



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator, Oakland City
Council

FROM: Councilmember Janani
Ramchandran
District 4

SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION
REQUESTING THE CITY
ADMINISTRATOR TO NEGOTIATE
TERMS OF A LEASE AGREEMENT
WITH EAST BAY RECREATION AND
CULTURE CLUB, INC

DATE: June 24, 2025

:

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution requesting the City Administrator to negotiate terms of a lease agreement with the East Bay Recreation & Culture Club, Inc., a nonprofit organization, to rehabilitate, operate, and maintain the former Montclair Firehouse and surrounding grounds located at 6226 Moraga Avenue (APNs 48F-7361-12 and 48F-7361-11) for use as a community arts center for a term not to exceed fifteen (15) years. If lease negotiations are successful, staff will return to the City Council with a proposed ordinance outlining the lease terms and appropriate California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) findings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The former Montclair Firehouse at 6226 Moraga Avenue, a historic City-owned landmark closed since the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, remains vacant and underutilized. The East Bay Recreation & Culture Club, Inc., a local nonprofit focused on cultural and community programming, has proposed to rehabilitate the structure and grounds to create a community arts center. This resolution authorizes staff to begin lease negotiations and provide access for the nonprofit to assess site needs.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In March 2018, the City of Oakland issued a Notice of Development Opportunity (NODO) for two parcels located at 6226 Moraga Ave. in the Montclair neighborhood. The parcels were marketed as development opportunities for residential, retail, commercial, or other permitted uses under the California Building Code and Oakland Planning Code. Parcel A (23,884 sq. ft.) and Parcel B (15,652 sq. ft., including the historic Montclair both parcels could be purchased or leased.

The City sought proposals that aligned with Montclair's culture, incorporated green building practices, complied with zoning and environmental regulations, and served the public interest.

Despite extensive outreach and a structured bidding process, no viable proposals were received.

CURRENT STATUS

The property remains undeveloped and closed since 1989 due to seismic concerns and deferred maintenance.

Community interest in revitalizing the site has increased in recent years, with nonprofit and neighborhood stakeholders seeking activation of the space for public use

The Montclair Firehouse is a 3,204-square-foot structure located on a 15,652-square-foot parcel (APN 48F-7361-12). It has been closed since the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and is currently vacant. The building is designated as a City Landmark. It sits adjacent to Montclair Park, Montclair Elementary School, and near major transportation corridors.

The East Bay Recreation & Culture Club, Inc. (EBRCC)—formerly The Piedmont Recreation & Culture Club, Inc.—is a California nonprofit public benefit corporation (Tax ID: 83-2485994; California State Charity Registration No. 4211637). Previously completed a successful restoration and rehab project on the Piedmont Arts Center, EBRCC has submitted amendments to its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws to expand its mission to “creating and promoting cultural activities in the East Bay. the nonprofit has voted to sponsor the Montclair Firehouse Arts Center (MFAC) project as a natural extension of its prior work.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The proposed lease negotiation would allow a qualified nonprofit to spearhead the rehabilitation, operation, and maintenance of the historic firehouse. The project aligns with the City's goals to support community-serving uses, enhance neighborhood vitality, and preserve historic assets. The East Bay Recreation & Culture Club, Inc. plans to raise funds and utilize volunteers to restore the facility and offer cultural programming.

Providing that any proposed use complies with zoning (RH-4 and S-14*) and applicable building codes. Additionally, CEQA review will be conducted prior to final lease approval

FISCAL IMPACT

This action will have no fiscal impact as it only directs staff to negotiate terms for a future lease. Staff is required to return to the City Council with proposed lease terms for consideration.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

Community groups, including local neighborhood councils and arts organizations, have expressed interest in revitalizing the Firehouse. This resolution reflects a collaborative and community-oriented approach to activating City-owned property for public benefit

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Local businesses may see increased foot traffic due to programming and events.

Environmental: Adaptive reuse of an existing structure avoids new construction and supports sustainable urban planning.

Social Equity: The center will be open to all Oakland residents and staffed largely by community volunteers. Cultural programming will serve diverse community interests.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

Upon successful negotiation, the City Administrator will return to the City Council with a proposed ordinance, including lease terms and appropriate findings under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Councilmember Janani Ramachandran

Subject: Adopting A Resolution Requesting City Administrator To Negotiate Terms Of A Lease Agreement W/ East Bay Recreation & Culture Inc.

Date: June 24, 2025

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That The City Council Adopt the resolution authorizing the City Administrator to negotiate the lease, grant a right of entry, and return to Council with a proposed ordinance and CEQA findings.

For questions regarding this report, please contact: imerriouns@oaklandca.gov - Iris Merriouns, Chief of Staff to Councilmember Janani Ramachandran.

Respectfully submitted,

Councilmember Janani Ramachandran

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janani Ramachandran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

City Council District 4

Prepared by: Iris Merriouns
Chief of Staff to
Councilmember Janani Ramachandran

Attachments 1

CED Committee
June 24, 2025