

Vice Mayor Kaplan's Budget Priorities for FY 21-23

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the lives of Oakland residents and highlighted the inequities that exist within our borders and beyond. Over the past year, our City has faced crises that forced us to evaluate what is important. Our health, our safety, and our economic status have all been at risk, and some have had to make decisions that they never thought they would have to make. As we move forward, the City of Oakland must focus on addressing the needs of its residents and ensure that they can live in a safe, healthy, and prosperous community. We must create a budget that is rooted in equity and will expand economic opportunity for all Oakland residents, not just a few.

This budget is an opportunity for us to take action to provide for a just and healthy recovery for our community. This means restoring vital public needs, such as fully restoring fire department services, funding violence prevention programs, and reducing trash and dumping on our streets. Below are the budget priorities that I will lift up as we move through this process.

1. **Restore Vital City Services.** The recent cuts to vital public safety services, and vacant city positions have endangered our communities and slowed down our economic recovery. We must invest in the City's infrastructure to ensure that the needs of its residents are met. This includes:
 - a. **Restore and Expand Fire Services.** The high risk for wildfires is no longer restricted to a few months, due to climate change, and fire season has become a year-round fight. The recent cuts to fire services are a danger to the health and safety of Oakland residents. We must restore funding to the Oakland Fire Department and keep all fire stations open to ensure OFD has the ability to respond to fire and medical calls in a timely manner. We must also fund summer wildfire prevention work, so it can start earlier due to expansion of fire season.
 - b. **Maintain Fully Staffed City Departments.** The City has been unable to increase retention among its staff and many departments are unable to fully perform its duties. This has resulted in delays of building permit approval, trash not getting removed, and lack of enforcement of tenant protection laws. Oakland should not contract these services out to outside vendors, and should continue providing these services in-house.
 - c. **Reinvest in Parks and Recreation.** Many City parks, pools, and recreation centers closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many residents depend on these areas to exercise, access the outdoors, and engage with other community members. We should not only open these centers, but expand their hours, the services they offer, and increase maintenance of the parks.
2. **Increase Economic Opportunity.** The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted socioeconomic disparities that exist in our communities. We must invest in opportunities that provide economic opportunities for Oakland residents to help them build and grow their businesses, learn new skills, and foster professional development.
 - a. **Expand and Continue Lake Merritt Vendor Program.** This program provides local businesses an opportunity to sell their products, engage with other business owners, and provide the community with a safe shopping experience. We must

expand and continue the vendor program at Lake Merritt to ensure health and safety and provide economic opportunity.

- b. **Fund Youth Summer Jobs Programs.** These programs, like those through Parks Rec and Youth Development, are great opportunities for youth and young adults to gain new skills and work within their communities.
 - c. **Provide Job Training.** Job training for those reentering the workforce is a proven way to increase economic stability and opportunity.
 - d. **Diversity Opportunities.** The 2019 Race and Gender Study conducted by Mason Tillman exposed the disparities that Black-owned contractors face in the contracting process in Oakland. An Assessment and directory of Black-owned construction contractors should be created by the Department of Economic and Workforce Development to make these business owners easier to find.
3. **Address the Housing and Homelessness Crisis.** Oakland is facing a severe housing and homelessness crisis. It is most severely affecting our communities of color and our low-income families, and the number of unhoused people continues to grow every year. Oakland must build more housing, especially housing that is affordable to middle and working-class Oakland residents in order to meet the demand.
- a. **Increased Services for Immediate, Emergency Housing Shelter.** The City of Oakland must utilize the Federal FEMA Reimbursement Program. FEMA has authorized 100% reimbursement to Oakland to pay to provide hotel rooms for the homeless, as well as for food. Thus, the City should utilize this funding opportunity to help people get off the streets.
 - b. **Increase Services at Encampments.** It is vital that those staying in the encampments around the City have access to services such as bathrooms, maintenance and clean up.
 - c. **Fully Staff Housing & Community Development Department.** The City must expedite the hiring of a permanent Homeless Administrator and fully staff the department in order to meet the needs of the unhoused and unsheltered community.
 - d. **Support the Development of Affordable Housing.** Oakland must continue funding and acquiring land for affordable housing, as well as preserve affordable and deeply affordable housing that currently exists.
4. **Protect Low Wage Workers.** Oakland must invest in protecting low-wage workers who are predominantly Black and Latino and have been on the frontline of this pandemic. Oakland has a number of laws that increase wages and rights for workers that will be critical to protecting our workers as the economy reopens. We must have these protections so that our recovery is just and rooted in equity. We must not only support community-based and labor organizations who are trusted by Black and Brown workers to conduct outreach and ensure that workers know their rights ,but also take other proactive steps, including:
- a. **Fully Staff the Department of Workplace & Employment Standards (DWES).** DWES was created to investigate violations of worker's rights laws and uphold workers rights. The Department must be properly resourced and staffed with workers' rights experts to effectively carry out its work. This includes unfreezing and filling the DWES deputy director position.

- b. **Allocate Significant, Dedicated Funding for Labor Standards Enforcement.** It will be important to sufficiently enforce Oakland's various labor standards policies, including minimum wage, paid sick leave, hotel worker protections, local hire policy, and recall rights.
 - c. **Maintain Funding for Fair Labor Education and Outreach.** This work includes funding for the Fair Labor Oakland community-based education, outreach and monitoring work, as well as the Day Laborer Program that provides health/social support services, outreach and education, economic opportunities, legal services for Oakland day laborers.
5. **Keep Our Communities Safe.** One of the main duties of government is keeping its residents safe. It is time that we reimagine public safety in Oakland and focus on ensuring that resources are being distributed equitably, and in line with the needs of the communities. There have been cuts to public safety programs that negatively impact our communities and make them less safe. In our upcoming budget, I will support the following strategies:
- a. **Fully Fund the MACRO Program as an In-House Service.** We must make MACRO an in-house service within the Fire Department to provide a non-law enforcement response to mental health crisis calls. This program will create good, union jobs, and save the City lives and money.
 - b. **Expand Community Safety Ambassador Program.** Given the recent rise in violence in business districts, especially against the Asian community, we must have Community Safety Ambassadors in Chinatown, Eastlake, East Oakland, and West Oakland
 - c. **Restore Funding for Vital Violence Prevention Programs.** Community programs focused on preventing violence in our communities should be key components to the City's public safety strategy. The programs that should be fully funded include: OK Program, Ceasefire, and the Department of Violence Prevention
 - d. **Expand ShotSpotter System.** The ShotSpotter Gunshot Location Detection (GLD) system has been proven to reduce gunfire activity and it is an important tool to combat gun violence in our communities. I believe we should expand the program to cover more geographic regions.
 - e. **Hire Civilian OPD Technicians.** The Police Evidence and Police Service Technician positions are critical to solving Missing Persons Cases. These civilian positions within OPD have been frozen, hindering the Department's ability to collect evidence and follow up with families in a timely manner.
 - f. **Implement Traffic Calming Measures.** People of color are disproportionately impacted by unsafe streets. It is more dangerous to walk and bike in their neighborhoods due to high-speed and poorly designed streets. Furthermore, enforcement of speeding can also be inequitable and lead to a higher number of people of color being pulled over and ticketed. By implementing traffic calming measures, we can make our neighborhoods safer, and prevent further interaction with Police Officers.

6. **Keep Our Communities Clean.** Oakland residents are increasingly noting the increase of litter, abandoned cars, graffiti, and poor roads. The City must address these needs and implement real solutions, including:
 - a. **Increase Department of Public Works Staffing.** The Department of Public Works is a key player in keeping our communities clean. By adding three Environmental officer positions, they can aid with litter enforcement and removal using a proactive and complaint-based approach.
 - b. **Invest in Infrastructure Repair.** The City must invest in communities that have suffered from race and class based disinvestment for decades. These investments should focus on roads, potholes and other major infrastructure with a prioritization in flatland communities.
 - i. Sidewalk Repair should be proactively pursued by the City. One approach would be to work with a contractor who would agree to several projects, instead of piecemeal jobs. This option would make more sense for the City and the community.

7. **Reinvesting In & Sustaining Arts & Culture.** The arts and culture of Oakland play an integral role in what makes Oakland special. They have been especially hard hit by the pandemic and need support to survive and thrive. The City can play a role with the following actions:
 - a. **Protect Artist Housing & Art Studio/Presentation Space.** The City should prioritize spaces for arts and cultural activities. Further, artists must have safe and affordable spaces in which to live and create.
 - b. **Restore Arts & Culture Funding to Pre-cut Levels.** As a part of Just Recovery, arts and culture organizations will need support and the wait for other forms of funding to come back online.
 - c. **Invest in the Black Arts Movement Business District.** Direct support to the BAMBD CDC, which provides support and services to the Black Arts in Oakland.
 - d. **Restore the Summer Jobs for Youth In The Arts.** This would specifically fund jobs for youth who are interested in programs in arts and culture in collaboration with existing programs in the community (i.e., BAMBD Youth Brigade, Black Ambassadors).

8. **A Transparent and Public Budgeting Process.** In order to ensure public faith in the city government and the entities that run it, transparency is essential. When it comes to taxpayers dollars this public faith is even more crucial. A transparent budgeting process that is conducted with notice to the public so that they have the opportunity to offer feedback to their elected officials does not only make sense, it is also mandated by the charter. Changes must be made so that the reserves cannot be spent without a public process that includes authorization from Council.