



**Councilmember Janani Ramachandran**  
**Oakland District 4**

1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612  
T: (510) 238-7004  
district4@oaklandca.gov  
[www.oaklandca.gov/officials/district-4-councilmember](http://www.oaklandca.gov/officials/district-4-councilmember)

## BUDGET MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 6, 2024

**TO:** Oakland City Council and Members of the Public

**FROM:** Councilmember Janani Ramachandran, District 4

**SUBJECT:** Councilmember Ramachandran's First Round of Amendments to Proposed Mid-Cycle Budget FY 24-25

Dear City Council Colleagues and Members of the Public,

In a challenging fiscal environment with unprecedented revenue shortfalls, I recognize that difficult decisions must be made with how to spend our limited dollars. Yet, I remain committed to the priorities stated in my budget memo for FY 2023-2025 that I authored last year two months into coming into office. I endeavor to pass a mid-cycle budget that helps re-build public trust in City Hall by funding basic city services, and building safe neighborhoods where every resident can prosper. This mid-cycle budget, I remain committed to my work over the past year to improve public safety by ensuring we are pro-actively recruiting for all frontline public safety job positions, to improve the city's efforts in generating revenue, and to bolstering the Town's economic development and commercial activity.

Given the challenges in our fiscal climate this year, my proposed amendments do not reflect the breadth of all that I wish to see changed in the proposed budget. My amendments are instead narrow in scope and practical to achieve results in the forthcoming fiscal year to improve public safety – which will, in turn, have lasting impacts to stimulate Oakland's economy and re-invigorate the vibrancy we are proud to hold as a city.

I look forward to collaborating with my Council colleagues to ensure that we can fund a budget that reflects our core values and our mandates as public servants to Oakland.

### **Proposed Additions (General Purpose Fund):**

- **Community Safety Ambassadors for East Oakland Commercial Corridors – Joint Amendment with Councilmembers Noel Gallo & Treva Reid**
  - The Mayor's proposed budget cuts \$1 million in funding towards Community Safety Ambassadors in the upcoming fiscal year. Part of this 2024-2025 funding was intended to go towards East Oakland business corridors, including neighborhoods in District 4 that did not receive an allocation last year. I am proposing a joint amendment with Councilmembers Gallo and Reid to re-instate funds for community safety ambassadors specifically for East Oakland commercial corridors. Last year, a pilot safety ambassador program in the Laurel during the holiday season (typically a dramatic escalation in crime) saw a decrease of violent crime by 36% and fall in property crime by 24%, with extraordinarily few commercial break ins. Yet crime levels rose by 32% in the immediate six weeks following the completion of the ambassador pilot. The ambassadors also led to increased feelings of security in the area, with 90% of

residents surveyed saying they felt safer in the district, and 75% of respondents saying they were more likely to shop and eat in the Laurel as a result. A pilot holiday safety ambassador program in Montclair produced even more dramatic results, with a decrease in crime by 50% during the time period ambassadors were present but a rise in crime by 80% in the immediate weeks following. You can view the complete budget amendment memo co-authored with Councilmembers Gallo and Reid on Legistar.

- **Critical OPD Civilian Positions**

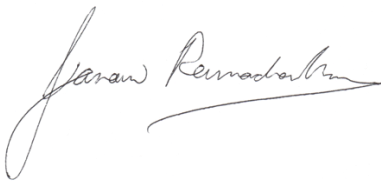
- The Mayor's proposed budget freezes 38 civilian staff positions in OPD. These include a range of critical front-line public safety roles that are key to addressing criminal investigations and accurate and timely data collection. If these positions are not funded and filled, officers will have to continue spending their time completing these tasks instead of patrolling our streets and responding to emergencies. Furthermore, OPD has experienced issues in accurate crime reporting (see [NBC Report report here](#)), and some of these civilian OPD positions play a key role in helping produce timely data. I will be proposing amendments to re-instate a few of these positions, including Evidence Technicians, Records Specialists, and Criminalists.

- **Fire Department Positions**

- The Mayor's proposed budget cuts three Fire Captains, 20 Paramedics, 13 Engineers, and 16 non-sworn civilian positions. My amendments propose re-instating some of these positions given the critical emergency services work they do, including a few Fire Inspectors and one Captain. For example, Fire Inspectors play pivotal roles in preventing tragedies like the Ghost Ship fire as well as supporting wildfire prevention efforts. Other roles that have been frozen, including that of Fire Captains, have critical grant-writing responsibilities. This is key because OFD has seen massive success in recent years at OFD due to the pro-active nature of its leadership in grant-writing (in fact, certain grants received last year played a pivotal role in preventing the temporary closure of Fire Stations).

As we have only had eight business days to review the proposed budget and ask questions to relevant staff, these are my initial set of proposed amendments. In the coming days, I will publish another budget spreadsheet with additional budget reductions in order to fund the public safety positions referenced.

In Community,



Janani Ramachandran  
Oakland City Councilmember, District 4

Janani Ramachandran, Esq.

Oakland City Councilmember, District 4  
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza | Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 858-9092  
[jramachandran@oaklandca.gov](mailto:jramachandran@oaklandca.gov)