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## **Oakland Council President Bas' Budget Team Commends Mayor Thao's Smart, Strategic Proposal To Balance City Budget**

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**OAKLAND, CA** – Today, [Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao published her proposed two-year budget](#), closing a historic \$360 million deficit. Council President Nikki Fortunato Bas and her budget team including Councilmembers Carroll Fife, Kevin Jenkins, and Rebecca Kaplan commend Mayor Thao for her creative and thoughtful plan to achieve a balanced budget while avoiding layoffs, maintaining critical services, and making record investments in affordable housing.

The Mayor and Council President have made a commitment to work together as One Oakland — to focus on delivering effective and equitable services, and to lay the foundation for tackling historic racial inequities and systemic problems in order to chart a path forward towards an equitable and thriving future for all Oaklanders.

“We are very pleased to see the largest investment in affordable housing in Oakland’s history — \$200 million over two years,” said **Council President Nikki Fortunato Bas**. “Affordable housing is Oakland residents’ top priority, and we will finally make progress creating housing that’s accessible to very low-income and working families. I’m proud to have led efforts to place Measure U on the ballot and thank Oakland voters for making this investment possible. I look forward to working with the entire Council, Mayor Thao, and Oakland residents to approve a balanced budget by June 30th.”

“Oaklanders want results, and the proposed reorganization is a smart strategy to cut the bureaucracy and make government deliver,” said **Councilmember Carroll Fife**, who also chairs the Life Enrichment Committee. “I’ve called for the integration of Oakland’s housing and homelessness programs, together with my colleagues. The merger of these departments, along with the historic investment in affordable housing, will help us focus on actually housing our unsheltered neighbors. And the creation of a Department for Children, Youth and Families means Oakland will put our kids’ needs first, because that early investment is so critical.”

“The Mayor’s budget builds on the foundation the Council put in place to create a holistic community safety system,” said **Councilmember and Public Safety Chair Rebecca Kaplan**. “This plan advances the work that I initiated with our community by expanding alternative crisis response through the Fire Department’s MACRO program. It also continues critical violence prevention programs and civilianizes Internal Affairs investigations so those officers get out onto our streets. The substantial investment in traffic/pedestrian/bike safety is a strong start, and we seek to identify additional funds for this critical need.”

“Unlike past budget deficits, there are no federal bailouts this time,” said **Councilmember and Finance Chair Kevin Jenkins**. “I appreciate that the Mayor used every possible tool to close

the deficit and maintain current City of Oakland employees — from the hiring slow down announced in March to freezing vacancies and attrition. The merger of Planning and Building with Economic & Workforce Development means that we will better support our business community and workers so that we can increase investments in East Oakland, Downtown, and across the city.”

In March 2023, the City Council held a budget retreat where they reaffirmed the importance of delivering effective, equitable services to Oaklanders rooted in our values of racial equity, fiscal responsibility, transparency and results. Council President Bas and her budget team will work with the entire Council, the Mayor and her Administration, and Oaklanders to deliver a balanced budget that advances our shared priorities towards One Oakland:

- Housing Security & Homelessness Solutions
- Community Safety, Prevention, & Healing
- Good Jobs & Vibrant Economy
- Clean, Healthy, Sustainable Neighborhoods

The Councilmembers look forward to reviewing the Mayor’s budget proposal in detail and discussing it with Oakland residents at community forums and Council meetings in the coming weeks.

**The City Council will hold a special meeting on Wednesday, May 3rd at 4pm, where Mayor Thao will present her proposed budget.** Councilmembers will host Community Budget Forums between May 17th and June 5th. On June 14th at 4pm, City Council will hold a special meeting to hear the Council President’s Budget Amendments and any additional amendments from Councilmembers. The City Council must approve a balanced budget by June 30.

Background:

- [Mayor’s proposed FY 2023 - 2025 budget](https://oaklandca.gov/topics/fiscal-year-2023-2025-budget) - oaklandca.gov/topics/fiscal-year-2023-2025-budget
- [City Council meeting calendar](https://oakland.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx) - oakland.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx
- [Councilmembers’ budget priorities](https://bit.ly/CMBudgetPriorities) - bit.ly/CMBudgetPriorities
- Budget Community Forums (partial list)
  - District 6, CM Jenkins, Thursday, May 18th, 6pm
  - District 3, CM Fife, Friday, May 19th, 5pm
  - District 2, CP Bas, Saturday, May 20th, 10am, Lincoln Rec Center, [RSVP here](#)

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**DRAFT talking points for Democracy Dollars, *if asked***

The Mayor and Council are committed to implementing Democracy Dollars. Given the historic deficit and high vacancies, we will phase in the implementation. Open general fund positions have been frozen across all departments — the City Council is freezing a long-awaited Budget & Policy Analyst; the Auditor is only getting 1 of 3 charter-mandated positions. And with so many vacancies, we are focusing on positions that deliver critical city services like Public Works, Transportation and Housing.

This coming fiscal year, the PEC will build strong infrastructure for Democracy Dollars with more education and training of candidates and the public. The budget includes start up costs for the purchase of necessary software, along with customization, configuration, and integration into the Oracle financial system. As our fiscal health improves, we will continue to build out the timeline for implementation, including adding the estimated 6 positions that are needed and the ongoing operating costs.