

**DAN KALB**

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Dan Kalb's 2023 Safety Plan for Oakland

Earlier this year, I developed a Safety Plan for Oakland and outlined a number of Budget and Service Priorities. Now that City Council has passed the City of Oakland Biennial Budget in June, I have revisited this Safety Plan with that in mind. While the majority of the priorities remain unchanged, this new Plan is informed by the newly adopted City Budget.

There have been a number of violent assaults, robberies, property crimes and other criminal activity in parts of North Oakland and in several neighborhoods throughout our city. The City of Oakland is committed to fully investigating these serious incidents and working to substantially reduce this horrible criminal activity throughout the city through actions by the Oakland Police Department (OPD), the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) and the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) program.

My staff and I continue to meet regularly with the OPD Area Captain and DVP senior staff to discuss recent crime trends in D1 and the city as a whole, OPD response and investigation, and implementation of DVP short and long-term strategies. I remain committed to supporting strategies and policies that prevent violent behavior, reduce recidivism, take violent offenders off our streets, and enhance overall public safety in Oakland.

I have consistently supported the programs housed in our Department of Violence Prevention, and in 2021 successfully advocated for doubling what, at the time, was their rather modest budget. Additionally, I drafted, along with Council President Bas, the initial legislation to create the city's MACRO program, which is in its pilot stages, to both enable a timely response to low-level, nonviolent incidents and free up sworn officers to focus on more serious criminal activity.

As a City, we must strive to do more to create actual safety for the people who live, work and visit here. Our Police response times are often lacking and violent criminal behavior continues to affect many of our neighborhoods. To address these realities, I have developed a number of budget and service priorities. Budget priorities include funds that the City Council dedicated during the budget process. Service priorities outline ways in which the Oakland Police Department and other departments/offices can focus resources to better ensure public safety for all. I've outlined these priorities below.

City Budget Priorities

1. Restored funding to the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) program strategies. This funding provides money for violence interrupters, gender-based violence reduction programs, youth violence prevention and other helpful services and programs. During the budget process, I was able to successfully restore \$750,000 to already approved grant programs administered by DVP.
2. Retained basic police services and funded six police academies. The freezing of some vacant positions that would not be filled anyway, will reduce to some extent the total funds available for overtime. While overtime supplements the sworn staffing we have and allows flexibility for OPD to cover essential functions, the six academies included in the FY 23-25 budget are critical to the service delivery system. For example, while overtime can be used to assign walking officers on a rotating basis into a dozen or more neighborhoods, increased officer staffing will allow these roles to be filled with officers working their regular shift and create increased opportunities for community policing instead of forcing officers to rotate. We will continue to monitor 9-1-1 response times, and meet with OPD staff to better understand OPD's ability to provide basic police services.
3. Prioritized hiring of 9-1-1 dispatchers to improve response time. Currently, calling 911 may or may not lead to a quick phone response in large part due to the lack of dispatchers. It is critical that we prioritize hiring and training 911 dispatchers immediately to address this essential function. These positions are in the budget, we just need to recruit for and fill them, and then retain those who we do hire. I successfully pushed to include this critical prioritization as a budget directive during the budget process. As a result of this prioritization, we expect to see robust hiring of 9-1-1 dispatchers and a subsequent reduction in 9-1-1 response time.
4. While the Council did not include my recommendation for a lateral academy, there is an opportunity to consider a lateral academy later in this budget cycle if the acting Chief requests one. I would support such a request as we need to make sure the Oakland Police Department is adequately staffed.

Service Priorities

1. Ensure a sufficient number of officers in the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) to help guarantee that serious and violent crimes are fully investigated. Serious and violent crimes must be investigated and OPD needs adequate resources to do so. As I have advocated for repeatedly over the past several years, this also involves having a sufficient number of civilian police evidence technicians and expert crime lab staff in order to best investigate crimes. These positions are in the adopted Budget.

2. Ensure that CeaseFire and the Criminal Investigations Division are fully staffed or as close to fully staffed as practical.
3. Institute on-going, rotating walking beat officers in crime hot spots. Walking beat officers can be a deterrent to crime and improve community relations and good will.
4. Increase visible patrol, particularly in business corridors such as Piedmont Avenue, Rockridge and Temescal in District One and in many other commercial corridors around Oakland such as Fruitvale, to deter criminal behavior.
5. Focus OPD and outside agency work on getting guns off our streets. This requires coordination with relevant agencies at all levels of government.
6. Continue to monitor and build the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO). MACRO enables a response to nonviolent, low-level crimes and non-criminal behavior and transfers the responsibility for responding to such calls from the Police Department to the Fire Department where MACRO is housed. This reduces the number of calls OPD is required to address, allowing OPD to focus on calls for service involving violence and other serious crimes. It also increases the number of calls overall the City is able to respond to. We need to continue to build MACRO's capacity to take and respond to these calls for service.

By focusing on these budgetary and service activities/priorities, I support both the ability of the Police Department to focus on responding to and investigating violent crime, and at the same time, resourcing the reduction of violence short and long term. Prioritizing sufficient overtime, improving 911 dispatch hiring and retention, and walking beat officers emphasizes the Police Department's role in public safety and gives the Department the tools it needs to be successful. Restoring the budget of the Department of Violence Prevention and building MACRO over time maintains the number of violence interrupters and other key staff the Department of Violence Prevention supports and increases the ability of the MACRO to address low-level, nonviolent calls for service. All of these policies resource the reduction of violence. As always, we must take a comprehensive approach to public safety.

These policy decisions can give the OPD, DVP and MACRO the resources they need to be successful, free up some resources to respond to violent crimes, and help to create a safer Oakland.

Collaboration Efforts

I am in communication with the Alameda County District Attorney's Office and other relevant government agencies regarding appropriate consequences, reentry services and more, and look forward to working with all local agency and elected officials to reduce crime and violence in and around Oakland.

We need substantially greater investments in rehabilitation programs in our state prisons in order to reduce recidivism and help those in need. Likewise, we need a stronger commitment at the County level, which would include expanding programs at the County Jail and helping the probation department with their reentry efforts.

Our City Administration must monitor all these efforts and activities and evaluate their efficacy. Let us continue to dedicate ourselves to making Oakland a safe and vibrant city for all.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Kalb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Kalb
Oakland Councilmember, District 1