



CITY OF OAKLAND

MEMO

TO:	Honorable Mayor Kevin Jenkins City Administrator, Jestin Johnson	FROM:	Ken Houston
	Deputy City Administrator, Monica Davis Director Erin Roseman Budget Administrator, Bradley Johnson		Council Member District 7
SUBJECT:	Budget Priority Request's	DATE:	March 17, 2025

Dear Mayor Jenkins, Administrator Johnson, Finance Administration, and Members of the Public:

As a subject matter expert in public safety, I have extensive experience and knowledge regarding critical issues such as homelessness, illegal dumping, graffiti vandalism, and the underlying factors contributing to these challenges. Addressing these concerns is essential to ensuring the well-being and stability of our communities. It is imperative that we prioritize fundamental core services to halt the decline that has afflicted Oakland, particularly District 7.

The current leadership has led us into a financial crisis, exacerbating existing problems and undermining public trust. Considering our strained financial circumstances, we must remain resolute in tackling the essential services and issues that directly impact our residents. Without a secure and stable environment, no other improvements can be effectively implemented.

Public safety is my top priority. Without it, the current trajectory of Oakland will remain unchanged. Safety is the foundation upon which all other aspects of a thriving city are built. My commitment to public safety stems from both my professional expertise and lived experience, which have provided me with a unique perspective and skillset on the necessary solutions.

Councilmember Ken
Houston Budget Priorities
March 17, 2025

Councilmember Houston Recommends the Following Budget Priorities for Inclusion in the FY 2025-2027 Biennial Budget:

1. Priority #1 Public Safety:

- Maintain a minimal staffing level of 750 sworn police officers. This number does not include those that are on any type of leave status. When and where possible, officers that can work should be in the field, not behind a desk.
- Implement the standards and protocols for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). The following patterns and best practices should be implemented.
- OPD and the City Administrator must work up a plan that via an electronic tracking system can monitor OPD overtime and it must be approved by the City Administrator.

Core Principles of CPTED:

1. **Natural Surveillance** – Increase visibility to deter crime.
 - Use proper lighting in parking lots, walkways, and building entrances.
 - Remove obstructions like tall fences or dense shrubbery that block sightlines.
 - Design buildings with windows overlooking streets or public areas.
2. **Natural Access Control** – Guide people through proper pathways.
 - Use fences, gates, and landscaping to direct foot traffic.
 - Ensure entrances are clearly marked and well-lit.
 - Restrict access to private or sensitive areas.
3. **Territorial Reinforcement** – Establish ownership and define spaces.
 - Use signs, fences, or landscaping to mark private or restricted areas.
 - Keep properties well-maintained to signal active ownership.
 - Encourage community pride and engagement in shared spaces.
4. **Maintenance and Management** – Keep areas clean and functional.
 - Repair broken lights, fences, and graffiti quickly.
 - Ensure public and private spaces remain well-kept to deter vandalism.
 - Implement regular patrols or security monitoring.
5. **Activity Support** – Promote legitimate use of spaces.

- Encourage community events or activities in public spaces.
- Design parks, plazas, and gathering areas to attract diverse groups.
- Align urban planning with mixed-use development to increase activity.

Best Practices for Implementing CPTED:

- Conduct **CPTED audits** to assess risks and identify necessary changes.
- Integrate CPTED principles into **city planning, architecture, and law enforcement strategies**.
- Work with community stakeholders (businesses, residents, and local governments) to create safer environments.
- Use **security technologies** (such as CCTV) to complement CPTED strategies.
- Encourage **community engagement** by fostering neighborhood watch programs.

Side Show Enforcement & Eradication:

- Establish an OPD Sideshow detail to enforce, impound and eradicate dangerous sideshows in Oakland.
- In June 2023, Oakland enacted an ordinance targeting individuals who organize, facilitate, or promote sideshows. Offenders face misdemeanor charges, punishable by up to six months in county jail and fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000, with increased fines for repeat offenders. To keep in step with our sister city, San Francisco, and the governor where we should increase our penalties towards eradication of sideshows by allowing for the impoundment of vehicles involved in sideshows, with the possibility of permanent seizure upon conviction.

Priority #2 Homeless & Housing:

- Encampment closures and *when* possible, work to ensure shelter services
- Continue the city's safe RV parking and storage of those that have been moved to a safe space.
- The City Administrator to work with the governor's office to secure additional funding for encampment management and additional services
- Ensure that seniors are well taken care of, including but not limited to:
 - Housing Safety

- Food Insecurity
- Senior centers to remain open to ensure our seniors thrive and can continue to socialize with their communities

Priority #3 Beautification of Oakland:

- Enforce the revised version of the Encampment Management Policy.
- Strongly enforce illegal dumping via increased penalties from the existing \$700.00 fine.
- Retain a law firm that can view Measure RR funds and track the data from those that are illegally dumping and develop a plan on how to penalize and track repeat offenders.
- Fully implement the Environmental Enforcement Officers program working in collaboration with Alameda County to Educate, Eradicate and Enforcement of illegal dumping in Oakland.
- Align our EMP with the post Grants v. Pass decision and review and draw an alignment with the anti-camping/encampment policies of those cities in the surrounding areas.
- Implement “**Build Oaklanders**,” in collaboration with the department of violence prevention utilize home grown Oaklanders, returning citizens, justice involved citizens, veterans, unhoused citizens, under **Build Oaklanders**, those individuals can work to rebuild their self-dignity and assist in beautifying the city of Oakland. A job readiness programs utilizing the current blight conditions of graffiti vandalism and illegal dumping to build transferable skills, to fill city jobs positions in OPW etc.

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- **Provide specific contracts to verified non-profits to manage and maintain the Build Oaklanders program, providing the vendor has a strong programmatic track record and has a results-based theory of design to their work.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Houston
Councilmember, District 7