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AGENDA REPORT

TO: Members of the
Finance and Management and
Public Safety Committees

FROM: Council President Larry Reid,
Councilmember McElhaney

SUBJECT: Establishing a Department of
Violence Prevention

DATE: April 27, 2017

RECOMMENDATION

Council President Larry Reid, Councilmember Lynette Gibson McElhaney and Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 2.29 of the Oakland Municipal Code entitled "City Agencies, Departments and Offices" to create the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) focusing on ending the epidemic of violent crime in Oakland and healing trauma in impacted communities.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

April 11, 2017

Council President Reid and Councilmember McElhaney introduced their proposal to create the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) at the Life Enrichment Committee. Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan joined as a co-sponsor.

April 24, 2017

Councilmember McElhaney presented the proposal to the Measure Z Safety and Services Oversight Committee which voted to formally endorse it.

PROPOSAL

In November 2014, Oakland voters passed the 2014 Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Act (Measure Z) to make supplemental investments in both community policing and violence prevention and intervention strategies to radically reduce violent crime and its traumatic impacts on communities. This proposal follows that wisdom and creates equal standing in the organizational hierarchy between the policing and intervention investments by elevating the non-sworn Measure Z investments to its own department.

Item: _____
Finance and Management and Public Safety Committees
May 9, 2017

Mission of the Department of Violence Prevention

The DPV works to dramatically reduce violent crime and to serve communities impacted by violence to end cycles of trauma. The DVP will initiate and support programs that employ what public health professionals call 'secondary interventions,' which are programs serving those at highest risk of violence. Interrupting violence – gun violence, family violence, sexual violence – in this way reduces trauma in the community and so removes one of the root causes of future violent crime. In all things, the DVP will promote trauma-informed care that builds on the wisdom provided by those community members most affected by violence.

Theory of Change

Rationale for Creating a Department with a Full-Time Director instead of the Status Quo

Public Safety is consistently cited as the most important issue confronting Oakland. The matter is so important that Oakland's current and prior City Administrators have maintained a direct reporting relationship with the Chief of Police and the Chief of Fire. This proposal amplifies community wisdom, giving community-driven strategies a seat at the table by establishing a department solely dedicated to direct and manage non-sworn Measure Z investments and establishing a Chief of Violence Prevention to lead the new department.

Leadership matters. Management experts conclude that organizations must be appropriately structured and staffed in order to succeed. Despite the millions of dollars in additional investment, Oakland's current organizational structure has yet to produce the declines in violent crimes realized statewide. Over the past two budget cycles, the Council has undertaken significant reform efforts within OPD including increasing the number of crime and lab technicians, dispatchers, strengthening Operation Ceasefire, retooling the Community Resource Officer position, upgrading technology systems, replacing vehicles, commissioning several plans and reports as well as adding academies. The time has come for us to consider retooling and supporting reforms on the non-sworn side of the equation. Violence prevention efforts must be the responsibility of a leader with the requisite authority and visibility to drive innovation and accountability.

Currently, the non-sworn Measure Z investments are managed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) in a suite of programs branded as "Oakland Unite." In the FY15-17 Budget, Oakland Unite is a \$8.7 million dollar division comprised of 15.49 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, including a Human Services Manager to manage Oakland Unite's efforts under the Human Services Department director. Oakland Unite comprises only 5% of DHS employees¹ and is tasked with some of the most challenging and endemic conditions impacting our city – including anti-poverty programs, elderly and youth services and homelessness.

The public has invested approximately \$300 million in Measure Z over the past 12 years, with approximately \$120 Million being invested in Oakland Unite programs. However, Oakland

¹ The Department of Human Services (DHS) is comprised of 305.37 FTE and is responsible for managing the Oakland Fund for Children & Youth (8.25 FTE), Head Start (180.94 FTE), the Alameda County/Oakland Community Actions Partnership (AC-OCAP) (17.55 FTE), Senior & Disabled Services (84.14 FTE) among others.

remains astonishingly dangerous. We reject any notion that this is due simply to differences in Oakland's population. With a very similar demographic and violence profile, the City of Richmond saw dramatically different results after establishing the Office of Neighborhood Safety.

With the passage of Measure Z in 2014, a strengthened Oakland Unite and the OPD Operation Ceasefire began to make headway in homicide reduction boasting a 22% reduction in homicides between 2010 and 2015.² Since then, however, there has been an uptick in homicides revealing the recalcitrant nature of multi-generational cycles of violence in Oakland and the fragility of the City's recent success in reducing homicides and shootings. These trends draw us to conclude that there is an urgent need to dedicate personnel resources in an improved structure that increases accountability and sets Oakland up for sustained success.

This modest investment in establishing the DVP is well worth the investment. As demonstrated in Richmond, cities across the nation have experienced dramatic reductions in violent crime after establishing departments similar to the DVP. It is worth noting that this structure is born of the wisdom of Oakland leaders - David Muhammad and DeVone Boggan - whose consultancy with the City of Richmond led to the establishment of the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) - which has resulted in a 71% drop in homicide and 100s of saved lives. The power of the dedicated department formalizes the integration of community-informed wisdom and empowers the voices of those who are mostly likely to be victims of crime.

Elevating Oakland Unite into its own department is the next step needed to achieve sustained and dramatic violence reduction. This proposal makes clear that the City places a priority on violence prevention by dedicating a full-time executive level official to manage and direct Measure Z non-sworn investments as opposed to having this critical work buried among the duties of the Department of Human Services. A full-time dedicated Chief of Violence Prevention offers the public:

- **More focus on empowering community:** the young men in the community who are most at risk of involvement with violence are the answer to reducing violence. A dedicated director will be charged with ensuring that their wisdom, and the wisdom of the family members and advocates closest to them, remains central to all decisions.
- **More capacity for programmatic vision:** a full-time director will have the capacity to ensure that Oakland Unite's strategy always represents best practices and that it nimbly adapts to the changing landscape of violence in Oakland. Additionally, a full-time director will be able to provide the strategic direction needed to address the domestic violence and CSEC epidemics that currently lack any plans for prevention.
- **More advocacy to make City staff successful:** a department director solely focused on violence prevention strongly advocating for Oakland Unite means violence prevention programs will get what they need from other departments faster. Reducing violence is too important for red tape to ever stand in the way.

² A 22% decline is calculated based on the percentage change between the average homicide rates of the three-year periods before and after the relaunch of Ceasefire in 2013: from 2010 to 2012, Oakland averaged a homicide rate of 26.7 per 100,000 residents while between 2013 and 2015, Oakland averaged a homicide rate of 20.7 per 100,000 residents.

- **More attention to partnerships:** a full-time director will have the capacity to manage the partnerships with hospitals and community based organizations to ensure they are successful.
- **Greater stature to ensure mutual accountability with OPD:** Oakland Unite and OPD must work in tandem to ensure that enforcement and social services strategies complement each other. Also, we believe that a Director solely focused to violence reduction will be able to help the City Administrator continue to properly implement Ceasefire during any leadership transitions in OPD.
- **Better visibility to attract outside funding:** a Director will have the bandwidth to market the Department to foundations based on its public health approach to reducing trauma and serving boys and men of color
- **Refined mission to prioritize a public health lens** for interrupting cycles of trauma caused by violence. We intend for the Department of Violence Prevention to also compete for grants and philanthropic funding to being cold case advocacy for families. A public health lens will also move the department towards providing more preventative services for those at risk of domestic violence and CSEC.
- **Clearer accountability:** a single director gives the public and the Council a single point of accountability who is responsible for results.
- **Sustainability:** Departments are more stable than divisions because of their visibility and because of the direct connection to the City Administrator. While the departure of the director of human services may impede Oakland Unite from the changes it needs in the administration, a transition of the Chief of Violence Prevention would only mean that the City Administrator personally steps into the role of leading the department.

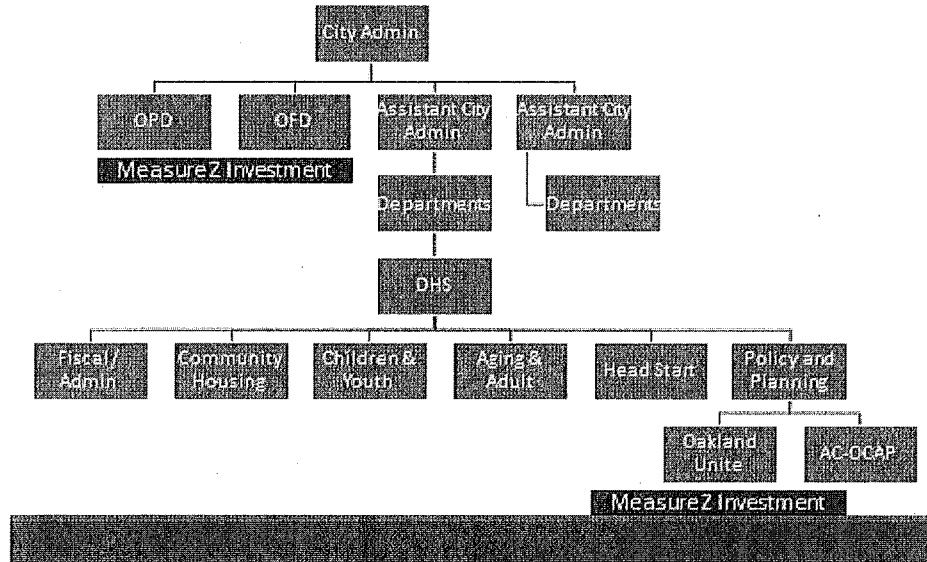
In addition, the newly established DVP will:

- Leverage the taxpayer's investment by attracting additional financial and technical resources to further this critical work.
- Establish a civilian-led victim advocacy component to improve support services, including cold case advocacy.
- Bolster the critical efforts underway to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

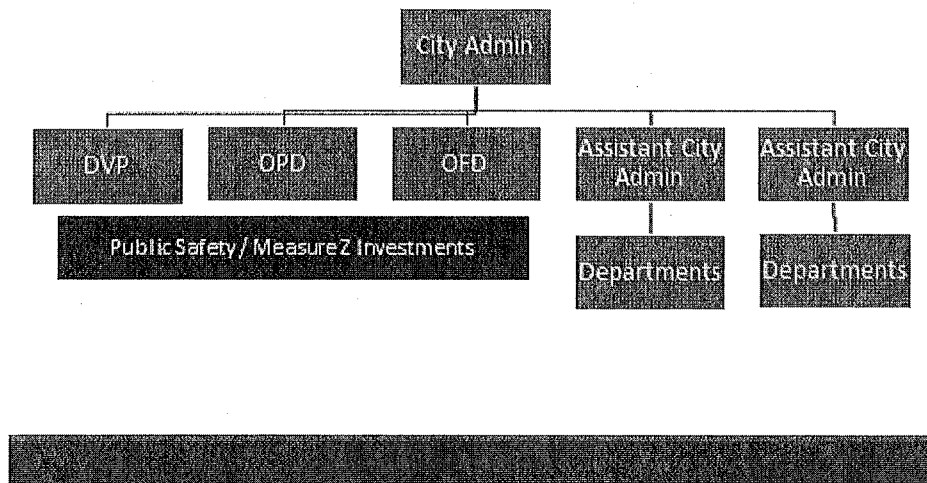
How will this change Oakland Unite?

Under this proposal, the DHS division of Oakland Unite remains whole and is elevated within the Oakland municipal structure to parity with OPD and OFD. We intend that the first year of the department mirror the successful launch of the Department of Transportation: hire a founding director on a temporary contract to lead a strategic planning process. The charts below illustrate the change proposed to the organizational structure:

Current Structure: Prevention as Lower Priority



Proposed Structure: Prevention with equal importance, access, respect



COORDINATION

Three separate bodies will coordinate the City's efforts to dramatically reduce violent crime:

- The Mayor's Director of Public Safety – this political appointee serves to advise the Mayor on public safety policy and is positioned to play an active role to interface with and convene other governmental agencies to establish regional support for Oakland's efforts to become one of the safest cities in the region. This role, while complimentary to the DVP, is broadly focused on all aspects of public safety, including law enforcement.
- The Chief of Violence Prevention will be responsible for crafting the strategic plan for Oakland's violence interruption and prevention efforts and for directly managing the non-sworn Measure Z investments. The position will also leverage additional grants and other resources to significantly interrupt Oakland's historic cycle of violence. An administrative position, the incumbent will serve peer-to-peer with the Chief of Police in establishing a holistic and comprehensive approach to reductions violence, insulated from election cycle disruptions associated with political appointees.
- The Chief of Police will contribute to violence prevention through fully implementing the Ceasefire philosophy and improving the department's clearance rates to reduce incidents of retaliatory violence.
- Ceasefire is OPD's data driven strategy focused solely on individuals who are most at risk of being involved in gun violence. Ceasefire provides direct and respectful communication to these individuals about their risk. These efforts are then strengthened by the array of services, supports and opportunities, including intensive case management and life coaching as well as job training and placement coordinated through Oakland Unite. The services will be enhanced and better resourced with the elevation of Oakland Unite into the DVP.

FISCAL IMPACT

The anticipated direct cost is estimated to be less than \$350,000 for a new director and support personnel. We believe that as the DVP works to reduce violent crime, especially homicides and shootings, the city will realize a significant reduction in OPD overtime. In 2016, OPD paid nearly \$1 million in homicide related overtime for investigators only. In addition, Oakland firearm assaults, nearly 1000 annually, burden the public safety system by commanding an entire police area patrol for hours – costing taxpayers money and reduced levels of policing services. Reducing assaults, even by a small percentage, will have the added benefit of keeping patrol units to the standard assignments to reduce and suppress other neighborhood crimes.

To minimize disruption in a transition to a fully empowered department, the proposal contemplates that Oakland Unite remain physically and administratively housed within the Department of Human Services for one year. We expect that the formation of the new department will occur in a similar manner as the Departments of Transportation and Race and Equity with the Administrator quickly retaining a consulting director who will initiate the department's efforts while the recruitment for a permanent Chief of Violence Prevention gets underway.

The administration's accompanying supplemental report will include more information on the projected costs of launching a new department and hiring a department head for it.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Homicides, shootings and violence of all kinds has a disproportionate impact on African American and Latinx families. Violence not only threatens the loss of life, it impacts the quality of life and has a negative impact on neighborhoods where violence is concentrated. DVP success is likely to attract additional financial and technical resources into the city while simultaneously producing a cost savings on OPD overtime and the cost of other supportive services provided by the Department of Public Works and the Oakland Fire Department, who provide first responder medical services.

A serious and sustained reduction in violence will also impact personal economic costs and savings. Currently every Oakland business and household pays a premium for Oakland's safety rating. Victim's families are often financially devastated by the loss of a loved one. Those killed include primary income earners and every death is accompanied with costs for funeral services and other associated costs.

Environmental: Community violence is a severe deterrent to residents enjoying open spaces and parks. Curing the conditions that make these spaces unsafe will improve the public stewardship and enjoyment of Oakland's parks, recreations centers and open spaces.

Social Equity: Violence in Oakland disproportionately impacts African American, Latinx and other people of color especially boys and men of color who are 62 times more likely to be murdered than their white counterparts.³ The City's failure to reduce homicide greatly increases the likelihood that survivors will suffer mental health traumas over a lifetime and poses a serious threat to future generations as the traumatic cycle demonstrates that victims of violence are more likely to perpetrate violence upon others.

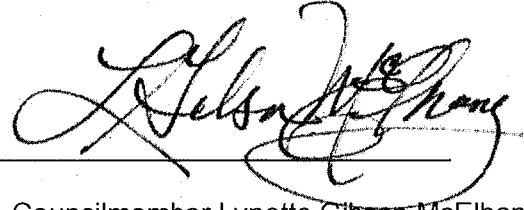
ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 2.29 of the Oakland Municipal Code entitled "City Agencies, Departments and Offices" to create the Department of Violence Prevention which will have as its mission eliminating serious violent crime in Oakland and providing advocacy and services to reduce trauma for those harmed.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Alex Marqusee, Sr. Legislative Analyst, at (510) 238-7031.

³ From 2011-2015, 0.35% of young (15-35) Black and Hispanic men were murdered while only 0.0056% of young White men were murdered.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynette Gibson McElhaney", written over a horizontal line.

Councilmember Lynette Gibson McElhaney
Oakland City Council, District 3