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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

**IN-DEPTH AUDIT PAVES THE WAY FOR THE CITY OF OAKLAND  
TO RESURRECT SUCCESSFUL VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY AND  
REDUCE CRIME**

*Operation Ceasefire is Credited for Saving Approximately 140 lives over a 5 year Period*

**Oakland, Ca** – The California Partnership for Safe Communities (CPSC) has completed and delivered an in-depth audit of Oakland’s Operation Ceasefire. The audit found that the City of Oakland has not effectively implemented the strategy since late 2019. During this time period, the resources, management talent and accountability needed to implement the strategy were refocused, defunded, and effectively gutted.

In response to the audit findings, **Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao stated:** *“Oakland was once the national model for reducing gun violence, achieving substantial decreases between 2012 and 2019. I’m proud to announce that we are resurrecting the strategy that was proven successful in saving lives and reducing crime,”* said Mayor Sheng Thao. *“Operation Ceasefire is a critical component of my comprehensive community safety strategy. Ceasefire is an evidence-based strategy that achieved success in reducing shootings, homicides, recidivism and victimization for those at highest risk.”*

Operation Ceasefire, initially implemented in Oakland in 2011, became a national model in tackling gun violence, boasting a remarkable 42% reduction in homicides from 2012 to 2017. This translates into approximately 140 lives saved in a five-year period. This period of violence reduction continued through 2019.

Ceasefire is an evidence-based strategy that uses intelligence and data to focus on the small group of individuals who are most likely to commit or fall victim to gun violence. This focus includes intervention through Life Coaching and other Measure Z-funded intervention programs, as well as focused enforcement for individuals who continue to engage in gun violence.

The audit found beginning most prominently in 2020, the City of Oakland began to walk away from the Ceasefire strategy. This occurred in the Oakland Police Department and the Department of Violence Prevention. As the City began to focus on pandemic relief, and other violence reduction strategies, the city's efforts to reduce violence became more general in nature. This generalized approach is in stark contrast to the very specific, precision-oriented intervention approach focused on high-risk individuals, groups and places that Oakland had been using during the multiple years of declining homicide rates. As the City walked away from Ceasefire, Oakland's homicide rate increased from a low 16.2 in 2018 to 27.8 in 2022.

In response to the audit findings, Mayor Thao has directed city departments to immediately begin efforts to resurrect Operation Ceasefire.

*"As Mayor, the buck stops with me and my responsibility is to ensure that all strategy elements are implemented effectively. We're moving beyond just saying that we're implementing this strategy to actually doing it," said Mayor Thao. "Violent crime in Oakland did not reach crisis levels overnight. Unfortunately, years working in silos and losing focus on what's actually worked in Oakland have taken its toll, and it's time to get this train back on track."*

*As the Chief of the Department of Violence Prevention, I am fully committed to restructuring our approach to gang-and-group-related gun violence," said Dr. Holly Joshi, Chief of the Department of Violence Prevention. "The recommendations provided in the audit will guide our efforts to enhance the Ceasefire strategy, focusing on prevention and intervention strategies that support individuals to choose a better path and improve community health and safety."*

*"Addressing gun violence is a shared responsibility, and the Oakland Police Department is dedicated to working collaboratively with our community partners. The audit underscores the need for renewed focus, staffing adjustments, and a unified approach to enforcement. We are committed to implementing the recommended changes for a safer Oakland and have already developed a plan to restructure OPD's strategy around Ceasefire" Interim Oakland Police Chief Darren Alison*

The California Partnership for Safe Communities will present the findings of the Operation Ceasefire Audit at the Oakland City Council Meeting on Tuesday January 16 at 4:00 p.m.

Link to Agenda Item: <https://oakland.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6444084&GUID=AB9A1A0A-AE48-4B75-956C-4AADD3301D6&Options=&Search=>

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## **Key Audit Findings**

### **Gun Problem Analysis:**

- Finding (Diagnostic): Oakland's violence problem remains consistent with previous analyses, with a hyper-concentration of risk among justice-involved, adult men. In short, the demographics of who were likely to commit crimes when Ceasefire was first initiated.
- Recommendations: Increase Subject Matter Experts on gangs/groups, reconfigure risk assessments for DVP gun violence prevention, and align with the Problem Analysis.

### **Shooting Review:**

- Finding (Diagnostic): The effectiveness of the Shooting Review meeting has significantly diminished, impacting the overall strategy.
- Recommendations: Prioritize the Shooting Review meeting, involve the OPD executive team, and link it with analysis, investigations, and enforcement.

### **Coordination Meeting:**

- Finding (Diagnostic): Coordination meetings are divided into two sessions, leading to inefficiency and resource consumption.
- Recommendations: Consolidate coordination meetings, led by the Mayor's Office, with a focus on comprehensive incident examination and proactive violence reduction plans.

### **Direct Communication:**

- Finding (Diagnostic): Challenges in tracking direct communications data, raising concerns about the current approach's effectiveness.
- Recommendations: Increase custom notifications, improve data consistency between OPD and DVP, and enhance messaging quality in call-ins.

## **Life Coaching & Services:**

- Finding (Diagnostic): DVP is poorly structured to address the service and support needs of high-risk individuals.
- Recommendations: Reorganize DVP Gun Violence work, develop a clear theory of change, and increase engagement through relentless outreach.

## **Focused Supervision & Enforcement:**

- Finding (Diagnostic): Ceasefire unit's focused enforcement is impeded by staffing shortages and organizational challenges.
- Recommendations: Disband VCOC, fully staff the Ceasefire Unit, combine Ceasefire Unit and CGIC, and prioritize area-based CRTs.

## **Management and Governance:**

- Finding (Diagnostic)The Ceasefire strategy lacks effective management and a clear chain of supervision.
- Recommendations: Align theCeasefire Director position with its original design, expanding management to include a data position and a community engagement specialist.

## **About Operation Ceasefire:**

[The Ceasefire strategy](#), initially implemented in Oakland, became a national model in tackling gun violence, boasting a remarkable 42% reduction in homicides from 2012 to 2017. Recognized for its effectiveness, the program gained acclaim for its data-driven approach, community engagement, and collaboration between law enforcement and community organizations. Ceasefire is a focused deterrence strategy that focuses law enforcement and community resources on those at the center of violence. The Ceasefire strategy held three specific goals as priorities:

1. Reduce gang/group-related shootings and homicides: Ceasefire focuses on the most violent gangs/groups and individuals who are at the greatest risk of shooting or being shot. We communicate directly with individuals through large group meetings ("Call-Ins") or by meeting with them one-on-one ("custom notifications"). Ceasefire includes community outreach, services, and support and, when necessary, multi-agency law enforcement action focused specifically on gangs/groups and individuals who continue to engage in violence.

2. Decrease recidivism and incarceration rates of individuals participating in the intervention: Outreach and support services are provided by the City of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention and its network of citywide community-based direct service organizations all dedicated to helping participants by offering real alternatives, resources, advocacy, mentoring and life coaching.

3. Strengthen police-community relations: Vital to the success of the Ceasefire Oakland strategy are community and faith leaders. Partners like Faith In Action East Bay and the National Institution for Criminal Justice Reform provide leadership, advocacy, and resources from a community perspective that strengthen the spectrum of support for participants while pushing for mutual accountability and transparency among all partners in achieving the strategic goals.

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