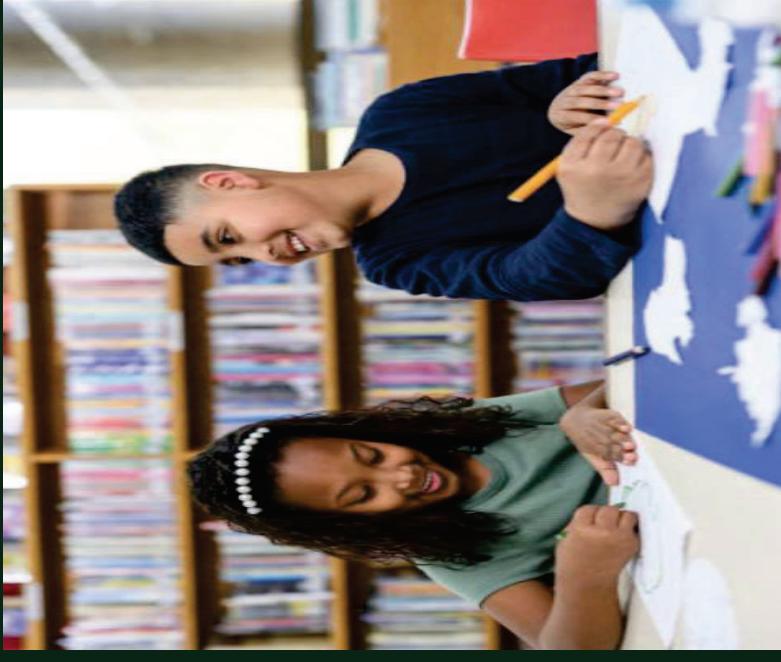
Jens Ludwig, University of Chicago Crime Lab: much violence is not premeditated but a momentary escalation. Behavioral and de-escalation training is the key lever for violent crime.



Transitional-age youth are most vulnerable: OPD arrests per 1,000 residents by age bucket.

Safe and Healthy Communities

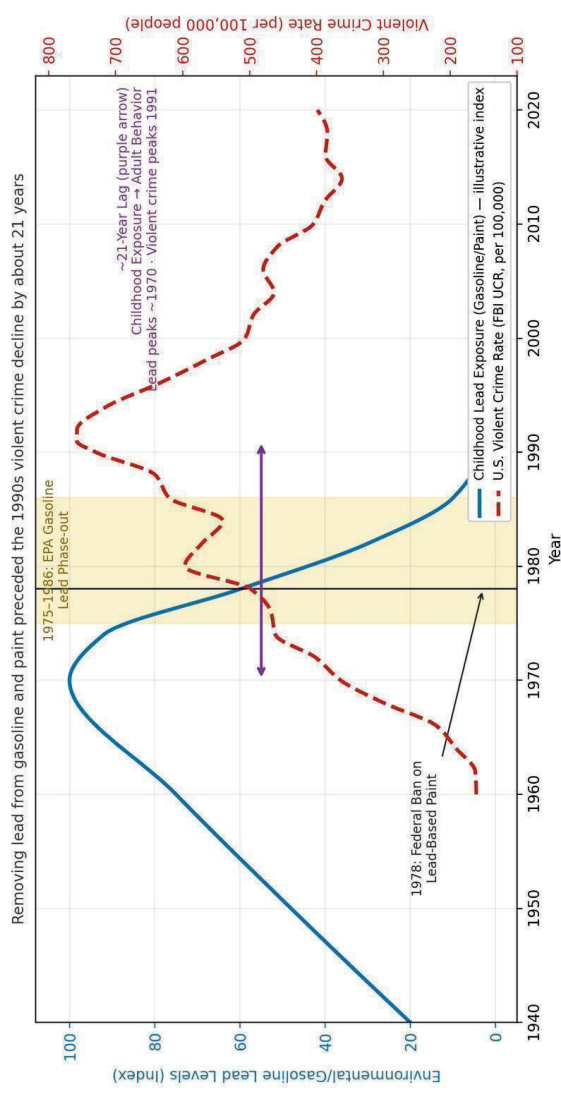
Improve the underlying neighborhood conditions that shape safety and opportunity: complete lead-based paint abatement, ensure access to healthy food, and leverage parks, libraries, and digital access as social infrastructure.



Finish abating Oakland's remaining lead-based paint

- **Childhood lead exposure has a measurable impact on later violent crime — Reyes (2007) attributes roughly half of the 1990s decline to the lead phase-out.**
- Lead is a potent neurotoxin that impairs brain development — especially impulse control, emotional regulation, and executive functioning.
- With a ~21-year lag (toddler to young adult), crime peaked in the 1990s and fell after leaded gasoline and lead paint were eliminated.
- Oakland still has areas needing abatement.
- **Recommendation: ensure funding for staff to implement abatement as requirements are identified through upcoming assessments.**

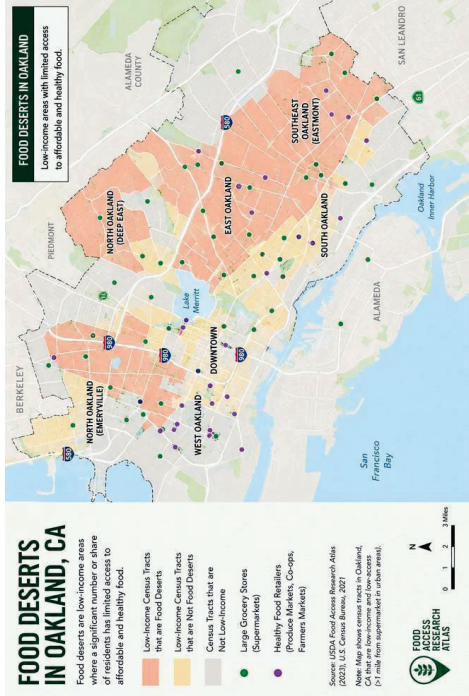
The Impact of Environmental Lead on Violent Crime



Sources: Violent crime rate — FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program (1960–2020). Lead exposure index is illustrative of the national trend. Analysis: Jessica Wolgast Reyes, “Environmental Policy as Social Policy? The Impact of Childhood Lead Exposure on Crime,” B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy 7, no. 1 (2007) — the leaded-gasoline phase-out explains roughly half of the 1990s decline in violent crime; Rick Nevins, “Understanding International Crime Trends: The Legacy of Preschool Lead Exposure,” Environmental Research 104, no. 3 (2007): 313–336.

Reyes (2007), B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy: the leaded-gasoline phase-out explains roughly half of the 1990s decline in violent crime. See also Nevins (2007), Environmental Research; Appendix E.

Eliminate Oakland's food deserts



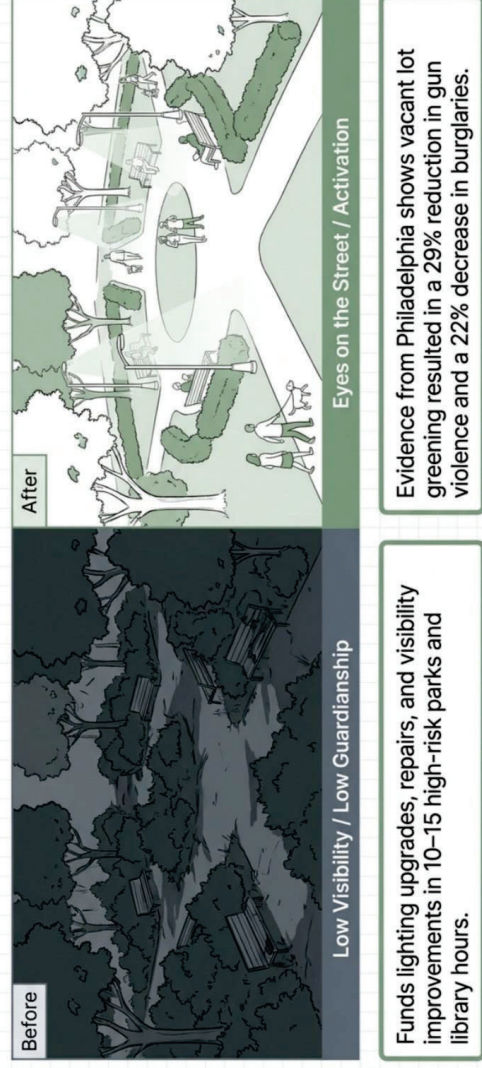
USDA Low-Income, Low-Access (LILA) tracts in Oakland.



Store-within-a-store, co-development, and pop-ups can bring fresh food to LILA tracts.

- East Oakland, West Oakland, and parts of North Oakland and San Antonio meet USDA food desert definitions.
- Dollar stores and liquor stores are not substitutes for fresh food and often push junk food.
- Nutrients such as omega-3s have documented health and public safety benefits, affecting aggression and crime-related behavior (Appendix F).
- **Recommendations**
 - Consider healthy food access in the General Plan and zoning.
 - Define model Healthy Food Impact and Mitigation Plans; require applicable projects to be reviewed for community impact.
 - Require project-specific mitigation as conditions of approval — store-within-a-store, co-development, pop-ups.
 - Use grants and other incentives to attract fresh-food retail.

Parks, libraries, and digital access as public safety investments



Parks with the right design are shown to reduce crime — lighting, visibility, activation. Philadelphia's vacant-lot greening cut gun violence 29%.



Libraries form a safe, constructive "third place" for youth.

Restore the Capital Improvement Plan with parks and libraries given appropriate focus and expertise. Create digital access — in general, and so workforce development resources are reachable for the youth who need them most.

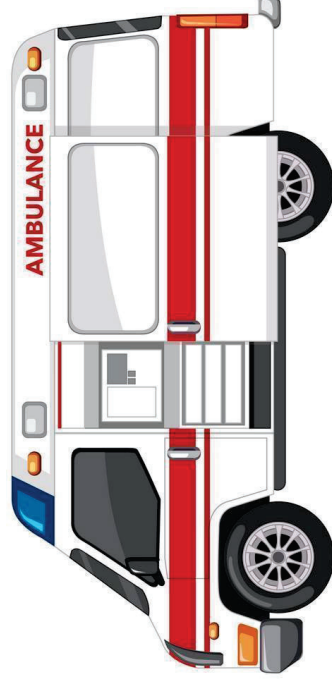
OFD Ambulance Integration and MACRO

Capture revenue and improve the level and equity of ambulance service by integrating county ambulance transport with OFD — while investing in MACRO wrap-around services and keeping fire stations open for response times and wildfire readiness.



Move OFD from a pure cost center to a service that earns revenue

- Over 80% of OFD calls are non-fire emergency response. OFD is first on scene; a private county contractor then transports and collects the insurance payment.
- **Cities that consolidate collect tens of millions of dollars and report better, single-point "one stop" service.**
- OFD stations are pre-positioned for fire response times, so they are already well placed — and more equitably positioned.
- **Strengthen MACRO so it fulfills its vision: fund the envisioned mental health professionals, comprehensive referral assistance, and fix dispatch restrictions on response to street addresses.**
- Keep fire stations open for response times and wildfire response.



Needed in the next budget to start

- 0.5 FTE planning position
- Initial equipment purchase for inter-hospital service
- Consolidation planned for 2029 — the vision needs shaping now

Improve Deployment of OPD Sworn Officers

Sworn officers are a vital part of the public safety ecosystem. Focus not only on staffing levels but on how existing resources are deployed — with performance metrics, stronger use of meet-and-confer, and follow-up reports from the City Auditor.



San José is
named the
safest big
city in
America!



Where the officers are: from authorized to deployable

700	Measure NN
678	Sworn authorized (3% below NN)
617	Sworn filled (9% vacant — still more per resident than San Jose)
508	Deployable (17% on payroll but not deployable)

The 17% non-deployable share costs more than Oakland's entire economic development and DVP budget.

Source: Feb 2026 OPD Overtime Report.

Qualitative deployment issues

- Outdated bureau structure affects response times (see the Auditor's 911 report).
- "Patrol draw": officers assign themselves to patrols by seniority, not by matching skills to needs.
- Sworn officers now fill defined civilian desk jobs; more cost-effective civilian positions could be created.
- We want sworn officers to be well compensated — and we also need performance accountability. Confront the tradeoffs; recognize finite resources and the benefit of all approaches.

RECOMMENDATION 4 • FOLLOW-UP STUDY IS NEEDED

Suggested follow-up topics with the City Auditor

- Understand the 17% of officers on payroll but not deployable — causes and scope, including paid administrative leave during duplicate investigations and workers' compensation vs. other cities.
- Understand how "patrol draw" affects getting the right skills to the right places.
- MACRO dispatch protocols — how restrictions on responding to street addresses limit effectiveness.
- Sworn officers filling civilian positions — potential to civilianize where appropriate.
- Update the 2019 Police Overtime Audit to reflect new trends and the 2025 SEIU report.
- Follow up on action items from the 911 and Police Overtime audit recommendations.



Public Education and Engagement

Build public understanding that economic development, workforce development, and public safety are connected — and that together they can drive crime down. This is the enabler for every other recommendation.



Measure understanding, engage, measure again

1 Conduct a "before" survey

Baseline how Oaklanders understand the drivers of crime and the range of alternatives.

2

Community training and engagement

Two rounds of town halls across all seven Council districts, plus Mayor-Council sessions with city experts, the chambers of commerce, and civic leaders.

3

Conduct an "after" survey

Document the shift — and hand Council members constituents who understand the options.

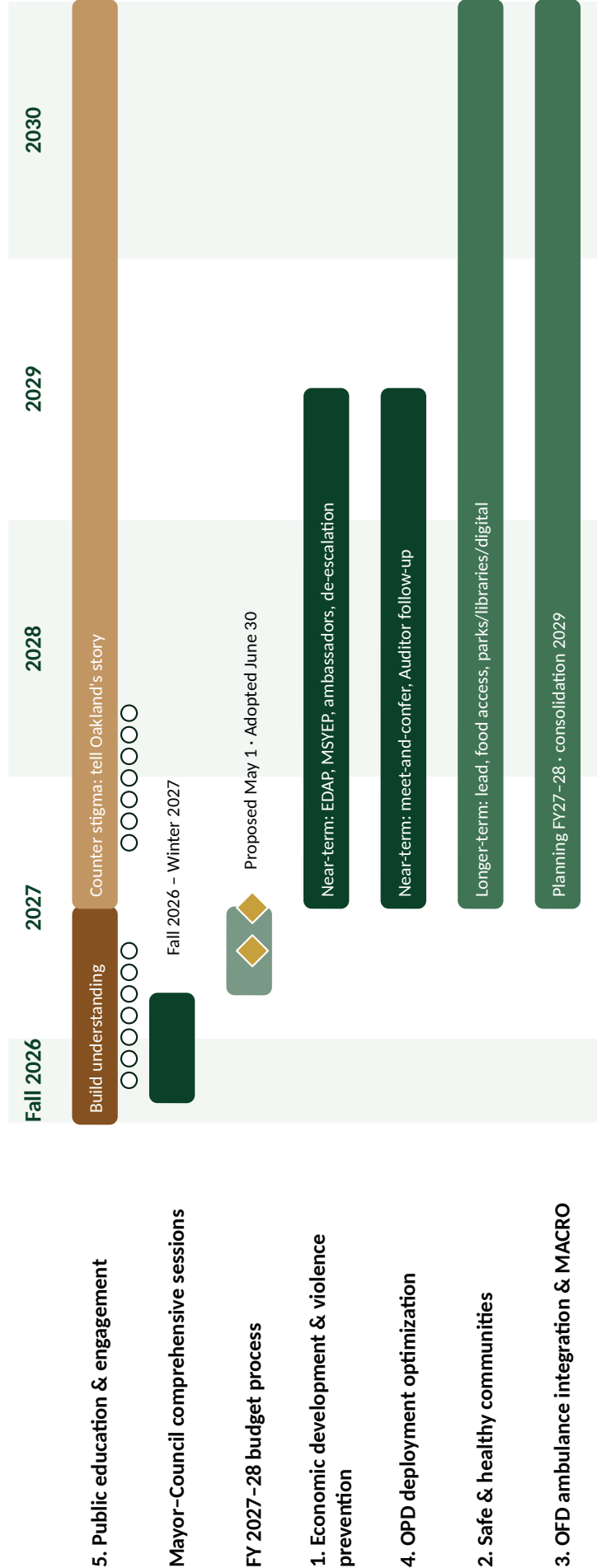


- Phase 1 (now – June 2027): educate Oaklanders on the full range of measures so they can be weighed on their merits in the FY 2027–28 budget.
- Phase 2 (2027 onward): shift toward telling Oaklanders and the wider public what Oakland is doing — overcoming the stigma that is itself part of the problem.
- **Suggested speakers: Rich Harrison (Oakland Lighthouse Schools); Fire Chief Covington (ambulance integration); Dr. Jenny Chatman (Haas, organizational culture change).**

TIME-PHASED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Fall 2026 through 2030

Public education starts immediately and continues throughout. Recommendations 1 and 4 launch with the new budget; 2 and 3 begin at the same time but phase in through 2030.

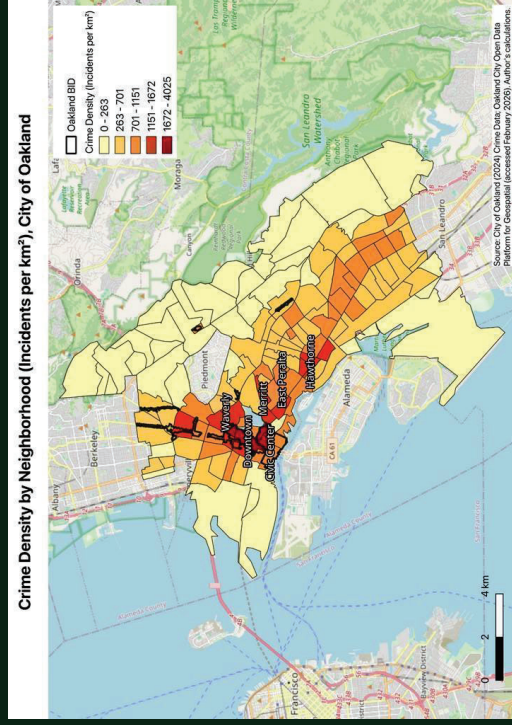


Budget milestones: Proposed Budget May 1, 2027; Council adoption June 30, 2027



Council-district town halls (two rounds, all seven districts — placeholder schedule)

Convene the conversation now — well before May 2027



Ask of the Mayor and Council: convene a session or series of sessions in fall 2026 or early winter 2027 with city experts, the chambers of commerce, civic leaders, and the public — so these recommendations can be refined by staff, included in the Mayor's proposed budget in May 2027, and adopted by Council by June 30, 2027.

Ask of the BAC: sponsor the before/after survey, help schedule town halls in all seven districts, and request the Auditor follow-ups.

We need well-deployed officers — and the conditions that make fewer of them necessary. When we invest in opportunity, safety, and healthy neighborhoods together, Oakland becomes a better place for everyone to live, work, and thrive.

From Mike Petouhoff, Chair BAC Trenching Policy Ad hoc
To: BAC Commissioners
Forwarding Memo for Trenching

Date: Sept 15th 2026

Commissioners,

We'd like to ask the BAC for approval in concept of this memo with any specific requests for edits to be addressed.

We'd like to take the next steps of coordinating this with DOT staff, and to make any factual updates to the memo from that coordination as this measure would be agendaized to be presented to council.

The memo reflects comments requested by Commissioner Gould that we provide examples of other cities that have similar policies.

Thanks to Commissioner Susan Flores for her research on this memo to better understand questions we need to coordinate with Oakland DOT staff.

We have identified that there is a measure I committee, and initial coordination indicated that Body was created to review completed projects in respect to alignment with the terms of the measure, and would not have jurisdiction on this matter, but as a courtesy would appreciate and update on BAC's proposed policy.

We'd to move forward with coordination with staff and the I bind committee and schedule this for presentation to the council.

Respectfully,

Mike Petouhoff

BAC Recommendation on Trenching Standards in City Streets to Make our paving dollars go farther

This is a recommendation from the Budget Advisory Commission, (to be coordinated with the I-Bond Oversight Committee) for the city to create a standard for trenching and other work that disrupts the Oakland public streets and a method of financial assurance of repairs as is done by other cities.

Background:

Our Streets are actually utility corridors as well. Trenching in Oakland's Streets is often

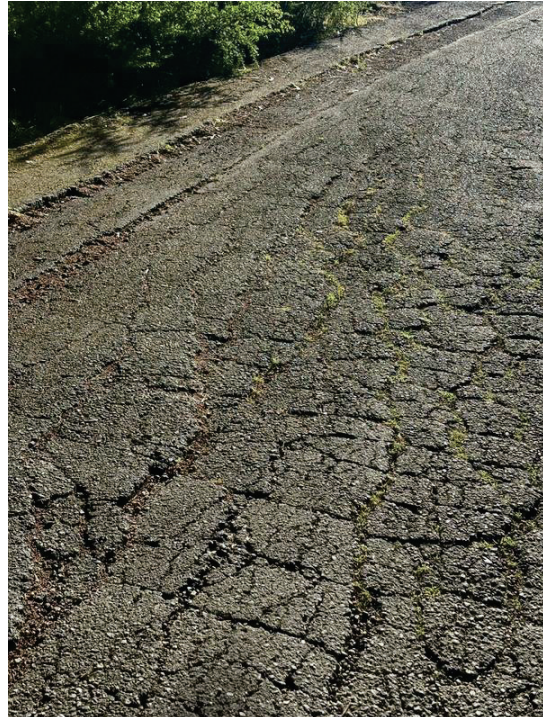


necessary for a variety of reasons. Reasons for trenching and excavating existing roads include: installation or repair cable services, water, sewer and electrical lines, undergrounding of existing overhead utilities, and emergency repairs, for example of water leaks. The entities doing trenching may range from EBMUD, to contractors for PG&E or cable companies. Though these may be necessary actions, the trenching needs to be repaired correctly. Trench failures include subsidence of the trench and can also include mottling of the adjacent pavement as well.

There are three impacts of the current approach, which negatively affects the value citizens receive from our precious paving funds.

- 1) Oakland City staff is spending funds to repair trench failures by others, estimated at \$6 Million per year

- 2) Trench failures can disrupt existing pavement, making the need for repaving sooner
- 3) Trench failures in newly re-paved roads can make the new pavement not last as long.



Trench failures can happen for a variety of reasons, but one of the most common is failure to compact backfill material sufficiently, which causes subsidence of the trench. This can break the pavement surface allowing water intrusion and erosion of the adjacent subbase materials. The trenched area itself may have subsidence and adjacent pavement may have mottling. Examples of a trench failure and mottling are shown above.

Other cities have trenching standards in place and financial mechanisms in place to ensure proper repair. These mechanisms, even if they are not utilized, create an incentive for trenching agencies- or their private contractors to meet the city standards to avoid enforcement activities.

Recommendations:

- Create City Wide Trenching Technical Standard including requirements for compaction and inspection and require acknowledgment before an encroachment permit is issued
- Create Requirement for Financial Assurance of Repair- as other cities have done- before an encroachment permit is issued.
- That DOT have flexibility to coordinate paving plans around utility undergrounding and trenching plans that may change over time.
- That City Council request DOT provide a report to council summarizing similar programs in place by other cities and a recommended approach for Oakland for follow up action by the City Council. Examples of trenching requirements for the Cities of Freemont and Emeryville are in Appendix A and B. DOT analysis should include assessment of impact on staff time.

Appendix A

City of Fremont Trenching Requirements

For any requirements to cut into the pavement or execute trench repairs within the public right-of-way (PROW) in **Fremont, CA**, the city strictly regulates these activities to safeguard its infrastructure. (source Fremont.gov)

Under the Fremont Municipal Code, you cannot dig without securing an **Encroachment Permit (ENC)**, and a core component of getting that permit approved is establishing financial assurance. This serves as a guarantee that the street, curb, or sidewalk will be safely backfilled, paved, and restored to standard city specifications.

Financial Assurance Requirements

Per **Fremont Municipal Code Section 12.05.300**, the City Engineer requires permittees to deposit a security fund before any encroachment permit becomes effective. This financial assurance protects taxpayers in case a contractor leaves a trench incomplete or fails to meet restoration standards.

Acceptable Forms of Security

The City of Fremont allows applicants to satisfy this requirement in a few ways:

Form of Security	Description / Key Requirements
Surety Bond	An <i>Encroachment Permit Annual Performance Bond</i> issued by a licensed surety company. The city requires original "wet" signatures from both the contractor and the surety—photocopies will be rejected.
Certificate of Deposit (CD)	An automatically renewable CD issued by a local Bay Area financial institution, legally assigned to the City of Fremont.
Cash/ Cashier's Check	A direct payment into the city's designated security fund, which is held until the engineering inspector signs off on the final repair.

The Baseline Cost: The exact dollar amount of the financial assurance is determined by the Engineering Division based on the estimated cost of restoring the specific right-of-way impact, but it carries a **strict minimum of \$1,000**.

The Encroachment Permit Submittal Checklist

When you log onto the city's online portal (**Fremont.gov/CitizenAccess**) to submit your application, you must provide the financial assurance alongside several other mandatory items:

- **Completed Application Form:** Outlining the applicant, contractor, and specific location.
- **Site Plans/Sketches:** At least two copies of engineering drawings detailing the trench dimensions and exact location relative to property lines and utility lines.
Fremont.gov
- **Traffic Control Plan (TCP):** If the trenching impacts vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian lanes, a professional traffic management sketch is required.
CCIS Bonds
- **Evidence of Insurance:** Liability insurance certificates matching city requirements must be on file with the Engineering Department.
CCIS Bonds
- **USA North 811 Ticket:** You must notify Underground Service Alert at least two business days prior to digging, and notify your assigned city inspector at least 24 hours before starting work.

Appendix B:

Example Trenching Requirement for City of Emeryville

To prevent the City from incurring costs due to improper street restoration, the City of Emeryville enforces strict **financial assurance and performance security mechanisms** for all trenching and right-of-way excavations. These mandates ensure that if a contractor or utility company fails to properly repair a roadway, the City has immediate access to funds to correct the defect.

Under **Emeryville Municipal Code (EMC) Title 7, Chapter 2**, and the City's *Standard Provisions to Encroachment Permits*, the financial assurance framework operates under the following guidelines:

1. Performance Security & Deposit Requirements

Before any encroachment or excavation permit is formally issued, the applicant must provide financial guarantees directly to the Public Works Department:

- **Performance Security/Deposit:** Permittees must post a performance security or cash deposit (per EMC § 7-2.04[m]). The exact value of this deposit is determined by the Public Works Department and is typically based on the estimated value and geographic footprint of the proposed trenching work.
eCode360
- **Administrative & Inspection Deposits:** Separate upfront fees must be deposited to cover City engineering reviews and field inspections during the trenching and backfilling process.

2. Pavement Failure & The "48-Hour" Repair Rule

If a trench begins to fail—such as the subsurface material shifting or the asphalt pavement becoming depressed, cracked, or broken—the City places the financial liability entirely on the permittee:

- **Written Notice:** The Public Works Director will notify the permittee in writing of any structural or aesthetic deficiencies in the trench restoration.
- **48-Hour Deadline:** Upon receiving written notice, the permittee has exactly **48 hours** to mobilize, backfill, or repave the area to meet City specifications.
- **Emergency Intervention:** If the City determines that a failing trench constitutes an immediate safety hazard, public nuisance, or emergency, Public Works reserves the right to skip the notice period and perform repairs immediately at the permittee's expense.

3. Tapping the Financial Assurance

If the permittee fails to repair the trench within the 48-hour window, or fails to pay the City back for emergency repairs, the City activates its financial recovery safeguards:

- **The 5-Day Payback Window:** The permittee has **5 business days** from the date of City invoice notification to pay for any repair costs incurred by Public Works.
- **Withholding Deposit Funds:** If payment is not received within those 5 days, the City will automatically deduct the full cost of the repair, plus administrative overhead, directly from the contractor's **Performance Security Deposit**.
- **Withholding Future Permits:** The City may also freeze any remaining administrative balances and deny future encroachment permits to the contractor or property owner until all financial accounts are settled.

4. Liability Insurance Mandates

In tandem with the performance security deposit, the applicant or their contractor must submit **Evidence of Liability Insurance** prior to pulling the permit.

Standard Requirement: This insurance must explicitly name the *City of Emeryville* as an additional insured party. It protects the municipality from third-party property damage or personal injury claims resulting from open trenches, improper steel plating, or subsequent pavement failures.