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Date: March 17, 2025

To: Interim Mayor Kevin Jenkins, City Administrator Jestin Johnson, Finance Director Erin Roseman, and Oaklanders

From: Oakland City Councilmember At-Large Rowena Brown

Subject: City of Oakland Budget Priorities for Fiscal Years 2025-2027

Shaping Oakland's Future: Essential Services at the Core

Community, as the City Council sets out to shape Oakland's fiscal priorities, I've created a working strategy centered on addressing critical needs, and ensuring that our resources are allocated in ways that foster safety, inclusivity, and long-term prosperity for all Oaklanders. This strategy aims to prioritize the well-being of every neighborhood, ensuring that the budget reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of our communities.

I am deeply committed to greater transparency in the budget process, ensuring that every decision is made with clear communication and accountability while allowing all Oaklanders the opportunity to provide input. By fostering an open dialogue with the community, I aim to provide Oakland residents with a clear understanding of how resources are allocated and how their voices can directly influence fiscal decisions, ensuring collaboration which results in equitable outcomes for all.

The Oakland City Council will need to close a projected deficit of \$265 million over the next two fiscal years, and to do so we have to make difficult decisions and be fiscally disciplined. Most importantly, we must ensure that we properly resource our core essential services.

My priorities are ***fostering safe and clean neighborhoods, investing in affordable housing solutions, economic revitalization through strategic investments, and strengthening organizational operations to enhance government effectiveness.***

I am committed to making sure that these outcomes are a reality for every Oaklander, especially for our residents who face housing instability, low incomes, food insecurity, high crime rates, poor water quality, and other disparities. Being Black, brown, an immigrant, LGBTQ+, or a senior should not be a predictor of your quality of life in Oakland. Clean, safe, affordable, and vibrant neighborhoods can be a reality in every district in our city. We have reiterated time and time again that the budget is a reflection of our values, and that is especially true now.

As we look ahead, my focus is on strengthening cross-governmental collaboration, working closely with Alameda County, the State, and other partners to strategically align our resources and drive meaningful, long-term progress for Oakland.

These are my priorities for Fiscal Years 2025-2027:

I. Investing in Affordable Housing Solutions

- A. Prioritize deeply affordable housing for transitional-age youth, seniors, LGBTQ+ residents, and very low income while utilizing Measure U funds.
- B. Expand permanent housing solutions to reduce homelessness.
- C. Expand Safe RV & Car Parking sites on City-owned parcels.
- D. Implement anti-displacement policies and tenant protections that keep Oaklanders housed.
- E. Ensure the Rent Adjustment Program's financial health by identifying solutions for improving fee collection.
- F. Preserve funding for the homelessness prevention pilot program.
- G. Preserve rental assistance, eviction defense, and tenant education services.

Alameda County Partnership:

- A. Use Measure W funds for permanent supportive housing, homelessness prevention, interim housing, rental subsidies, and other homelessness interventions. Measure W, a half-cent sales tax passed in November 2020, raises \$150M annually for the county.
- B. Expand mental and behavioral health treatment facilities, treatment beds, and supportive services for Oaklanders.

State Partnership:

- A. Expand funding for deeply affordable housing and permanent supportive housing, and change project scoring criteria to unlock Oakland's affordable housing pipeline.

II. Fostering Safe Communities

- A. Enhance violence prevention programs, which are vital to the vision of achieving holistic community safety.
 - a. Preserve Ceasefire investments in violence interrupters, life coaches, and client stipends that have been critical for violent crime reductions.
 - b. Preserve investments in reducing sex trafficking, human trafficking, and gender-based violence.
- B. Fund at minimum 700 sworn officers to help improve our 911 response times, restore community policing, and follow through on our Measure NN commitment.
 - a. Align police department (OPD) resourcing with the recommendations of the Inspector General staffing study.

- C. Prioritize traffic enforcement to mitigate reckless driving.
- D. Strengthen the Neighborhood Enhancement Services Team (NEST) program to ensure efficient and coordinated service provision in neighborhoods most impacted by crime.
- E. Improve the management of overtime in OPD.
 - a. Embed Finance Department staff in OPD to improve overtime management and oversight.
- F. Shift responsibilities of OPD's Internal Affairs Division into the Community Police Review Agency.

Alameda County Partnership:

- A. Work collaboratively with the county to assist victims of violent crime, domestic violence, and to fund alternative policing models.

State Partnership:

- A. Maintain a healthy partnership with California Highway Patrol to work collaboratively alongside the Oakland Police Department
- B. Advocate for Ceasefire investments across highly impacted counties in the State.
- C. Expand public safety grant programs like the California Violence Intervention & Prevention (CalVIP) grant.

III. Economic Revitalization Through Strategic Investment

- A. Prioritize Economic & Workforce Development Department resources to support businesses in leveraging State and private capital and financial assistance.
- B. Invest in outreach to the business community to ensure that we maximize our business development resources like the Neighborhood Business Assistance Program and staff technical assistance.
- C. Make and attract targeted investments in placemaking, programming, beautification, and marketing to revitalize key business corridors.
 - a. Explore the creation of Entertainment Zones and other innovative programming that reestablishes business corridors as community destinations.
- D. Preserve the Facade and Tenant Improvement Program to support exterior and interior improvements for businesses.
- E. Restore funding for arts and cultural programming, which is a major driver of economic activity.

Alameda County Partnership:

- A. Advocate for county-wide investments in arts and cultural programming.

State Partnership:

- A. Advocate for investments from The Office Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development for business financial assistance, facade improvements, security measures, technical assistance, marketing, and corridor revitalization.

IV. Clean Streets, Safe Journeys: Ensuring Traffic Safety and Injury Prevention

- A. Reinvest in the OakTown Proud campaign, which prioritizes education to prevent illegal dumping and inform residents about their options for bulky waste disposal.
- B. Preserve Environmental Enforcement Officers that track and enforce the fines for illegal dumping.
- C. Preserve staffing in the Public Works Keep Oakland Clean and Beautiful division to address illegal dumping, graffiti, and blight.
- D. Accelerate street paving, pothole filling, and street safety improvement efforts by using Measure U funds and filling vacancies outside of the General Purpose Fund.
- E. Expand parking enforcement and parking meters, which generate revenue for the city.
- F. Preserve abandoned vehicle enforcement efforts to address blight on our streets.

Alameda County Partnership:

- A. Expand funding for Oakland's street safety and infrastructure projects by working with the Alameda County Transportation Commission to revise capital project guidelines.

State Partnership:

- A. Advocate for legislative and financial support to assist with illegal dumping and abandoned autos in our neighborhoods.
- B. State funding to re-design streets in communities on the High Injury Network.

V. Strengthening Organizational Operations to Enhance Government Effectiveness

- A. Streamline and consolidate permitting processes to reduce administrative burden on businesses, residents, and City staff.
 - a. Integrate all departmental permitting processes with the Online Permit Center.
- B. Expand revenue-generating positions that return money to the General Purpose Fund, like parking control technicians and revenue collection staff.
 - a. Expand grant management and writing staff to improve Oakland's competitiveness for external public and private funds.
- C. Evaluate contracting and vendor payment processes to reduce delays in compensating businesses and community organizations.
- D. Minimize outside contracting for functions that can be performed by filling vacancies and hiring new City workers.
- E. Make critical investments in affordable housing, streets, and facilities by issuing Measure U bonds.

- F. Develop strategic partnerships with government and philanthropic institutions to increase investments in programs for affordable housing, homeless interventions and services, community safety, and other priorities.
- G. Invest in technology across all departments to increase organizational efficiency.
- H. Implement Democracy Dollars, ensuring that all Oakland residents are able to participate in local government by supporting campaigns.

Alameda County Partnership:

- A. Work collaboratively to ensure Oaklanders are aware of the resources available from Alameda County.

State Partnership:

- A. Expand funding for technologies that protect and prepare cities from digital threats, and support emergency preparedness, public safety, and overall government efficiency.

These priorities reflect a commitment to making Oakland a more affordable, safe, clean, and economically vibrant city. By investing in housing, community safety, economic revitalization, clean neighborhoods, safe streets, and government efficiency, we can create a city that works for all Oaklanders, especially our most marginalized residents.

Shaping Oakland's future requires a strong partnership with both Alameda County and the State, as well as collaboration with City departments, local businesses, community leaders, and residents. Through strategic investments with a focus on equity, we can maintain our essential services today while laying the foundation for a more resilient, stable future.

Please save the date for my ***100 Days in Office Community Town Hall*** on **Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 5 PM at 1955 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612**. This event will provide updates on my first few months in office while offering a space for open dialogue and collaboration regarding the budget and how the City can better meet your needs. Additionally, my Council colleagues will be hosting budget town halls in their districts in the coming months, providing more opportunities for feedback.

My office will continue to keep you informed about opportunities to partner in developing a budget that reflects our values.

In Community,



Rowena J. Brown
Oakland City Councilmember At-Large