



CITY OF OAKLAND

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COUNCILMEMBER LOREN TAYLOR
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AGENDA MEMORANDUM

Date: July 3, 2020
To: Members of the City Council and Members of the Public
From: Councilmember Loren Taylor
Subject: Homeless Encampment Management Survey Results

Colleagues on the City Council and Members of the Public:

In response to our Life Enrichment Committee Meeting on February 25th I distributed a letter that invited the Oakland community to participate in a survey about how the City could better manage its homeless encampments – To better support our unhoused residents while also creating a better understanding about the rules for those living in our encampments, and reducing the negative impacts on our neighborhoods and businesses. This letter is included as Attachment A.

Between March 17 and June 3, we received 850 responses. The slides attached in Attachment B detail the findings.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS: A primary goal of this survey was to ensure adequate participation by Oakland’s diverse community ensure integrity of the results. I am pleased that of the 850 survey respondents, our Black community members were fairly well represented in this survey (21% of survey respondents identifies as Black or African American, compared to 24% representation in the general population), but we also found that White respondents were over-represented (58% of the survey respondents, compared to under 40% of the general population). It was also important to ensure diversity of housing status – in particular, understanding the percentage of the respondents who had experience being homeless. 14% of survey respondents had lived experience in an encampment or an RV in Oakland which is significant representation compared to their <2% representation in Oakland’s general population. Based on this information, the survey—while not perfect—is a pretty good indicator of how a representative sample of Oaklanders feel about the questions asked.

SURVEY RESULTS: Overall, the survey results were clear: most Oaklanders understand that encampments are a reality in Oakland, and that the City can’t and should not simply disallow encampments from existing. Our neighbors need places to sleep and exist when they lack other indoor options, and unfortunately, City resources are insufficient to immediately address the magnitude of the problem. A significant majority of respondents favor:

- Setting restrictions on where encampments can and cannot be allowed.
- Setting some reasonable rules and regulations at encampments.
- Establishing and then enforcing rules at encampments, and relocating encampments to other areas when needed based on those ruled.

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Living outside is not an acceptable long-term solution for anyone, and we must continue to invest in the long-term solutions to homelessness: permanent housing and supportive services. However, until we get there, the Community is clear: most Oaklanders disapprove of our current encampment management policies, and favor a new approach. Interestingly, in most instances, Black and unhoused Oaklanders favored these proposals even more than their White and housed fellow community members.

As the Council debates a new policy framework for encampment management, this is an important piece of community input to ensure as many voices as possible are captured in the conversation.

Thank you to everyone that participated in this survey.

Sincerely,

Loren Taylor
Councilmember District 6