

# [NEWS] Wins in our budget for community safety & violence prevention



by Nikki Fortunato Bas, Council President on June 30, 2021

Original post can be found at [https://www.nikki4oakland.com/budget\\_wins](https://www.nikki4oakland.com/budget_wins) while logged in.

Last Thursday, [Council passed our two-year budget](#), meeting this historic moment by changing course in our city. Our balanced budget makes unprecedented new investments in our most impacted residents and neighborhoods and in transforming public safety.

**The time couldn't be more urgent. Gun violence, homicides, and robberies have been devastating Oakland and cities across the country. Our marginalized communities suffer most from the trauma and loss caused by violence in all forms -- communal, systemic, historic. Just two weekends ago, we lost Dashawn Rhoades to gun violence at Lake Merritt, and two 17-year-olds, Marcel Alley Jr. and Isaac Mitchell, several weeks before in Highland Park. Our solve/clearance rates for serious and violent crimes are low, and as a city, we are not keeping our community safe.**

As Council President, my job is to ensure we allocate and balance our budget to meet peoples' needs. The people of Oakland are reeling from the economic fallout of the pandemic; people are out of work, more are unhoused and on the verge of losing their homes; we are at a crossroads.

The Mayor proposed adding \$57M to the Police Budget, which makes up nearly half of our general fund -- over \$692 million in two years. The budget we passed, instead,

diverts \$18M from the police towards violence prevention, alternatives responses to non-violent 911 calls, reactivating our parks and open spaces, supporting disadvantaged small businesses with reopening, expanding arts and culture, and homelessness solutions. **There will be a one year transition period to divert non-violent, non-criminal 911 calls before the police staff reductions take place a year from now in July 2022.**

The Police Department will receive a \$38 million increase and will hold four police academies over the next two years. Their budget will continue to make up nearly half of our general purpose fund. In the meantime, we'll conduct an independent audit of the Department to understand what is working, what isn't, and right-size our investments to make sure we are doing all we can to keep Oaklanders safe.

## **Our balanced budget, approved by my budget team of CMs Fife, Gallo and Kalb plus CMs Kaplan and Thao makes these public safety investments:**

- **Triples our Department of Violence Prevention's budget** with \$17.4 million more to stop violence from happening in the first place with violence interrupters, life coaches and community ambassadors, and targeted investments in our youth in the most impacted neighborhoods.
- Invests \$6.5 million total in MACRO, a new mobile crisis response system through our Fire Department so that **trained, civilian crisis responders with medical and behavioral health expertise** -- rather than an armed law enforcement officer -- respond to mental health 911 emergencies. Additionally, the State of California just published a revised budget that includes \$10 million to fund our MACRO program.
- Transfers **low-level vehicle-related 911 calls** -- which make up thousands of calls for service every year -- to our Department of Transportation over the next year. Our police officers can focus on violent and serious crime, no longer tasked with responding to issues like blocked driveways, auto tows, improper parking, and abandoned autos.

SOCIETY

## Oakland votes to redirect millions in police funding to violence prevention programs



By J.R. Stone and Leslie Brinkley

Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:18PM



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Oakland's City Council has voted to reallocate \$18 million from police budget to violence prevention and other services not involving the police.

[\[LINK\]](#)

**Holistic public safety and community wellness goes beyond policing. It also requires deep investments in preventing violence, affordable housing, good jobs, small businesses, and access to arts and culture, parks and libraries. I thank my budget team, the Finance Department, and the many City Staff whom we met with to develop a thoughtful and balanced**

# **budget. I'm proud that our budget expands these critical supports:**

## **Affordable Housing and Homelessness:**

- Provides sanitation to over 100 encampments while expediting affordable housing solutions for the unhoused;
- Adds staffing to the city's Homelessness Division to improve interdepartmental coordination of encampment management and case management for unhoused Oaklanders.

## **Good Jobs & A Vibrant Economy:**

- Provides \$300K to small and disadvantaged businesses for facade improvements, repairs, flex street supports, and parklets;
- Provides \$1.5 million in cultural affairs programming and staffing to support artists and festivals, particularly in a post-COVID recovery environment; and
- Provides \$1.5 million in workforce development, training and placement targeted to serve flatland neighborhoods, youth, unhoused, and formerly incarcerated individuals.

## **Clean, Healthy & Sustainable Neighborhoods:**

- Restores the Mayor's elimination of 13.5 FTE crossing guards at Oakland schools to ensure student and family safety;
- Restores the Mayor's cuts of 4 environmental enforcement officers who address illegal dumping;
- Pilots a 25-member Parks Ambassadors program to serve parks citywide;
- Invests \$500K through Measure HH in community food cards at corner stores in the flatlands to support families in accessing nutritious food.

# **Budget Wins to Improve Our District 2 Parks, Recreation Centers, Gardens, Libraries, and City Services**

1. Funding the **reopening of San Antonio Park Recreation Center** with two staff and critical **park repairs** including: lighting and bleachers repair around basketball courts, moveable bleachers at soccer field, repair of tennis courts gates, and repair of surface roads. The re-opening will also build community-based partnerships by engaging community organizations in programming.



2. Maintained funding for renovating Chinatown's **Lincoln Recreation Center**.



3. **Resurfacing** of the Tot Lot play surface at **Bella Vista Park**.





4. Expanding funding for the City's gardener position from part-time to full-time to care for our beloved **Morcom Rose Garden**.



5. Extending **Lake Merritt** operations to manage crowds during COVID and promote access to our city's gem. The city's plans will continue through November 2021 and include developing a timeline to phase out City Department Teams while phasing in



**Parks Ambassadors** and other alternatives to address safety, equity, and health at the Lake, while also expanding programming and permitted events in parks and public spaces citywide.



6. Improvements and repairs at each of our District 2 libraries -- **Asian Branch Library, Lakeview Branch Library, and Main Library.**



7. Funding for violence prevention projects, including **Community Ambassadors**, which are currently partnering with the Chinatown Coalition, Family Bridges, Toishan

Family Association, Oakland Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, and TRYBE to keep our neighborhoods and small businesses safe.



8. Our budget also directs the City Administrator to prioritize implementation of recommendations from CPTED (**Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design**) analysis, particularly in flatland neighborhoods, business corridors and police beats with high rates of serious and violent crimes, such as along E. 15th St in D2's San Antonio neighborhood, where traffic calming and lighting can help address human trafficking.

With Oakland Love,

*Nikki Fortunato Bas*

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Council President + District 2, City of Oakland  
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