



CITY OF OAKLAND

## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** April 30, 2021  
**TO:** City Council and Members of the Public  
**FROM:** Council President Nikki Fortunato Bas and Vice Mayor Rebecca Kaplan  
**SUBJECT:** **Resolution Directing The Council President To Schedule A Meeting With The Alameda County Board Of Supervisors To Discuss And Develop Plans For Coordination Of Homelessness And Public Health Solutions**

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Dear Colleagues on the City Council and Members of the Public,

The homelessness crisis impacts Oaklanders profoundly, with serious public health and safety consequences on our communities. Oakland's unsheltered residents are among the most vulnerable populations in the world. Over 4,000 unsheltered people live and sleep on Oakland's streets, and 82% of Alameda County's unsheltered lived in Oakland prior to becoming homeless<sup>1</sup>.

Homelessness in Alameda County has doubled since 2015. From 2017 to 2019, homelessness in Oakland grew by an unprecedented 47 percent<sup>2</sup>. According to Alameda County's 2019 Homeless Persons Point-In-Time count, over half (51%) of the County's unsheltered residents are residing in Oakland, which is a similar percentage distribution to the 2017 findings. In 2017, Alameda County's Homeless Persons Point-In-Time Count, 2,761 homeless persons were counted in the City of Oakland.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, homelessness has become more urgent than ever, as residents simultaneously grapple with the economic crisis, housing instability due to job loss, and other unforeseen challenges. The United Nations called the scope and severity of the Bay Area homeless crisis "one of the most pervasive violations of human rights globally"<sup>3</sup>. In the City's Equity Indicators Report, Oakland scored a 1 for homelessness, as African Americans make up 70% of Oakland's homeless population but only 24% of the City's population<sup>4</sup>. According to Alameda County's EveryOne Home Strategic Update in 2018, for every two people who become homeless for the first time in Alameda County, only one returns to permanent housing, and homelessness will increase by 1,500 people per year if these rates continue<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See "View Administration Supplemental Report 1/10/2020"

<https://oakland.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4205414&GUID=27357322-E28C-466C-A9C8-7070413A5518&Options=&Search=>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/07/23/oakland-saw-a-47-percent-spike-in-homelessness-this-year/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.undocs.org/A/73/310/rev.1>

<sup>4</sup> [http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2019HIRDReport\\_Oakland\\_2019-Final.pdf](http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2019HIRDReport_Oakland_2019-Final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2018-EveryOne-Home-Strategic-Update-Executive-Summary.pdf>

Within the City of Oakland, the city oversees homeless shelter programs while Alameda County is responsible for public health, including behavioral health, mental health and other healthcare issues for unsheltered residents. Despite providing the majority of frontline services to the unsheltered in Oakland, the majority of available funds, and the authority to allocate those funds, is given to Alameda County.

In November 2020, Alameda County voters passed a sales tax measure, Measure W to add an additional 0.50% sales tax, estimated to raise \$150 million annually to fund homelessness programs, such as rapid rehousing, rental subsidies, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing, in accordance with recommendations of the Home Together 2020 Plan. Alameda County has discussed plans to allocate funding from Measure W to cities and unincorporated areas based on their population of unsheltered residents.

The City of Oakland's Human Service Department and Alameda County's homeless outreach teams and Healthcare for the Homeless (ACHCH) work together to address the needs of residents in Oakland's street encampments, however, City Councilmember and County Supervisors have not coordinated around a joint homelessness strategy, policies, or budgetary issues, despite how large the problem has grown specifically in Oakland.

The City of Oakland and Alameda County would both benefit greatly from closer collaboration at the policy and fiscal levels around their collective homelessness work. Currently, there are no formal venues for the elected representatives of the Oakland City Council and Alameda County Board of Supervisors to advance homelessness work or develop strategies, while some municipalities, such as the City of Portland, Oregon, have worked to create the [Joint Office of Homeless Services](#) to interface with Multnomah County, in order to better advance policies and programs to address homelessness.

This resolution would direct Council President Bas to reach out to Alameda County Board of Supervisors President Keith Carson to discuss Oakland's priorities for homelessness on behalf of the City Council. This joint meeting will focus on the two entities' joint homeless strategies and programs, including policies and budget items, including the use of Measure W funds to be utilized for programs in the City of Oakland, and a priority for County and state funding for homelessness solutions in the City of Oakland.

Respectfully submitted,



Vice Mayor Rebecca Kaplan  
Oakland City Councilmember At Large



Nikki Fortunato Bas  
Council President, District 2