



# CITY OF OAKLAND

CITY HALL • 1 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

SHENG THAO  
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## **SHENG THAO BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR FY 2022-2023**

Like many of you and our constituents, I am eager to see a change for the better in our City. Oakland is a beautiful place, and we need more investments into public safety, housing & homelessness support, and illegal dumping. Aside from those, we need to make sure that people have more access to green spaces, safe streets, and clean and healthy neighborhoods.

We also must act on revitalizing our city as we continue to recover from a global pandemic. We need to acknowledge that poverty and homelessness significantly increased, mostly in our black, brown, indigenous, Asian, and LGBTQ communities. We have a potential tidal wave of evictions on the horizon, and we must do everything we can to mitigate or completely avoid a crisis from happening.

In addition, we need to have adequate staffing resources to implement these investments. Between the hiring freeze, low wages, a competitive job market, and increases in retirement, Oakland has a vacancy rate that is unsustainable. We must fill our vacant positions and we must ensure those jobs are being prioritized to communities that often don't have access to good, union jobs. Personally, public service got me out of poverty and homelessness, and I believe it can help many Oaklanders in the same position as well.

For those reasons, I want to see direct investments in:

### **1. The Welfare of Our Children, Youth, and Families**

- **Children, Youth and Families Department.** Last year, I fought for funding for a feasibility study on a possible Department of Children Youth and Families. What we have seen and what I've been pushing for is a way to streamline how our families in Oakland are being supported. I ask that we allocate funding for this feasibility study that will evaluate and review what a comprehensive implementation would look like.
- **Head Start.** This must be protected and expanded by making sure that any funding gaps and staff are being supported.



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- **Feather River Camp.** A local Oakland destination for families, children, and adults seeking relaxation, creation, and fun. This nonprofit has some huge needs to be filled like an upgrade to infrastructure and preparation for wildfires. Last year, it was nearly destroyed by wildfire and would need \$50,000 for restoration.

## 2. Housing Support

- **Casa Justa and other tenant counseling services.** I want to ensure that critical tenant counseling resources are funded. Casa Justa and other tenant counseling services have been providing free right to counsel for low-income tenants. This bilingual programming is critical and they will need \$1 million to extend their contract with the city. If we do not sufficiently equip our low-income tenants with the proper guidance that they need, this may lead to an evacuation crisis that will force more people to live on our streets, sleep in their cars, or get displaced.
- **Permanent Housing.** I'd like for us to also look at opportunities that will allow the city to have ongoing housing for our unhoused neighbors- including programming and wrap-around services that would lead people to permanent housing.
- **First-time Homebuyer Program.** We already have a program in place for our Oaklanders' first-time homebuyers. But currently, there are no investments that have been made yet, so I'd like to see significant funds allocated to this program.

## 3. Public Safety Improvements

- **Expand MACRO capacity.** MACRO's incoming calls for service are increasing more than we expected. Today's calls-for-service report shows us the vast majority of police calls are for non-emergency items so it is a must to scale this program.
- **Community Preparedness & Response Programming.** We need an additional \$125k to renew the Oakland Firesafe Council Grant for Oakland Community Preparedness & Response Programming. This work has been amazing and a free resource for community members to prepare for a disaster. Whether it is a wildfire or an earthquake or even something as small as a power outage, being ready for a disaster is lifesaving.
- **Tree Removal and Vegetation Management.** We need additional resources, staff, and funding for tree removal and vegetation management, especially along evacuation routes. We have been doing this work because of strong community and state support, but we need a lot more to meet strong vegetation standards.



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- **Joaquin Miller Park Repair.** We have seen a massive increase in the use of this park since the pandemic began, and trails are in dire need of repair. I would like to request \$50,000 for trail maintenance work so we can continue to provide a safe public park to all Oaklanders.
- **Caldecott Tunnel Sidewalk Construction.** This is a shovel-ready project on the CPI list. It was a high priority on the list of improvements for the community, and it was supposed to be funded by Caltrans. Unfortunately, we have not seen that pan out so I would like to address this. It will be a project request of \$2.5 million.

#### **4. Community Outreach & Engagement**

- **Funding Assistance to Oakland Private Industry Council (OPIC).** They are a non-profit that provides accessible, high-quality training and employment services to local residents and employers in our city. They need critical infrastructure upgrades to continue their valuable community-serving work in Oakland. I would like to request \$50,000 for this.

#### **5. City Personnel Needs**

- New Full-time HR staff dedicated to filling staffing vacancies and expansions in key departments.
- Fund and staff the Department of Workplace and Employment Standards so it can complete its critical work. It is important that we are able to enforce our workforce standards in the city.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts on the midcycle budget. We passed a strong budget with 6 votes last year, and I look forward to the implementation of these greatly needed resources for the city of Oakland.



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheng Thao', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councilmember Sheng Thao