

CITY OF OAKLAND



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COUNCIL MEMBER SHENG THAO
DISTRICT 4

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Date: March 15, 2019
To: Mayor Schaaf and City Administrator Sabrina Landreth
From: Councilmember Sheng Thao
Re: Budget Priorities for Budget Cycle 2019

Dear Mayor Schaaf, City Council Colleagues and Members of the Public,

Thank you for working together with the City Council as we begin the work towards adopting our 2019-2021 budget cycle. Please see the below list of my budget priorities that I am submitting to Mayor Schaaf and the City Administrator's office for consideration. I look forward to working with each of you, including engaging with the community, working towards passing a budget that encompasses our shared values and goals for the City of Oakland.

Wildfire Prevention

1. Fully fund vegetation management programming, including projecting for the heavier vegetation growth due to a longer rainy season, filling inspector vacancies and funding for goats.
2. Adopt a comprehensive Vegetation Management Plan, which would include adding additional funding for wildfire prevention.
3. Funding for updating/replacing/acquiring necessary equipment for vegetation management crews to be successful.
4. Funding to reestablish the Special Wildfire Prevention Assessment District.

2018 was the deadliest and most destructive wildfire season on record in California. The Camp fire in Butte County was the most Destructive and Deadliest wildfire in California history, with 153,336 acres effected, 18,804 structures destroyed and 85 deaths[1]. According to Cal Fire, the department spent \$601.5 million fighting wildfires only four and a half months into the fiscal year that ends this June 2019.

With the depletion of the funds from the sunsetted Special Wildfire Prevention Assessment District, I support the full funding of the Vegetation Management department's programmatic needs, including equipment, to clear city properties on time and ahead of the fire season.

I support the completion, and more funding if needed, to complete a comprehensive Vegetation Management Plan that outlines the action needed to clear city properties, and for it to be specific as possible. It is also equally important to support and fund various mechanisms to reestablish the WPAD.

[1] http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/incidents_statsevents

Housing Crisis Mitigation

1. Increase the affordable housing stock, including:
 - a. Setting aside Oakland's Transit Occupancy Tax from Short Term Rentals to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
 - b. Putting Boomerang Funds BACK to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
2. Develop work-force housing, (housing for teachers and first responders etc.)
3. Wrap-around support for our unhoused neighbors, including purchase of another Single Room Occupancy hotel, or the like, for a navigation center.
4. Fund sanitation, access to showers, and laundry for all unhoused city sanctioned sites.
5. Funding for education for renters' rights and landlord rights.

The Bay Area is continuing to experience a housing crisis, which is making our housing market the most expensive in the country. In San Francisco, an individual would need to earn \$58 per hour, or \$120,000 per year, to afford a typical two-bedroom apartment. To find affordability, people are moving farther and farther away from their jobs, sacrificing the time they spend connected to family and community for long commutes. This housing challenge facing the Bay Area create serious gentrification and displacement pressures and threaten our most vulnerable community members a fair opportunity to lead healthy, independent, and productive lives.

This housing crisis has caused massive displacement which has increased the number of people who are unhoused. I support funding sanitation, access to showers and laundry for city sanction sites and for the city to use State/County funds to purchase another SRO that implements the ideals of navigation centers.

I support the Transient Occupancy Tax on Short-term rentals and the reestablishment of the Boomerang Funds to be directed into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to help develop the much-needed affordable housing stock in our City, and to include work-force housing so that our first responders and teachers are able to live in the city they work in.

I support funding to help both tenants and landlords understand their rights, responsibilities, and programs offered by the City. I want to highlight the importance of housing workshops – including pathways to home ownership, education, and outreach for low-income Oakland renters.

Public Safety

1. Continue funding Shotspotter
2. Officer response time / burglary response time
3. Continue support for the Department of Violence Prevention
4. Continue supporting Cease Fire

Having your home burglarized is a traumatic experience. The City of Oakland budget overwhelmingly is dedicated to the Police Department, I urge resources be directed to allow for a timely response to home burglaries.

I recommend fully funding the ShotSpotter technology to help the Oakland Police Department fight gun violence by delivering instant, precise, and detailed data that alerts them to gunfire. Shotspotter further helps OPD respond more quickly, safely and effectively and to possibly retrieve illegal guns.

Life Enrichment & Oakland's Youth

1. Extend library hours and programming for youth at city recreation centers.
2. Support Head-Start and Meals on Wheels.
3. Continue supporting Safe Routes to School.
4. Fund crossing guards.
5. Restriping of crosswalks near and around schools and recreation centers.
6. Fund restorative justice programs in our schools.
7. Fund upkeep and updates for city owned parks, including cleaning restrooms and mowing park fields.
8. Continue supportive funds for Oakland's Chabot Space Center.
9. Fully fund the Youth Summer Jobs program

Investing in our youth and Oakland's children is imperative, that is why I'm supporting funding for extended library hours, expansion of programs for our youth in our recreation centers, continuing support for Chabot Space & Science Center – which has expanded its outreach programs to an even larger scope of low-income families in Oakland, and funding to ensure that restorative justice programs are available to our students. I'm also supportive of fully funding the Youth Summer Jobs program, as this will give our youth an opportunity to learn new skills, keep them safe and off the streets.

The city must continue to support and address the low-hanging fruits when it comes to our children's safety in and around schools and places where youth use for recreation. This includes the upkeep of cross-walk striping, funding for crossing guards, maintenance to our park restrooms and mowing park fields for our OUSD sports teams to utilize throughout the season.

Jobs & Economic Development

1. Fund job training and workforce development, including Cypress Mandela and West Oakland Jobs Resource Center.
2. Partner with OUSD to create pathways to vocational and trades programs.
3. Honor voters passage of Measure Z by creating the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement.

We must invest in Oaklanders and fund programs that will get our residents into good paying jobs. Moreover, through partnership with OUSD, the creation of pathways to college, vocational education or into a trade that will give our Oakland children expanded opportunities to thrive.

Infrastructure

1. Work in partnership with utilities to implement a "whole streets" paving plan.
2. Continue to fill potholes where needed.

Our streets are backlogged and need attention immediately. However, because we don't have the funds to unclog this massive backlog immediately, the city should work in partnership with the utilities to pave streets that are being opened by PG&E, EBMUD and others.

After a utility company finish their underground work they are required to repave a portion of that street. I support implementing a "whole streets" approach where the City funds the latter portion so that the whole street is repaved all at once.

Climate and Energy Action

1. Set-aside funding for next steps to reach our goal for ECAP deadline.
2. I recommend the alignment of the Oakland Sewer Fee for those who are eligible for the EBMUD Care Program which will provide a modest relief to low-income homeowners.

I support funding systems that will help the City get to its environmental goal/deadline, and beyond. There are many pressing issues that we need to address throughout the City, I see climate change and environmental responsiveness as one of these issues. I am supportive of funding next steps so that Oakland can narrow the gap to reaching its ECAP goal.

More Efficient City Services

1. Reduce the vacancy rate, including prioritizing Temporary Part Time (TOT) workers to fill city vacancies when possible.
2. Support Oakland's Business Districts, including funding (if needed), to provide accurate data on delinquencies and provide basic and clear information to the BID board of directors.
3. Funding to streamline the city's permitting process.

The current City of Oakland employment vacancy rate is high, which has lasting effects that could result in over-worked employees and lack of services for our residents, taxpayers and more. It is important to better understand the continuous high rate of vacancies in the City and what can be done. I support funding to hire a third-party consultant to comprehensively analyze the cause and make substantial recommendations to reduce the City's high vacancy rate.

Business Improvement Districts are a wonderful supplemental public service that are designated commercial areas throughout our city. BIDs finance, by fees paid by local property owners, basic services such as sanitation and security, as well as neighborhood amenities such as signage, street lighting, and street plantings. The City must uphold its responsibility by providing accurate data on which entities are delinquent on their BID fees, provide basic and clear financial information to the BID board of directors, and have robust communication between city staff and the BID. I support necessary funding to have the city provide the service that is needed to have the BIDs be successful.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sheng Thao".

Councilmember Sheng Thao, District 4