



CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Sofia Navarro
Interim Director, Economic
& Workforce Development
Department

SUBJECT: Corridor Safety Ambassador Grants

DATE: October 2, 2023

City Administrator Approval

Date: Oct 5, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt a Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Award Grant Agreements For The 2023-2024 Corridor Safety Ambassador Program To Non-profit Organizations Jack London Improvement District, Spanish Speaking Unity Council Of Alameda County, Inc. And Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation for The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 As Set Forth In Table 1 To This Resolution For A Total Amount Not To Exceed One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) To Immediately Enhance Security Ambassador And Personnel And Safety Programs During The 2023 Holiday Shopping Season And Throughout The Program Year In High Priority Neighborhood Business Corridors Including The Downtown, Hegenberger, And Fruitvale, Commercial Corridors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neighborhood-serving commercial corridors and the business operators that run them are the backbone of the City of Oakland (City) economy. Crime in these commercial corridors has steadily increased in the past year, creating additional obstacles for businesses to recover and build from the economic losses sustained during and following the Covid-19 pandemic.

This emergency initiative aims to support interventions in three of Oakland's high priority commercial districts, serving a large sector of the City's visitors, commercial and business groups, and residents alike. Community-initiated interventions help build safer, more welcoming, and thriving business corridors, and include streetscape improvements, public safety personnel, and community ambassadors as some of the ways to bring community members together, build communication networks, and draw critical mass to our corridors as a deterrent to theft and property crime.

Due to the urgency in our business community, disbursement of year one funding is essential and will allow for quick deployment of Corridor Safety and Ambassador efforts and demonstrate

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October 10, 2023

the results of inter-agency coordination coupled with community driven public safety solutions. These dollars will help leverage additional investments in targeted high traffic and economically critical commercial corridors. In year two, Staff will continue to develop a comprehensive, citywide Corridor Safety and Management program to build capacity for long-term service delivery, to strengthen and revitalize neighborhoods without displacement, and to leverage existing City resources and support. The initiative is modeled after successful, long-term strategies in similarly sized cities. Staff will also continue to research and design a long-term holistic Corridor Safety program by leveraging public and private investments, engage a multitude of stakeholder groups and community-based organizations and provide for authentic opportunities to build relationships with, coordinate communications amongst, and respond to the diverse needs of our neighborhood merchant community and its residents.

REASON FOR URGENCY

The level of urgency to deploy these funds immediately is due to an increase in property crime and theft and ensure deployment of funds prior to the upcoming holiday seasons; therefore, immediate action is required to avoid substantial adverse impact that would occur if action was deferred to a subsequent special or regular meeting.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In the Fiscal Year (FY) 23-25 budget approved by City Council on June 26, 2023, \$1,000,000 was allocated for the Community Ambassadors and Safety Improvements for Business Corridors for FY 23-24.

The Business Development team has been meeting with a variety of stakeholders to design and implement a Corridor Safety/Ambassador program that is responsive to individual corridor needs, and that meets organizations and community groups where they are in their organizational capacity to design and to execute their own, community-generated responses to public safety, organizing, and activations that support a broader sense of safety and security in high priority neighborhoods.

The first step of this program is to leverage matching funds and public-private partnerships in the following high priority corridors: Downtown, Hegenberger and Fruitvale/International Boulevard commercial districts.

Within District 3, Downtown Oakland plays an important role in the City and the entire Bay Area, serving as a regional employment center, transit hub, civic and cultural center, and visitor destination. This District hosts 40,000 employees¹ and 5,447 businesses. Hotel, retail, and office uses, as well as arts, entertainment, and nightlife all generate significant fiscal benefits for the City since visitors, shoppers, employers, workers, arts patrons, and nightlife revelers pay a variety of taxes and fees, as well as support local businesses. The safety and cleanliness profile shows 59,375 Service Requests to the City's 311 site. Requests were mainly illegal dumping, police and abandoned autos. District 3 sits within OPD crime Area 1 where commercial burglary has increased by 59% from 2021 and 52% since 2017. Downtown, within District 3, is home to many areas with concentrations of arts and cultural uses, including Jack London Square, Chinatown, the Art + Garage District, Uptown, Koreatown/Northgate, and the Black Arts Movement and Business District (BAMBD). The greater Downtown Oakland is the largest

employment center in Oakland and the East Bay, accounting for more than one-third of all jobs in Oakland in 2022. Economic activity in Downtown Oakland also generates tax revenues that support municipal services for Oakland residents throughout the city. As of 2023, Oakland is seeing a slow but significant resurgence of new businesses, including restaurants and entertainment venues owned by BIPOC Oakland residents. As this critical employment, business, and entertainment sector slowly recovers,

Within District 7, the Hegenberger commercial corridor serves as an entry point for visitors to Oakland and includes the Airport Business Park. District 7 hosts 4,000 employees and 3,318 businesses including the Airport Business Park which supports the Oakland International Airport, making it a major economic engine for the SF Bay Area. Creating a safe and vibrant commercial district that services the thousands of visitors, business owners and operators in the area is critical to support the region's economy and continued growth. The safety and cleanliness profile shows 64,532 Service Requests to 311 in 2022, 31% were for Illegal Dumping, 11% were for police and 3% were for Abandoned Autos. District 7 sits within OPD Area 6 where commercial burglaries have increased by 124% since 2021 and 59% since 2017. These are some of the highest increases in burglary in the city and the impact of the increase in commercial crime has been felt by District 7's leading employment sectors including hospitality, car rental, gas stations, construction and manufacturing and business owners and operators identified several pressing issues that need immediate attention to provide for a safer business environment conducive to the increased activity expected during the holiday travel and shopping season including a lack of police presence and slow response times for emergency calls.

Within District 5, the Fruitvale/International Boulevard commercial area, anchored by the Fruitvale BART Station, the Fruitvale Transit Village adjacent to the BART Station, and various commercial areas located in the District have emerged as an important cultural and commercial center for the Bay Area's Latino community. District 5 hosts 2,659 businesses that employ 9,000 people, offering Latino-oriented goods and services, authentic Mexican and Central American cuisine. The District features widely attended cultural events such as Día de Los Muertos which draws as many as 80,000 people per year. In addition to its retail and restaurant offerings, a distinguishing feature of the district is its rich network of social services, including health centers, schools, and social service organizations, which serve as major employers, draw additional customers to the area, and provide services that help stabilize the surrounding community. Specifically, health and service agencies employ approximately a quarter of the workforce in this area. The three largest non-profit organizations in this area serve more than 40,000 people per year. The Fruitvale Village is a multimodal corridor accessible by vehicle, BART and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along International Boulevard and attracts the highest vehicle traffic of any commercial area along International Boulevard (50,000 daily vehicles). The Fruitvale BART station is the 4th busiest BART station in the East Bay with an average of 80,000 monthly trips. The Fruitvale Transit Village, developed by the Unity Council, acts as an important mixed-use, transit-oriented development linking the BART station to International Boulevard. District 5's safety and cleanliness profile includes 67,833 Service Requests to 311 in 2022; 32% were Illegal Dumping, 12% were for Police and 4% were Abandoned Autos. District 5 sits within OPD Area 3 where commercial crime has increased by 92% since 2022 and 73% since 2017.

Ambassador programs have been previously established to enhance public safety and hospitality. These were designed as public private partnerships, leveraging public and private funds and to create local job opportunities.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Commercial burglaries have hit an all-time high in the City. Downtown Oakland's commercial burglaries increased 52% over the last year, the Hegenberger area saw a 124% increase in commercial burglaries in the past year, and the Fruitvale/International Boulevard area experienced a 92% increase over last year (see **Exhibit A**). These statistics exclude vandalism and theft. Immediate community-based solutions are needed to secure these three areas of Oakland's critical business and commercial districts during the peak travel and shopping season, and to address the spike in property and commercial crime.

Community Ambassadors are one of several tools to address the business community's and residents' primary concerns regarding safety in our neighborhoods' heavily used business corridors as part of a holistic, community led citywide safety strategy. Community Ambassadors can play a variety of roles that support a holistic sense of safety and wellbeing, from providing a welcoming presence on the street for residents, visitors and shopkeepers to conflict de-escalation; they are a community resource to bridge a communication and service gap between neighborhoods and beat officers/street patrols. However, Community Ambassadors alone are insufficient to address more complex drivers of property crime and theft. Therefore, this initiative aims to provide communities with the resources to address specific needs through activities that are customized for the commercial corridors' community assets, resources, capacity and need.

The proposed resolution would enhance Community Ambassador and Security Programs during the holiday shopping season in neighborhood shopping areas by making the following grant awards (see also **Table1**).

- A \$500,000 grant to the Jack London Business Improvement District (JLBID), representing the Oakland BID Alliance, for the development of a coordinated safety network to enhance public safety, corridor ambassadors, and infrastructure improvements throughout the Downtown Corridor.
- A \$250,000 grant to the Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation (BCZ) to implement a layered model of public safety personnel to secure the Hegenberger corridor between the Airport and 73rd Avenue.
- A \$250,000 grant to the Spanish Speaking Unity Council of Alameda County, Inc. to implement safety initiatives in the Fruitvale Village and International Boulevard commercial corridor.

TABLE 1

Commercial Corridor Safety and Ambassador Grants (\$1,000,000):		
Grantee	Individual Maximum Grant Amount	Total Not-to-Exceed Grant Amount
Jack London Improvement District (3615695), a Nonprofit Corporation, to serve the Downtown commercial district	\$500,000	\$500,000
Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation (4533653), a Nonprofit Corporation to serve the Hegenberger commercial corridor	\$250,000	\$250,000
Spanish Speaking Unity Council of Alameda County, Inc. (527967), a Nonprofit Corporation to serve the Fruitvale commercial district	\$250,000	\$250,000
TOTAL		\$1,000,000

Public safety is a citywide priority and has drawn support and partnership from several agencies and stakeholders both public and private. Issuance of these grants would allow the City to leverage contributions of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Port of Oakland, which will be investing additional resources to support the City’s initial public safety investment for this initiative.

For the Downtown commercial district, JLBID will work with the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce to leverage an initial 50% match (\$250,000) to support daytime and evening public safety activities and ensure that interests of the 30 stakeholder groups that have been convening over the past six months inform proposed community-building and public safety activities these funds would support.

JLBID, on behalf of the Uptown/Downtown and Broadway Valdez stakeholder communities is proposing to prioritize technological investments to develop a robust and coordinated public safety network, lighting and streetscape improvements, increased ambassador presence and coordination with law enforcement and the business community, and potentially, a series of activations that aim to create spaces for positive patron engagement and a venue management

approach to address crowd flows, engagement, and interactions that create positive experiences for the general public, including young people and families.

For the Hegenberger commercial district, the Port of Oakland has committed resources to enhance active security patrols in the form of non-sworn Law Enforcement Officers, as well as deploy preventative and deterrence measures along the two major airport-area corridors along Hegenberger and 98th Avenue within the bounds of I-880. These resources complement and add another layer of support for the BCZ, which is an organization that during last year's holiday season successfully *piloted a Corridor Ambassador initiative, recruited and deployed dozens of corridor ambassadors to provide a presence along several commercial corridors, engaged with business owners, facilitated contact with City services, and reported making over 500 business contacts on everything from support with 311 reports of illegal dumping and service requests to access to business consulting services during the short pilot period (November, 2022 - January, 2023) (Resolution No. 89484).*

In the Hegenberger corridor, BCZ in partnership with trusted messengers and violence interrupters in East Oakland, will deploy a multi-layered community engagement strategy and public safety initiative which leverages relationships with a network of trusted ambassadors, CREW, influencers, interrupters, and messengers. BCZ will also engage with community-based private security/safety patrols, involve members of the East Oakland Small Business Alliance and other Commercial Corridor business and property owners, and will coordinate with City Agencies and entities, including the Department of Violence Prevention. The goal is to engage and unify all stakeholders, expedite appropriate responses, and address public safety and quality of life concerns along the major commercial corridors in East Oakland bounded by Hegenberger/73rd Avenue, MacArthur/Foothill, 98th Avenue, and Doolittle. Building on the success of the BCZ Community Ambassador funding through the 2022 Shop Safe initiative, BCZ will once again recruit, stipend, train, and deploy Community Safety Stewards and coordinate with public and private entities in a collaborative, multi-agency approach to secure the corridor during one of Oakland's highest travel season.

For the Fruitvale/International Boulevard corridor, the Unity Council will focus on similar streetscape, lighting, and other improvements, safety cameras, ambassadors, and safety personnel to secure the Fruitvale Transit Village and International Boulevard as a high priority shopping and transit corridor. The merchant Public Safety Committee helped inform the plans.

In summary, Corridor Safety/Ambassador grants will:

- Immediately expand safety, security, and Community Ambassador programs used in high priority neighborhood shopping and travel areas through the holidays. Provide grants to implement community-specific initiatives and infrastructure improvements that support safety, network and community building goals.
- Leverage private investment to enhance and support community based public safety and community building effort.

These grants will compliment multi-agency efforts led by the Business Development team, which convenes Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT), Oakland Police Department (OPD), Fire, Code Enforcement and other key departments to steward operational

enhancements including high-visibility patrol presence in commercial areas during key shopping times and enhanced coordination with commercial district ambassadors and security, including regular coordination meetings and shared communications devices.

Approval of the recommended action would advance the Citywide priority of **holistic community safety** by providing up to \$1M of investment into high priority areas to support safety efforts.

FISCAL IMPACT

The one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in funding for these grants are available as part of the FY 2023-25 adopted budget in General Purpose Fund (1010), Business Development Organization (85411), Miscellaneous Contract Services Account (54919), Business Corridor Community Ambassador Project (1007109), Business Creation, Attraction, Retention, & Expansion Program (SC11).

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

Staff has been working across multiple City departments including the Oakland Police Department, Department of Transportation, Oakland Public Works, Business Development, Special Events, Department of Disability, and the City Administrator's Neighborhoods Office (Oakland Police Department, Oakland Department of Transportation, Oakland Public Works) to address business corridor safety concerns, including responding to safety concerns citywide, and leading and facilitating merchant and resident coordination and collaboration efforts in high priority neighborhoods in West Oakland, Little Saigon, and Downtown.

Staff convenes a monthly online inter-agency workshop with the above-named City departments to steward, facilitate and implement solutions in close concert with the Uptown/Downtown Nighttime Economy Committee, which includes venue operators such as the Paramount Theater, The Fox Theater, and the multitude of business owners and operators, commercial landlords, residents, business leaders and associations. These efforts have significantly addressed the impacts of the shifts in the type, timing, and impacts of increased nighttime business activity and resulting spikes in property and violent crime.

In addition to our team's inter-agency coordination efforts, the Metropolitan Chamber and its membership, have been convening a diverse group of stakeholders since February that represent small business owners, arts, education, developers, BIDs and CEO's – the goal was to have a strong cross section of business interests to ensure better coordination of efforts which in turn results in better coverage, better communication, and better outcomes. This group continues to meet, coordinate and advance community driven safety activities and solutions and meets regularly with City staff to communicate their needs and priorities. The Jack London Business Improvement District is a key partner to integrate these community driven solutions into a cohesive strategy that addresses, daytime and nighttime safety investments.

The Unity Council has also been an instrumental collaborator, participating and collaborating with Merchants Public Safety Committee, Neighborhood Services Coordinator, business operations and Ambassadors to develop a set of community informed solutions, in addition to coordination with law enforcement and with Staff. Staff attend the Merchant Public Safety meetings in the community and continue to be in communication on responses to ongoing concerns.

COORDINATION

The Budget Bureau and Office of the City Attorney were consulted in the preparation of this report and resolution, as well as Oakland Public Works, Department of Transportation, Parking Enforcement, Oakland Police Department, Fire Department and the City Administrator.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The proposed grants support community driven initiatives and interventions to create safe and welcoming spaces for residents, workers and visitors alike to enjoy during the busy holiday events and shopping season in three of Oakland's high priority commercial corridors, located in the Fruitvale, Hegenberger, and Downtown neighborhoods. These three corridors play a critical economic and cultural role in Oakland's vibrancy and in the visitor experience, particularly during the holiday shopping and travel season. It is expected that these grants will preserve if not enhance economic activity, retain jobs and support safer business operations during a critical time for the business community.

Environmental: The proposed grants support community driven streetscape improvements, which shift the psychology of a space, lead to less illegal dumping, and combined with safety personnel, benefit the environment and can be used effectively as crime prevention strategies by altering how people engage in and move about the physical environment.

Race & Equity: This initiative centers on the urgency from the Oakland business community and residents in high priority neighborhoods, defined as communities with disproportionate concentrations of people of color, low-income households, and high levels of crime relative to other parts of the City. The Downtown, Hegenberger, and Fruitvale commercial corridors continue to experience a disproportionate increase (52%- 124% from last year) in property crime, retail theft, and robbery, it is urgent to interrupt these patterns, particularly in communities which increasingly house BIPOC business owners and operators. The initiative is a multi-agency, multi-stakeholder effort, and responds to our business communities' proactive, community-driven approaches to create safer, more welcoming experiences for residents and visitors alike, centering their agency, and efficacy to drive nuanced solutions in their respective neighborhoods. The success of the intervention is expected to build strong community networks, facilitate connection and communication amongst a diverse and broad stakeholder community that is driven by the communities most impacted by the surge in commercial crime and associated socio-economic impacts.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt a Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Award Grant Agreements For The 2023-2024 Corridor Safety Ambassador Program To Non-profit Organizations Jack London Improvement District, Spanish Speaking Unity Council Of Alameda County, Inc. And Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation for The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 As Set Forth In Table 1 To This Resolution For A Total Amount Not To Exceed One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) To Immediately Enhance Security Ambassador And Personnel And Safety Programs During The 2023 Holiday Shopping Season And Throughout The Program Year In High Priority Neighborhood Business Corridors Including The Downtown, Hegenberger, And Fruitvale, Commercial Corridors.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Cristy Limon Johnston at 510-238-6193.

Respectfully submitted,



SOFIA NAVARRO

Interim Director, Economic & Workforce
Development Department

Reviewed and Prepared by:
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Attachments (1)

Attachment A: Percentage Change Commercial Burglary Data, Jan – Dec, 2022

ATTACHMENT A

Percentage Changes in Burglary, Oakland Police Department Jan – Dec, 2022,

<i>Percentage Change</i>	Area 1 (Downtown W Oak)		Area 2 (N Oak Uptown)		Area 3 (Fruitvale Central Oak)		Area 4 (E Oak Mills Leona)		Area 5 (E Oakland Knowland Park)		Area 6 (Coliseum OAK Airport)	
	1-Yr	5-YR	1-YR	5-YR	1-YR	5-YR	1-YR	5-YR	1-YR	5-YR	1-YR	5-YR
All Burglary	2%	6%	18%	2%	-1%	-7%	-32%	-42%	-12%	-29%	66%	48%
<i>Commercial</i>	59%	52%	112%	82%	92%	73%	22%	19%	84%	41%	124%	59%
<i>Auto</i>	-1%	3%	14%	-3%	-7%	-8%	-52%	-59%	-35%	-47%	67%	56%
<i>Unknown Location</i>	73%	110%	25%	75%	217%	116%	300%	131%	22%	28%	20%	43%
Motor Vehicle Theft	19%	33%	1%	33%	4%	14%	0%	13%	6%	22%	-2%	13%
Larceny	30%	16%	30%	22%	-1%	2%	-2%	1%	2%	-3%	44%	24%
Carjacking – 215(a) PC	0%	30%	27%	74%	-3%	78%	-1%	61%	-7%	30%	2%	39%