



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Sasha Hauswald
Interim Chief,
Office of Homelessness
Solutions

SUBJECT: City Of Oakland 2026 Homelessness
Strategic Action Plan

DATE: February 20, 2026

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Feb 26, 2026 08:14:49 PST)

Date: Feb 26, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report From the Office of Homelessness Solutions On The City Of Oakland 2026 Homelessness Strategic Action Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About 2,500 people become newly unhoused in the City of Oakland (“City” or “Oakland”) every year. And around 1,500 people each year, with the support of local programs, are able to exit homelessness and find a permanent home. The fact remains that individuals and families are becoming unsheltered at a higher rate than the number of unsheltered people who exit homelessness. System Modeling by [All Home](#) and the City of Oakland indicates that to solve homelessness in the City, would cost \$1.3 Billion over 10 years.

The Homelessness Strategic Action Plan (Plan), **Attachment A**, sets forth the goal to reduce unsheltered homelessness by 50% within five years. The Plan proposes solutions that: (1) result in equitable outcomes, including for demographic groups that are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, (2) improve compatibility with the County and regional partners, and (3) build a balanced approach focused on prevention, interim housing, and permanent housing solutions.

The most efficient and effective strategic approach will concurrently invest in prevention and permanent housing, along with expanding interim housing as needed to expedite exits to housing (and foster housing stability thereafter) and reduce the traumas associated with living unsheltered. Below is a summary of the 5-point plan to reduce homelessness by 50% by 2031.

1. **Targeted Prevention:** Targeted prevention identifies households on the brink of losing their current housing that are also statistically most likely to experience homelessness as a result. After identifying households most at-risk, Targeted Prevention Programs stabilize people before they enter homelessness, with a flexible “whatever it takes” approach. The City currently funds an acclaimed prevention program that provides a combination of supportive services, coordination and referrals, legal support, and financial assistance in a flexible and creative manner. This is a very cost-effective

Life Enrichment Committee
March 10, 2026

program. ***The Plan recommends an investment of approximately 6% of total homeless funding for prevention.***

2. **Access and Coordination:** Access and coordination services ensure that people experiencing homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness, can connect quickly to the right mix of services and benefits, specifically through street outreach, housing navigation services, and case management. Both the City and the County deliver these services through outreach teams that provide basic needs like food and hygiene kits, offer medical attention, and help connect people to Interim Housing programs and waitlists. ***The Plan recommends an investment of approximately 4% of total homeless funding for access and coordination services.***
3. **Encampment Engagement and Neighborhood Health:** In 2025 an estimated 1,921 encampment locations were identified in the City. As a result, programming to address encampments is an immediate need. Core elements of the encampment strategy include deep cleanings, trash-runs, proper hygiene and sanitation, connecting unsheltered individuals to services and housing, addressing vehicular homelessness, and attending to “high sensitivity” areas. The City expended approximately \$13.7 million on encampment engagement activities in fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025, representing 19% of the total City funding for homelessness response. ***Efforts are underway to estimate the ongoing need for these activities.***
4. **Interim Housing:** Interim Housing provides temporary shelter or housing, coupled with supportive services, to ensure immediate safety and stability while households work toward permanent housing solutions. It gives people a place to land that begins to abate the trauma of living outdoors, while readying them for permanent solution. Interim Housing features non-congregate sleeping arrangements (i.e. individual rooms with doors that close), and offers a basic level of supportive services, individual privacy, security, and space to keep belongings. These programs operate under a variety of models, including Community Cabins, Shelters, Transitional Housing, and RV Safe Parking; and all emphasize both immediate safety and ongoing case management and supportive services. ***The Plan recommends an investment of approximately 32% of total homeless funding for interim housing programs.***
5. **Permanent Housing:** The key to ending homelessness is Permanent Housing that is affordable to people experiencing homelessness and which provides supportive services tailored to the needs of the residents. There is a huge gap between market rents and the income of people experiencing homelessness (including both earned income and benefit programs like social security and disability insurance). Permanent Housing, as defined by HUD, is generally divided between four models: Dedicated Affordable Housing (DAH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Short-term assistance (Rapid Rehousing being the most common), and Ongoing Rental Subsidies (such as Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers). ***The Plan recommends an investment of approximately 54% of total homeless funding for permanent housing solutions.*** This significant investment reflects the evidence-based efficacy of this strategy, where rates of housing retention are in the 90% range.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In December 2019, the [Oakland City Council received a report](#) on the [Permanent Access to Housing \(PATH\) Framework](#), which among other things, recommended strategies and interventions to address the growing homelessness crisis in Oakland. The PATH Framework aimed to guide Oakland's homelessness strategies for 5 years through FY 2023-2024 or 5 years through FY 2023-2024.

The PATH Framework groups response strategies into three major categories:

1. **Prevention:** to protect vulnerable tenants from losing the housing they have and stabilizing those most at risk of becoming homeless;
2. **Emergency Response:** to shelter and rehouse households and improve health and safety on the street;
3. **Housing Development:** to expand the number of Extremely Low Income (ELI) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units prioritized for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Since FY 2023-2024 the City has been without a strategic plan to guide homelessness investments and system improvements.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The Plan advances the Citywide priorities of 1) holistic community safety, 2) housing, economic, and cultural security, 3) responsive, trustworthy government by creating a holistic public plan that works to assist our homeless population and communities impacted by unsheltered homelessness.

Homelessness is the result of decades of underinvestment in affordable housing, public health, mental health care, and education, as well as the rising cost of living without a commensurate increase in wages. While there are innumerable, complex, and in some cases seemingly intractable reasons why people find themselves homeless - from systemic racism to the foreclosure crisis - the evidence-based solutions of providing dignified housing options and supportive services are surprisingly straightforward. However, while these solutions are well known, they are also expensive and need to be sustained over time.

Homelessness in the City grew by 9% between 2022 and 2024. Additionally, in 2025, over 1,900 encampment locations were reported throughout the City.

Despite the many City-assisted programs that connected thousands of people experiencing homelessness to permanent housing in recent years, the fact remains that individuals and families are becoming unsheltered at a higher rate than the number of unsheltered people who exit homelessness. There is a fundamental imbalance in how the system operates which inhibits the intended "flow" of people from becoming unsheltered to becoming housed in a permanent setting. Data from the federal Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) indicates that in the City, approximately 2,550 people are becoming homeless for the first time

each year while only 1,500 individuals experiencing homelessness are recorded as exiting to permanent housing.

Further, data clearly indicates that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations in Oakland are overrepresented in homelessness, poverty, and displacement. Data consistently show that Black Oakland residents, in particular, are disproportionately overrepresented among unhoused residents and inflow to homelessness in both new entries and returns to homelessness. While homelessness programs alone cannot address all the root causes of poverty, housing insecurity, and homelessness, Oakland's homeless response system can be structured to intentionally reduce barriers and avoid perpetuating racial disparities.

Insufficient funding, system bottlenecks, limited provider capacity, and challenges in advancing innovation currently hinder the City's efforts to reduce homelessness. Due to funding realities, unsheltered homelessness will exist in California, the Bay Area, and Oakland for the foreseeable future. As such, a humane and strategic approach to engaging with unsheltered neighbors will continue to be necessary, even as we turn the tide on rising homelessness.

Addressing Key Challenges

The Plan analysis surfaces the key challenges which must be tackled:

- Inflow exceeds outflow: More individuals and households enter homelessness than exit to Permanent Housing each year.
- Bottlenecks in Interim Housing: Shelters and Transitional Housing programs lack pathways into Permanent Housing.
- High returns to homelessness: Particularly, Black residents are more likely to experience multiple episodes of homelessness, reflecting historic and ongoing systemic inequities, limited long-term supports, and gaps in culturally responsive services.
- Uncertain funding: Declines in local, state, and federal funding resources threaten program stability and may reverse prior successes.

The humanitarian crisis that is homelessness in Oakland has many root causes that include deeply entrenched, systemic inequities, public and private disinvestment in communities, and inadequate resourcing of evidence-based solutions. However, the City possesses many of the elements needed to make a material impact on homelessness:

- Strong partnerships with the County and the State of California,
- Best practice models to learn from and expand,
- Internal know-how in the Human Services, Housing, and Race and Equity departments that can guide and target efforts that have the most impact,
- An understanding that continuous improvement and innovation are keys to success, and
- Political will to meaningfully prioritize the response to homelessness.

Primary governance on homelessness will continue to be led by the City Council and Mayor's Office. In addition, in 2025, the office of Mayor Barbara Lee created the Office of Homelessness Solutions in the City Administrator's Office to coordinate efforts between the various city agencies and set a comprehensive, unified strategy for addressing homelessness in Oakland.

Next Steps

A detailed Implementation Work Plan will be devised upon adoption of the Plan. This Work Plan will lay out action steps, roles and responsibilities, funding goals, outcome metrics, and monitoring and evaluation protocols. Some of the key next steps to be coordinated will be:

1. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Staff will collect data on homeless system performance that disaggregates for demographic data on an ongoing basis and measure outcomes over time. Analyses will be conducted that inform needed program changes, policies, and/or funding.
2. **Public-Private Partnerships that Support Innovative Programming:** While many existing programs reflect positive outcomes and should be continued and/or expanded, there are notable innovations taking place around the county, the state and country that could be replicated in Oakland. Joining with private partners with an interest in innovation can propel new initiatives that accelerate the pace of success in Oakland. Staff will establish an agenda for identifying promising new practices and seek partnerships to help fund their implementation, including an evaluation component.
3. **County Collaboration:** The County will be a critical partner in the City's quest to meet the Plan's ambitious goals and objectives. Measure W funds administered by the County will provide \$1.4 billion in homelessness funding over the next 8 years. The current relationship with the County has been very productive, however, the following areas of focus will heighten the value of this collaboration.
 - a. Roles and responsibilities should be better delineated and reinforce the strengths and areas of expertise that each entity possesses.
 - b. Increased commitment to outreach and case management is needed to ensure that individuals experiencing homelessness are supported in a more expeditious and targeted manner.
 - c. Increased commitment to program quality is needed, along with an approach that fosters long-term sustainability of the homelessness response ecosystem. The provider organizations that deliver services and housing solutions are the lynchpin to a successful system. If they are overextended, unprepared, or ill-equipped, the people the system is designed to serve will suffer.
4. **Fundraising:** The Plan's analysis of the cost to achieve the goal of reducing homelessness by 50% in five years is challenging to imagine achieving, but it is possible. The City must double down on its efforts to raise funds from new sources. This will require an "all-hands" approach coupled with clarity on needs and outcomes.
5. **Building Capacity Within Oakland's Programs and Providers (existing and new):** As noted above in the County Collaboration next step, a focus on provider organizations is pivotal to success. The City will work to build capacity of these groups, including funding talent, training, and infrastructure and establishing accountability standards to measure progress. In addition, new homeless provider groups from around the Bay Area will be invited to participate in Requests for Proposals/Qualifications and engage with Oakland's Five Point Plan implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT

This report itself is an informational report and does not have fiscal impacts. The following addresses financial needs to implement the Plan.

Fiscal Overview

Homelessness response funding derives from local, County, state, and federal sources. In the City of Oakland, these funds are primarily overseen by Community Homelessness Services (CHS) division within the Human Services Department (HSD) and the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD). Most sources are restricted to funding specific activities within limited timeframes and have little flexibility for redirection to new ideas. CHS and HCD layer, leverage, and monitor the expenditure of each source in accordance with its requirements. Funding related to encampment management, which requires cross-departmental staffing, flows through multiple departmental budgets including the City Administrator’s Office, Police Department, Fire Department, Department of Public Works, and Department of Transportation.

Total City funding for homelessness programs in FY 2024-2025 is estimated at \$131,200,000 as shown in **Table 1** below. These estimates exclude administrative staffing expenses and overhead. For the encampment expenditures, the amount for FY 2024-2025 is based on estimates from the City Auditor’s 2021 report on Encampment Management Interventions and Activities.¹

Table 1. City Sources of Homelessness Funding FY 2024-2025

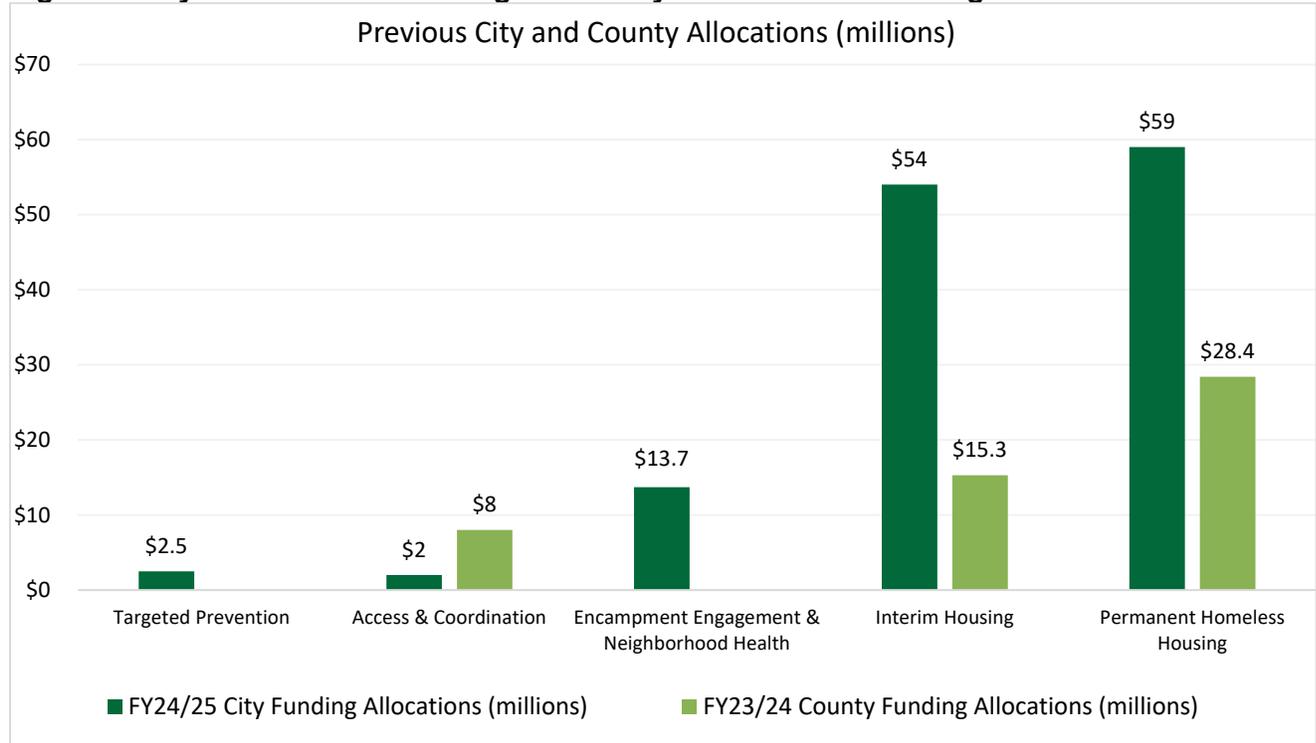
	Amount	Sources
Prevention	\$ 2,500,000	CDBG, Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Vacant Property Tax
Outreach	\$ 2,000,000	HHAP, Vacant Property Tax
Interim	\$ 54,000,000	Measure Q, General Fund, CDBG, HUD Continuum of Care, Vacant Property Tax, HHAP, HOPWA, ESG, PLHA
Permanent	\$ 59,000,000	Measure U, Boomerang, PLHA, AHTF, Measure Q, General Fund, Oakland Housing Authority, CDBG, County SSA, HUD Continuum of Care
Encampment	\$ 13,700,000	Franchise Fee, General Fund, Measure Q, Vacant Property Tax, Other TBD ²
TOTAL	\$ 131,200,000	

The County is a key funding and implementation partner. Although annual allocations vary, the County has historically invested approximately \$51.7 million for homelessness response activities in Oakland. City and County funding is shown in **Figure 1**.

¹ [Audit Report estimates \\$ 7,098,000](#) estimates \$ 7,098,000 in costs incurred by OPW, OPD, HSD, OFD, OCA, CAO, DOT, OPR, and the Mayor’s Office. For FY 2019-20. In this year there were 20 Closures, 67 Re-Closures, and 74 Deep Cleanings. Using a simple inflation adjustment creates the present-day estimate of \$13.7 million. This is a conservative estimate, since in 2025 there were 1212 Encampment Closures and Re-Closures, a more than 10-fold increase in activity.

² City of Oakland currently lacks consistent tracking of the cross-departmental costs for Encampment Engagement and Neighborhood Health activities.

Figure 1. City FY 2024-2025 Funding vs. County FY 2023-2024 Funding



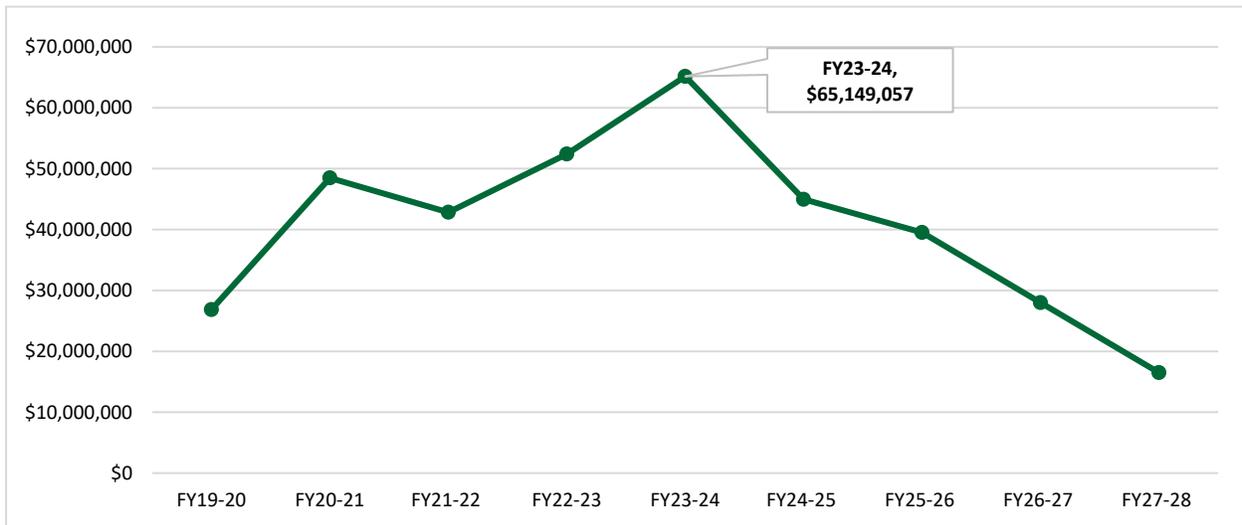
Funding Outlook

The outlook for funding for the homeless response system at all levels of government is facing extreme challenges, with a few exceptions. The state government is facing a large budget shortfall, and the federal government is threatening to severely limit the way in which HUD homeless funds can be used.

The City saw a rise in funding from 2019-2024, with a peak in FY 2023-2024. In FY 2024-2025, the City invested approximately \$131.2 million in local, state, and federal resources for homelessness housing and services. However, many of the state and federal sources available for City allocation over the past five years were linked to COVID response and no longer exist. In addition, the City is likely to see a continued decline in HHAP at the state level and Measure U at the local level, which have been important funding sources.

Figure 2 below reflects the funding outlook over time for CHS, the primary City funder of the homelessness response system. Funding coming to HCD and other City departments, as well as the County, follow a similar trajectory.

Figure 2. CHS funding: Past, Current & Projected³



Without new funding sources, the City's affordable housing and homelessness budget is expected to undergo substantial reductions. FY 2025-2026 reductions resulted in cuts to interim housing programs, and future reductions will undermine progress toward ending homelessness. These trends highlight the urgency of identifying new revenue streams and advocating for sustained investment at the state and federal levels

In addition to the known reductions in funding, other uncertainties lie ahead.

The federal government is threatening to severely limit the way in which HUD homeless funds can be used. Although federal funding only comprises about 10% of the funds that flow through the City budget for housing and homelessness, the County and local nonprofits also use federal dollars to sustain programs that are critical to Oakland's homelessness response infrastructure.

State government is also facing a budget shortfall. State Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP) funds have represented a substantial funding source for the City's homelessness response and were about 35% of the funding for interim housing with supportive services in FY 2024-2025. Since 2020, the City has received a total of \$107,567,120 in HHAP Rounds. However, future rounds of HHAP funding are projected to decrease significantly, posing serious challenges for cities like Oakland that rely heavily on these funds to sustain homelessness programs.

³ LeSar Development Consultant (February 2025) City of Oakland Integrated Strategic Plan & Roadmap pg. 9.

Alameda County’s funding landscape is also shifting - new resources at the County level are a bright spot in the funding outlook for homelessness. County Measure W, a voter-approved general sales tax, has been accruing since July 2021. In July 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved staff recommendations to direct 80% of funds to homelessness housing and services. Although the Board has provided high-level guidance on allocations, the details of how homelessness funding will be spent in terms of the programs, places, and timing will be largely decided by [Alameda County Housing and Homelessness Services](#) and the Board of Supervisors. With potential reductions in state and federal funds, County Measure W resources may be needed to backfill and sustain existing programs and services, thereby reducing Measure W available for improvements and expansion of programs. Nevertheless, Measure W will be a critical resource to support the Plan’s goals.

Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) funding administered by the County also offers opportunities for integrating behavioral health into housing stability efforts. California Proposition 1, passed in 2024, reformed the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), creating new requirements to prioritize unhoused and at-risk populations. Per Prop 1, the County must devote 30% of BHSA resources to housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. Total BHSA funding to Alameda County for FY 2025-2026 is approximately \$106 million.

Fiscal Conclusion and Next Steps

As noted above, this is an informational report and the Plan itself does not authorize any spending. The estimated annual cost to meet the Plan goal and the gap is substantial as shown in **Table 2** and **Table 3**.

Table 2. Costs of Plan

Total Annual Cost to Meet the Plan Goal	\$406 million
Estimated Amount of City and County Funding for a single year	\$122 million
Funding Gap	\$284.3 million

Table 3. Annual Funding Needed, Funding Available and Resulting Gap

	Funding Needed to Meet Goal Annually	City Funding Available Annually	County Funding Available Annually (estimated)	Annual Gap
Targeted Prevention	\$24.8 million	\$ 3.6 million	\$0	\$21.2 million
Access & Coordination	\$16 million	\$1.9 million	\$8 million	\$6.1 million
Encampment	\$18.7 million	\$13.7 million	\$0	\$5 million
Interim Housing	\$129.3 million	\$30.7 million	\$15.3 million	\$83.3 million
Permanent Housing	\$217.4 million	\$20.3 million (PSH Only)	\$28.4 million	\$168.7 million
TOTAL	\$406.2 million	\$70.2 million	\$51.7 million	\$284.3 million

While \$284.3 million for a single year is a heavy lift, staying focused, targeting racial inequities, advancing systems change in a forthright manner, and pursuing multiple strategies simultaneously will yield results. With persistence the City can make incremental progress toward ambitious funding goals. Even relatively small commitments make a meaningful difference. With a \$10,000 investment, the City can prevent one person from becoming unhoused. With a \$50,000 investment, an unsheltered person can come indoors to a high-quality interim housing program. For \$30,000, the City supports one-year of operations for a permanent supportive housing unit.

The Plan recommends a four-pronged funding strategy to meet the Plan's goals:

- 1) **Maintenance of Effort** – Ensure that both City and County funding levels remain the same or higher as the prior year.
- 2) **Access Measure W Funding** – Alameda County is expected to allocate \$1.4 billion from Measure W over an 8-year period to fund the homelessness response system throughout the County. Oakland accounts for approximately 58% of the County's total homeless population and 74% of Countywide Black/African American homelessness.
- 3) **State and Federal Funding Advocacy** – If there are continued reductions in available funding from the state and federal levels, Measure W dollars and local sources like Measure Q may need to support existing programs, rather than funding expansions. It is important that the City maintain a commitment to a strong and visible advocacy agenda.
- 4) **Local Investment and Public/Private Partnerships** – The City must expand local resources to meet the aggressive 50% homelessness reduction goal. A top priority is replacing Measure U funding with an additional bond measure for capital investment in homeless housing – both permanent and interim units. Additionally, the City must increase engagement with philanthropy for investment into innovative solutions and program pilots.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

A core element of creating this plan included obtaining feedback from the community. In July and August 2025, the City conducted 10 community feedback sessions and 18 individual interviews that gathered perspectives from people who work in the homelessness response system and People with Lived Experience. Community feedback sessions included virtual group discussions with service provider leadership, frontline staff, housing developers, researchers, and policymakers. In addition to hosting virtual focus groups, two in-person focus groups were held in West Oakland and East Oakland libraries for people with lived experience. Individual interviews and community feedback sessions built upon knowledge gathered from other recent research efforts and initiatives, particularly the [Centering Racial Equity in Homeless System Design](#) report.

Summary feedback from community feedback sessions, as well as direct participant quotes may be found in the Homelessness Strategic Action Plan Racial Equity Impact Analysis (HSAP REIA), **Attachment B**.

In addition to small invitation-only feedback sessions, the Plan *findings* were presented and discussed publicly at the Homelessness Commission on June 25, 2025. A second discussion of the Plan *recommendations and next steps* took place on February 25, 2026.

The purpose of community feedback – both through small group meetings and public Homelessness Commission presentations – has been to deepen the City’s understanding of systemic problems and solutions, and to identify system gaps, especially those that perpetuate racial disparities.

COORDINATION

Development of the Plan and this report was coordinated with the Mayor’s Office, City Administrator’s Office, City Attorney’s Office, Human Services Department, Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Public Works, Department of Transportation, Department of Race and Equity, and the Homelessness Commission.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic:

Taking meaningful steps to address homelessness are necessary to support a thriving economy in Oakland and maintain usability of Oakland’s parks, schools, businesses, and critical infrastructure.

Environmental:

Addressing homelessness under this Plan will reduce homelessness and associated environmental impacts on infrastructure and health and safety.

Race & Equity:

As shown in the HSAP REIA, data clearly indicates that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations in Oakland are overrepresented in homelessness, poverty, and displacement. Data consistently show that Black Oakland residents, in particular, are disproportionately overrepresented among unhoused residents and inflow to homelessness in both new entries and returns to homelessness. Most of Oakland’s unhoused residents have deep roots in the community—60–70% were last permanently housed in Oakland⁴. Furthermore, available data indicates that 85% of the Black unsheltered residents in Oakland have lived in Alameda County for more than a decade.⁵ The trend of staying local holds for people living in vehicles; 82% of those living in vehicles (including cars, trucks, RVs) have resided in the County for over 10 years. While homelessness programs alone cannot address all the root causes of poverty, housing insecurity, and homelessness, Oakland’s homeless response system can and must be structured to intentionally reduce barriers and avoid perpetuating racial disparities. The investments and actions recommended in the Plan strive to do this.

⁴ Alameda County HMIS System Report (2025) Demographic Dashboard City-funded programs FY23-25

⁵ Simtech Solutions Point-in-Time Count (2024) [Unsheltered Insights Dashboard](#)

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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For questions regarding this report, please contact Sasha Hauswald, Interim Chief Homelessness Solutions Officer, at 510-813-7572

Respectfully submitted,



Sasha Hauswald
Interim Chief Homelessness Solutions Officer,
City Administrator's Office

Reviewed by:
Betsy Lake, Assistant City Administrator

Attachments (2):

- A. City of Oakland 5-Year Homelessness Strategic Action Plan (HSAP)
- B. Homelessness Strategic Action Plan Racial Equity Impact Analysis (HSAP REIA)