



News from: **Economic & Workforce Development  
Department**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Shopping for the Holidays? Think Oakland First**

*City partners with Visit Oakland & Oakland Metro Chamber to encourage Shopping Locally this Holiday Season*

Oakland, CA – The *Think Oakland First* holiday season campaign encourages Oakland residents and visitors to put their money where their hearts are by shopping locally. This theme aims to capture the immense pride residents have for Oakland. To inspire shoppers, [ThinkOaklandFirst.com](http://ThinkOaklandFirst.com) has small business directories, holiday contests, fun community events, and more.

“Now more than ever, Oaklanders need to support our hometown businesses by shopping locally for the holidays,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. “Our diverse local artists and entrepreneurs are the backbone of our local economy, so I encourage all Oaklanders to put their money where their heart is and support the businesses that invest so much in us.”

Shoppers are encouraged to explore Oakland’s shopping districts and discover the unique gift items offered by local retailers. More Oakland retailers are offering online shopping with delivery or curbside pickup options. Local event organizers have found creative ways to hold festive online events and marketplaces, and many events have returned to live celebrations. This means Oaklanders have many options of where to spend their dollars locally and experiences to savor, whether in-person or online.

At [ThinkOaklandFirst.com](http://ThinkOaklandFirst.com), online small business directories and shopping resources help Oaklanders find the boutiques, shops and makers offering one-of-a-kind holiday gifts.

To encourage turn-over of parking spots to better ensure availability for shoppers, both on-street and within off-street garages and lots, the City will maintain standard parking rates at all street meters and in City-owned garages and lots. Shoppers are reminded that parking at street meters and in metered City parking lots is free on Sundays year-round. Time limits still apply.

**Window Decorating Contest**

To encourage shoppers to explore Oakland’s commercial corridors, merchants from across the city are creating festive displays for the Holiday Window Decorating Contest. Shoppers can find a roster of participating merchants at [ThinkOaklandFirst.com](http://ThinkOaklandFirst.com) and cast their vote for the best decorations through Wednesday, December 15. The merchant with the most votes will receive the People’s Choice Award – a staycation package including overnight accommodations at an Oakland hotel and dinner for two courtesy of [Visit Oakland](http://VisitOakland), a great way for the winning merchant to unwind after the busy holiday season.

(more)

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“Visit Oakland is thrilled to host the People’s Choice Holiday Window Decorating contest,” commented Peter Gamez, President & CEO, Visit Oakland. “We encourage the community to view all the windows in the various neighborhoods that truly make Oakland a special destination. Our neighborhoods shine extra bright during this time of year while continuing to offer diverse restaurants, holiday performances and special events. It’s the perfect reason to stay the night in Oakland and enjoy a getaway at one of our welcoming hotels.”

### **#ThinkOaklandFirst Social Media Contest**

To help spread the word about the unique shopping experiences found in Oakland, the holiday campaign includes a **shopping selfie contest**. Snap a photo as you shop, savor, sip and share the holiday season and post it on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter using the hashtag #ThinkOaklandFirst. All entries submitted now through 5 p.m. Monday, December 27, 2021, will be entered into a drawing for a grand prize of four Southwest Airlines tickets, courtesy of [Oakland Metro Chamber of Commerce](#). Details and contest rules will be linked to from [ThinkOaklandFirst.com](#).

“Think, Shop, Spend and Show your Love for Oakland small businesses this season!” exclaimed Barbara Leslie, President & CEO of the Oakland Metro Chamber of Commerce.

### **Why Shopping Locally is Important**

Many Oakland merchants have been severely impacted by state and county shelter-in-place orders. By choosing to shop at local businesses, whether online or in-person, you will enjoy a more distinctive experience and support the small, independent businesses that contribute to Oakland’s unique character.

Shopping locally also helps provide jobs for your neighbors and generates sales tax revenue for the City. Consider the many social and economic benefits of shopping local as you complete your holiday gift purchases.

### **Help Bring Joy to Oakland’s Children**

During this season of giving, remember that some families have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Help bring joy to a child by supporting the City of Oakland Community Toy Drive with a tax-deductible donation. To keep volunteers and families safe during the pandemic, the Toy Drive has pivoted to distribution of gift cards instead of toys. For donation instructions and more information, visit [oaklandca.gov/toydrive](http://oaklandca.gov/toydrive), call (510) 777-TOYS, or email [mayortoydrive@gmail.com](mailto:mayortoydrive@gmail.com).

### **Holiday Partnership**

The *Think Oakland First* holiday season promotion is a partnership between the City of Oakland, Visit Oakland and the Oakland Metro Chamber of Commerce.

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