



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Karen Boyd
Citywide Communications
Director

SUBJECT: Love Life Resolution Update

DATE: September 15, 2021

City Administrator Approval

Date: Sep 16, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That City Council Receive A Report And Recommendations From The City Administrator Regarding The Action Plan To Implement The City's Motto "Love Life" With Public Agency Partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides City Council with an update regarding the action plan to implement the City's motto "Love Life" with public agency partners.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On April 5, 2016, City Council adopted Resolution No. 86088 C.M.S., which adopted "Love Life" as the City's official tagline and motto in memory of 16-year old Lo'Eshe Lacy. The motto serves as a mantra against violence and an affirmation of the value of life. Lo'Eshe in Nigerian Igbo means "love life," a rallying cry to embody Oakland love.

The resolution directed the City Administrator to incorporate the use of the motto in all official communication and return with a recommendation on the best means by which to publicize the City's adopted motto through welcome signage, in the City's official communications and by other means deemed appropriate.

On July 18, 2017, City Council adopted Resolution No. 86868 C.M.S., which clarified the City's fair use of the motto for its literal meaning. As such, the resolution stated the following: "the City's official tagline and motto is hereby amended to clarify that the City Council and City Administrator will take into account the literal meaning of the 'Love Life' motto and the intent of the City of Oakland to convey that literal message when determining the best means to publicize the motto." This clarification was needed as staff reported at the time, the phrase Love Life had been trademarked by a number of entities throughout the country.

Life Enrichment Committee
September 28, 2021

Street Signs

From May 2017 to May 2018, City staff issued a series of informational reports to the City Council updating its progress in installing welcome signs with the Love Life motto in 15 locations throughout Oakland. Additionally, the reports detailed the City's marketing campaign leading up to an October 17, 2017 commemorative ceremony, where the City unveiled the new street signage at the intersection of Durant Avenue and Bancroft Avenue. The street signs with the Love Life motto were installed in the locations identified in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Locations of Love Life Welcome Street Signs

<u>District 1</u>	<u>District 5</u>	<u>District 7</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3241 College Ave.• Market St. & 63rd St.• 63rd St. & Vallejo• Rose Ave. & Linda• 55th St. & Vallejo• Alcatraz & Dover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tidewater & High St.• Fruitvale & Alameda Ave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marlow Dr. & Foothill Blvd.• Breed & Durant• Beverly & Durant• Bancroft & Durant• Voltaire & Durant• Sunnyside & Durant• Myers & Durant

The City's Communications team incorporated the Love Life motto into various communications tools used in the City's official communications. It is included as a hashtag with a link to the [#OaklandLoveLife web page](#), which provides context and explains that the official City motto serves as a mantra against violence and an affirmation of the value of life. #OaklandLoveLife is featured in the following official channels:

- City of Oakland Website – #OaklandLoveLife is prominently placed on the footer of every page of the [City's official website](#). It links to a description of the [meaning of the motto](#) as a mantra against violence and an affirmation of the value of life.
- City Email Newsletter – Incorporated into the masthead of the City's weekly email newsletter, distributed to 11,000+ subscribers.
- Social Media Platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Medium) – Incorporated into the City of Oakland's profile on the City's official social media platforms.
- Press Releases – The City is in the process of re-designing its official press release template, which will feature the #OaklandLoveLife motto in the masthead.

On July 6, 2021, City staff provided a report to the City Council with an update regarding the ways in which the City's motto "Love Life" has been incorporated into the City's official communications, signage, and other means deemed appropriate since the motto was officially adopted in 2016. At that time the City Council requested that staff provide a follow-up report regarding the action plan to implement the City's motto "Love Life" with public agency partners.

ANALYSIS/POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Vision of the “Love Life” Campaign

In April 2016, the City of Oakland adopted an official city motto in memory of 16-year old Lo'Eshe Lacy. The motto serves as a mantra against violence and an affirmation of the value of life. Lo'Eshe in Nigerian Igbo means "love life," a rallying cry to embody Oakland love.

Building on the initial mantra, City staff have worked to identify ways to embody the motto through messaging and communication. To activate the “Love Life” motto and more prominently uplift it to ultimately be embraced by the community, staff are working to connect it to the implementation of some of the City’s core strategies related to Violence Prevention and Cultural Arts. More specifically, staff are engaging the dual themes of family and belonging that underpin existing work in these two departments—leveraging existing programs and initiatives—to expand the community’s awareness of and engagement with “Love Life” as a citywide mantra against violence.

DVP’s Family-Strengthening Strategy

The Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) uses a public health approach to addressing violence in Oakland. DVP’s primary tier prevention strategy—focused on community members who are exposed to violence—seeks to strengthen family and community connections. The DVP lens of family is respectfully inclusive of the broad range of family styles and non-traditional structures in which young people are raised in Oakland.

Family strengthening includes activities that bring families together in community settings to build mutual resilience, strengthen family bonds, and honor shared cultures. Through these activities, families can share in family ancestral traditions through music, food, photographs, recordings, and story-telling. These events embody the spirit of “Love Life.”

The “Love Life” campaign can support DVP’s efforts to counteract the history of pathologizing Black and Brown families primarily as sources of dysfunction by offering instead strength-based narratives, images, and premises of cultural pride and the family as a source of healing and transformation. A source of love and life.

Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan

The Cultural Plan seeks to employ strategies that ensure the people of Oakland not only feel a sense of belonging in the city and to each other, but know that the city belongs to them—with the rights and responsibilities that entails. The Plan articulates a vision that resonates with the “Love Life” theme: “Belonging is the Goal: People’s sense of belonging informs their ability to lead meaningful lives, to be connected to the place they live in and the people they live among, and to feel a part of something greater than themselves.”

Through their expression, artists serve as community catalysts, helping bridge divides between people, neighborhoods, and sometimes government. Art can break down distrust and uplift beauty, creativity, and life energy. In recognition of this transformative role that the arts can play in the life of our community, the “Love Life” campaign will embrace the goal of belonging as articulated in the Cultural Plan and seek the assistance of a Cultural Strategist, embedded in the DVP, to ensure community voices and artistic expressions are lifted up and celebrated.

An Interdisciplinary, Interdepartmental “Love Life” Approach

An internal working group has been formed to develop a campaign that works to support the City’s core strategies of family and belonging, and embody the “Love Life” motto in the campaign. The working group will be led in partnership by Karen Boyd, Citywide Communications Director; Chief Cespedes, Department of Violence Prevention; and Roberto Bedoya, Cultural Arts Manager. It includes staff from the Department of Transportation (OakDOT), the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP), Economic & Workforce Development Department, and the City Administrator's Office.

In addition, community members will be engaged throughout the process to ensure that the campaign is deeply rooted in the voice of the Oakland communities most impacted by violence. Staff acknowledges the need to shift the narrative, recognizing that communities are living in violence and are not violent communities.

Plan of Action

Phase 1: Messaging, development of creative assets, and internal use of the motto

In order for the “Love Life” motto to be understood and adopted by the community and partner agencies, staff must first develop the messaging and creative assets for the campaign, as well as adopt the motto internally. City staff and members of the working group have identified a number of community-centered programs and initiatives that are already in the works that can be leveraged to help re-launch and expand the understanding and association of the “Love Life” motto. These initiatives include:

Paint the Town

The OakDOT community-powered street mural pilot, Paint the Town, was recently relaunched as a permanent program. Under the program Oakland residents are invited to engage with neighbors, friends, and community organizations to create murals directly on neighborhood streets. This program aims to leverage partnerships with local nonprofit organizations including EastSide Arts Alliance and Safe Passages to beautify Oakland streets, bring neighborhoods together, and advance racial justice goals. Paint the Town serves to help residents and local groups to foster their own imagination and creativity in reimagining Oakland’s neighborhood streets as spaces of art, vibrancy, and community ownership. The program can provide an opportunity for residents and community artists who wish to celebrate “Love Life” with street murals to do so with approved, traffic-safe designs.

Town Nights

The DVP's Town Nights events serve as outlets for community members to come together and connect in safe, positive spaces to build community, nurture relationships, and promote peace—the essence of “Love Life”. Town Nights will take place on Friday nights during times when violence spikes in Oakland (the holidays and early summer) in the neighborhoods experiencing the highest rates of violence. Town Nights events gather neighborhood residents and youth leaders for multi-generational activities and food to nurture cross-racial, cross-cultural, and cross-generational relationships before violence or crisis happens. They serve as opportunities to strengthen these ties in a spirit of celebrating “Love Life” in community.

DVP will partner with DOT's Paint the Town program and community who attend Town Nights events to design, create and unveil “Love Life”-themed street murals near the event sites. Sites may include streets near parks in East Oakland such as San Antonio, Arroyo Viejo, and Verdese Carter; and street/school locations in the Hoover Foster and Acorn neighborhoods in West Oakland.

Neighborhood Voices: Murals

In 2022, the Cultural Affairs Division will launch “Neighborhood Voices: Murals” that will support the creation of mural(s) in each City Council district. The mural selection process will be done in partnership with Council offices. The “Love Life” motto will be part of the project acknowledgment (e.g., *This mural is supported by the Oakland City Council and funded by the City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program - #OaklandLoveLife.*)

Poet Laureates

Launched in April 2021 during National Poetry Month, the new Oakland Poet Laureate program's primary goal is to make poetry more accessible across Oakland. Poetry has a transformative power to rebirth/reinvigorate, help situate ourselves in space and place, and assist us in future casting/visioning for more embodied ways of moving forward, together, in our amazing city. The Cultural Affairs Division will share the “Love Life” motto with the Poet Laureate to help get the word out to Oaklanders. The team will also coordinate with the Oakland Public Library to engage Oakland's Youth Poet Laureate in the campaign.

City staff will continue to build on this list as new community-centered initiatives are launched that embody the spirit of the “Love Life” motto. To capture the messaging and imagery that these programs and initiatives generate and expand the community association with the motto, City staff will:

1. Build a Video and Image Repository

City staff will run an open call for on-call professional services in photography and videography that the City can work with to capture images from these initiatives and other events that embody the meaning of the “Love Life” motto. For example, to lift up the diversity and beauty of Oakland family structures, City staff will arrange for photo booths at upcoming community events such as the Town Nights to capture images of Oakland love through family and belonging. With permission from the participants, the photos will be used as a montage in the #OaklandLoveLife campaign to showcase the strength of Oakland families.

2. Develop Key Messages

City staff will develop a social messaging campaign that incorporates the videos and images and highlights the “Love Life” motto. Messaging will affirm the value of life and tell a story of family and belonging.

3. Create a Central Repository for Messaging and Assets

City staff will develop a centralized repository on Oaklandca.gov that will house the background and context of the motto and serve as a public repository of the messages, creative, and social assets. It will also offer suggestions on actions residents can take to Love Life in their community (i.e., volunteer opportunities, adopt-a-spot, early childhood resources, etc.) The repository will serve as a hub where staff, Councilmembers, partner agencies, and the community can go to pull images, messaging, and actions to promote “Love Life” across their respective channels.

4. Run an Initial Campaign Highlighting the Messaging and Creative Assets

City staff will model the campaign by pushing out the messaging, actions, and creative assets across citywide channels. The Oaklandca.gov homepage will be redesigned to embody the “Love Life” motto and link back to the centralized page; imagery from the campaign will be used in online and print promotional materials; City staff will push out the messages through City-hosted social channels; and the weekly newsletter will be used to highlight stories that embody the “Love Life” motto. This initial design work will add context and meaning to “Love Life” that can be applied to consideration of ways to apply the visual assets to the City’s printed business materials (e.g., letterhead business cards, vehicles).

Phase 2: Expansion and Partnerships

Once the initial messages and creative assets have been developed, the City will be in a stronger position to pull partner agencies into this work, as well as to seek outside resources and support.

By the end of 2021, City staff will onboard a Cultural Strategist within the Department of Violence Prevention to build on this work and support the City in developing a longer-term strategy that incorporates partnerships with public agencies and robust community engagement. The Cultural Strategist will:

- Engage the community in conversations to inform our ongoing messaging and strategy
- Develop a toolkit for partnership agencies to use to support the amplification of the motto and messaging

Phase 3: Community-wide Adoption

Once success is realized with partner agencies highlighting and lifting up the “Love Life” motto, City staff will transition to focus on community-wide adoption of the motto. City staff will access outside funding opportunities, as well as potential opportunities to provide stipends or grants for community-based organizations to develop their own campaigns to lift up the “Love Life” motto.

Timeline

- Phase 1 is in progress and will continue through March of 2022.
- Phase 2 will commence as the Cultural Strategists come on board, which is anticipated by the end of 2021. Most strategists will be in place for 12 months; however, the individual embedded with the Department of Violence Prevention will have a two-year engagement.
- Phase 3 will be ongoing.

City staff will provide an update to the City Council at the completion of each phase.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no direct fiscal impact for receiving this report.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach was deemed necessary for this report beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures.

COORDINATION

This report was prepared in coordination with the Department of Violence Prevention, the Economic & Workforce Development Department's Cultural Affairs team, the Department of Transportation, and the Citywide Communications/Public Information Officers (PIO) team.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: There are no economic opportunities associated with this report.

Environmental: There are no environmental opportunities associated with this report.

Race & Equity: Community members will be engaged throughout the development of the campaign to ensure that the motto and messaging are deeply rooted in the voice of the communities most impacted by violence in our City.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That City Council Receive A Report And Recommendations From The City Administrator Regarding The Action Plan To Implement The City's Motto "Love Life" With Public Agency Partners.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Karen Boyd, Citywide Communications Director, at KBoyd@oaklandca.gov; Guillermo Cespedes, Chief of Violence Prevention, at GCespedes@oaklandca.gov; or Roberto Bedoya, Cultural Affairs Manager, at RBedoya@oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Boyd

KAREN BOYD
Citywide Communications Director

Prepared by:
Nicole Neditch, Assistant to the City
Administrator

