



# *Budget Memorandum*

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**DATE:** June 6, 2025  
**TO:** Oakland City Councilmembers and Members of the Public  
**FROM:** Councilmembers Rowena Brown (At-Large), Janani Ramachandran (District 4),  
Zac Unger (District 1), and Charlene Wang (District 2)  
**SUBJECT:** Council Budget Team Amendments to FY 25-27 Proposed Budget

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Dear City Council Colleagues and Members of the Public,

Attached for your consideration are amendments and policy directives for the Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Biennial Budget from the City Council Budget Team including Councilmember and Co-Chair Rowena Brown, Councilmember and Co-Chair Janani Ramachandran, Councilmember Zac Unger and Councilmember Charlene Wang.

We are at a pivotal point for the fiscal health of our City, as we face an unprecedented \$265 million structural deficit, a growing disparity between revenues and expenditures, and a historic reliance on one-time funding. These challenges require us to be both creative and steadfast to our values as we collectively chart out a path toward Oakland's economic revitalization and the flourishing of a safe and clean city that we all take pride in. It also requires us to be honest and transparent about the realities of our City finances so we can regain the trust of Oakland residents.

**We are proud to present to you a balanced and fiscally responsible budget that prioritizes the delivery of essential City services with no layoffs of City staff.** This includes restoring all 25 fire stations, improving police staffing levels, tackling illegal dumping, improving public infrastructure, and incentivizing economic development.

These amendments come in response to the widespread and consistent calls from across Oakland's diverse communities asking us to prioritize funding solutions to the issues that have most directly impacted our residents' safety and quality of life. Our amendments are also inspired by our firm belief that Oakland is on the way not only to financial recovery, but also to global acclaim and recognition. Oakland can attract and preserve businesses of all sizes with safer, cleaner streets. We can and will have more large-scale festivals that celebrate Oakland culture, concerts that uplift our incredible local musicians, conferences that attract patrons from across the world, and award-winning restaurants that top national charts. A thriving economy and cultural renaissance will create more jobs for Oaklanders, while also generating more revenue for the City through sales and business taxes.

As elected leaders, the people of Oakland have entrusted us to ensure that our public dollars are utilized in a responsible manner to keep our communities safe, healthy, and thriving – especially during challenging fiscal times. Our budget team is committed to working with our

colleagues to pass a budget that is realistic about our challenges as a city and provides fiscally sound solutions that will set Oakland on a sustainable path forward.

Our budget recommendations are summarized below. We are grateful for collaboration with countless community groups and Oakland residents that we have engaged with, and for support and guidance from the City Administrator, Finance Department, City Attorney, and staff across City departments.

## **Budget Amendments**

Below is a summary of our proposed budget amendments:

### *Revenue & Expenditure Adjustments*

1. Use of available fund balances to support appropriate expenditures
2. \$2.25 million in forthcoming revenue from a billboard agreement
3. \$1.7 million in increased projections from the special revenue collections project
4. \$3.13 million from unassigned contingency funds
5. \$6.99 million savings by budgeting lower starting salary steps in accordance with MOUs
6. Right-sizing police academies to a realistic three (3) academies in FY25-26 and two (2) academies in FY26-27
7. \$7.1 million reduction to the Self Insurance Liability Fund
8. Removal of unfilled positions of Finance Manager and Cultural Affairs Manager
9. Reduction of \$1.2 million in O&M for police legal fees
10. Reduction of \$1 million from unassigned violence prevention funding

### *Expenditure Additions*

## **Public Safety**

We are focused on maintaining crucial Fire Department services across all 25 stations, increasing sworn police staffing by improving academy recruitment, adding civilian OPD staff to allow sworn officers to focus on patrol and criminal investigations, and speeding up administrative processes. Amendments include:

1. Adding \$10.29 million to keep all 25 Oakland fire stations open during FY 2025-2027 with the exception of 90 days in winter 2025-2026
2. Restoring four (4) civilian police intake technicians, which will release four sworn officers to patrol or criminal investigations
3. Restoring one (1) OPD fleet compliance coordinator, which will release one sworn officer to patrol or criminal investigations
4. Restoring one (1) grant coordinator within the Oakland Police Department
5. Adding \$220,000 in outreach for OPD academies to ensure academies are full
6. Adding \$700,000 in OPD Special Operations programs for human trafficking work
7. Adding \$1 million for community safety ambassadors
8. Adding \$200,000 to expedite Skelly hearings to shorten the time sworn officers are on administrative leave

## **Clean & Safe Streets**

We are devoting more resources to keep our neighborhoods clean and beautiful. This includes funding efforts to prevent illegal dumping and sideshows, and street safety improvements to ensure that every Oaklander can walk, bike, and drive safely. Amendments include:

1. Adding \$850,000 for technology to prevent illegal dumping
2. Adding \$1.4 million for sideshow prevention
3. Adding \$600,000 for an abandoned auto removal surge
4. Adding \$450,000 for durable bus shelters
5. Adding \$1 million for neighborhood traffic calming and street safety improvements
6. Adding \$500,000 for workforce development programs to train Oakland residents for neighborhood beautification careers in Public Works
7. Adding one (1) Program Analyst III for Neighborhood Enhancement Services
8. Restoring two (2) Environmental Enforcement Officers
9. Adding \$71,472 to support the training needs of Environmental Enforcement Officers
10. Adding \$150,000 to support the review of illegal dumping surveillance footage and crime data collection
11. Adding one (1) Public Information Officer for the Oaktown PROUD Illegal Dumping Education Campaign
12. Adding \$100,000 allocated to O&M for Oaktown PROUD Illegal Dumping Education Campaign to raise awareness about bulky waste disposal resources and strategies to prevent and address illegal dumping
13. Restoring one (1) painter for graffiti abatement

## **Economic Revitalization**

We are directly investing in initiatives to re-energize our commercial corridors Citywide. These programs will support the needs of small businesses that are the heart of Oakland's economy, while also recruiting new businesses of all sizes. Amendments include:

1. Adding \$1 million to establish Economic Opportunity Zones
2. Adding a \$3 million Business Incentive Program
3. Restoring (1) Special Activity Permits Coordinator in the Economic & Workforce Development Department

## **Housing Security & Homelessness Solutions**

We are committing funding to keep Oaklanders housed and protect programs that help transition our unhoused residents into stable housing by:

1. Reserving \$900,000 for potential federal funding cuts to homelessness programs
2. Adding \$1 million for the Homelessness Prevention Pilot Program

## **Parks & Open Space**

We are prioritizing critical maintenance work in our parks and public rights of way by re-instating the Tree Services Division and supporting relevant programs:

1. Restoring two (2) Tree Trimmer Crew Leaders
2. Restoring two (2) Tree Trimmers
3. Restoring one (1) Administrative Assistant for Tree Services
4. Adding \$650,000 for tree clearing and bathroom cleaning blitz during peak usage periods
5. Adding one (1) Parks Equipment Operator
6. Adding one (1) Gardener

## **Government Effectiveness & Transparency**

We are committed to improving the way City government functions with investments that promote transparency, integrity, and a more efficient government on behalf of all residents by:

1. Restoring \$250,000 for Limited Public Financing
2. Adding \$101,000 to the City Auditor's Office to bring mandated recurring audits within specified dates
3. Restoring one (1) Performance Auditor in the City Auditor's Department
4. Adding one (1) Ethics Investigator in the Public Ethics Commission Enforcement Unit
5. Adding one (1) City Administrator Analyst to support grant writing and coordination for public safety initiatives
6. Adding \$3 million to fund staff positions within IT to improve Accela systems for more efficient permitting processes
7. Adding one (1) Administrative Assistant in the Department of Race and Equity

## **Fiscal Health**

We are taking concrete steps toward long-term fiscal sustainability by creating reserves to protect core services and our workforce from budget uncertainty at the state and federal levels. This includes:

1. Reserving \$2 million for possible reductions in State and Federal grants
2. Reserving \$3 million to prevent against any potential layoffs contemplated by the current budget proposal

## **Budget Policy Directives**

Attached are our team's Budget Policy Directives. Highlights include:

1. Public Safety: Increase the number of OPD positions filled by qualified civilian staff to ensure that sworn officers are available for patrol, special operations, and criminal investigations. This includes transitioning Internal Affairs Division investigations to the Community Police Review Agency (CPRA). Enhance recruitment strategies for OPD academies to increase class and final graduation size. Coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking through organized prevention and trauma response.
2. Clean & Safe Streets: Implement a surge to remove abandoned autos and blight in the public right-of-way. Collaborate with County to improve enforcement mechanisms, enhance staff training, and implement more effective technology for illegal dumping.

3. Housing Security & Homelessness Solutions: Coordinate with the county, state, and federal governments to more effectively resource and implement homeless services and housing placements.
4. Government Effectiveness & Transparency: Improve hiring process efficiency and strengthen recruitment outreach, and align new hire salaries in accordance with relevant MOUs and applicant qualifications.
5. Fiscal Health: Develop revenue and expenditure alternatives in partnership with the City Administration and Finance Department to address a potential revenue shortfall in the second year of the budget.

These budgetary priorities lay out a framework of investments dedicated to public safety, a clean city, jobs and economic development, housing and homelessness solutions, and public infrastructure that reflect our mutual goal of fostering thriving and resilient communities on behalf of all Oakland residents. We appreciate the work of the City Administration, Finance Department, all City staff, and most critically members of the public who supported our budget deliberations.

For questions regarding this memo, please contact Iris Merriouns, Chief of Staff for the District 4 Council office, at [ilmerriouns@oaklandca.gov](mailto:ilmerriouns@oaklandca.gov), and Georgia Savage, Chief of Staff for the At-Large Council office, at [gsavage@oaklandca.gov](mailto:gsavage@oaklandca.gov).

Respectfully submitted,



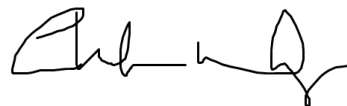
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Attachments:

1. Budget Policy Directives
2. Spreadsheet of Budget Amendments