



Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas

CITY OF OAKLAND

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**DATE:** November 26, 2019  
**TO:** City Council and Members of the Public  
**FROM:** Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas  
**SUBJECT:** Homeless Priorities and Analysis of Oakland's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness (PATH Plan)

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### **HOW WE MUST ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS**

Our community is in a deepening crisis. The Oakland I have loved for decades is experiencing homelessness and displacement like never before. Thousands of people, including children and seniors, sleep in the streets of our city every night. Encampments are now under almost every freeway overpass. While cranes line the Oakland skyline, erecting thousands of units of luxury, market rate housing, there are paltry amounts of affordable housing and even less housing that is deeply affordable and accessible to homeless individuals. Our work to address this crisis must start with a shared understanding of the worsening problem and then shift our collective resources and policies towards bold and humane solutions.

As the Council prepares for our special Life Enrichment Committee meeting on homelessness on December 4th, I want to share the major priorities of my office. The newly homeless are working class, formerly incarcerated, elderly, and persons with disabilities with limited means to make a living in today's labor market. They were already living in the cheapest housing available when they lost their housing. African Americans disproportionately experience homelessness; over 70% of unsheltered individuals in Oakland are African American while they are only 24% of the population. **Best practices around the country show that the solutions that will truly reduce and end homelessness include: producing deeply affordable housing, preventing homelessness, and increasing and stabilizing income.**

My priorities to address homelessness include:

- 1. Prioritize Deeply Affordable and Permanently Affordable Housing**
  - a. Adopt and implement the City's proposal to generate 5,000 new permanent housing units affordable to unhoused and 0-20% of AMI households.
  - b. Prioritize new development projects that are 100% affordable, including deeply affordable units at 0-20% AMI.

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**2. Prioritize Vacant Public and Private Land for Housing**

- a. Immediately identify and use vacant public land for low-cost, longer-term housing that meets United Nations human rights standards, such as tiny homes, container homes, and other creative forms of housing based on successful models across the nation.
- b. Support longer-term, co-governed housing sites that enable residents to maintain and build community and that provides the necessary sanitation and basic support services needed for residents to effectively transition into permanent housing.
- c. Partner with private landowners to utilize vacant land for housing solutions. This could include expanding the City’s partnerships with churches and creating interim uses for land that is in development.
- d. Adopt an ordinance to implement the Public Lands Policy and prioritize public land for 100% affordable housing.

**3. Ensure Human Rights and Dignity Standards at Homeless Encampments**

- a. Expand services to meet United Nations human rights and dignity standards and address the health and safety of unsheltered individuals, families, and surrounding communities by providing sanitation (permanent toilets or porta potties, hand washing stations, showers, and laundry), water (potable and drinking), regular trash pickup and dumpsters, solar power, needle collection, and fire safety training and extinguishers.
- b. Expand outreach and engagement including intensive case management and health and mental health services to connect residents to resources and housing opportunities.
- c. Increase communication, transparency and coordination among the City Administration, City Councilmembers, unsheltered residents, advocates and neighbors regarding policies and procedures for encampment management and decision-making regarding encampments.

**4. Significantly Invest in Homelessness Prevention and Strengthen Tenant Protections**

- a. Increase community street outreach, tenant outreach, and protections for tenants from evictions and other housing violations.
- b. Implement the Permanent Affordability Fund, which I worked with advocates to create in the 2019-2021 budget to allow renters to partner with land trusts and co-ops and purchase their homes. Secure funding to recapitalize and expand the current \$12 million.
- c. Create a permanent housing subsidy program that leverages funds from multiple sectors.

**5. Address the Structural Racial and Economic Barriers to Housing**

- a. End the prison to homeless pipeline by passing a Fair Chance Housing ordinance.
- b. Adopt and implement the City’s proposal to increase and sustain income.

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- c. Create the new Department of Workplace and Employment Standards, as mandated by Measure Z, to implement and enforce Oakland's worker protections.

### **INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS OF PATH PLAN**

Oaklanders are well-aware of our City's homelessness crisis; in fact, the City of Oakland has declared a *local emergency* due to the welfare and safety concerns of those who are unsheltered. In 2006, Oakland developed the *Permanent Access to Housing (PATH) Strategy* as a roadmap to end homelessness in 15 years. Yet, in the last two years, there has been an unprecedented 47% increase in homelessness. The City's update of the PATH Plan provides an urgent opportunity to tackle this persistent crisis. To effectively do this, **we need an evaluation of our current strategies, an analysis of best practices from around the country, and the willingness to make hard choices about how to best use our City resources to address this humanitarian emergency.**

I appreciate the expertise and dedication of our City team who drafted the PATH update and there are many positive aspects of the plan. I also believe additional independent analysis is helpful to understand the complex issue of homelessness, so I commissioned the attached policy memo from Just Cities. This memo provides an analysis, from an economic justice perspective, of the City's draft PATH Plan and of best practices in cities across the country. I am sharing it with my colleagues and the public to supplement the information we already have and to help inform our discussion and decision making.

As we update our homelessness strategy, I encourage my colleagues to consider these bigger picture areas:

1. More ambitious goal for reducing homelessness so that our strategies will explicitly work towards ending it.
2. A shared understanding of the drivers of homelessness, or a problem statement, that informs our strategies. *See draft below.*
3. Evaluation of our current investments and strategies; without this outcome data, we do not have full information about the effectiveness of our current investments and whether we should continue, reduce, expand or end our current strategies.
4. Institutionalizing collaboration among city departments including Human Services Department, Housing & Community Development, Planning & Building Department, and Economic & Workforce Development.
5. Organizing one unified, strategic collaborative of government, service providers, philanthropy and business with strong leadership that includes the Council.

I offer this draft problem statement for the Council's consideration:

In order for the City of Oakland to successfully reduce, prevent and end Oakland's trend of escalating homelessness, the City must have a shared understanding of the drivers of

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homelessness. These drivers help to inform the City's strategies, resource allocations, policies and inter-departmental and external agency partnerships. We believe the main drivers of homelessness are:

1. Insufficient controls on the rental housing market that create vulnerability and housing instability for tenants,
2. Structural racism and discriminatory barriers that prevent residents from returning home from prison from living with family members and/or accessing both public and private rental housing,
3. Insufficient housing units that are affordable to people at the 0-20% AMI levels, and
4. Insufficient quality jobs and lack of access to them.

I look forward to discussing the PATH Plan in more depth, including specific strategies that show promise and others that need further information and debate.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Nikki Fortunato Bas  
Councilmember, District 2

Attachment:

- A Preliminary Policy Justice Analysis of Oakland's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness, Produced by Just Cities for Oakland Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas

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## A Policy Justice Memo for Oakland Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas

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October 21, 2019 with November 25, 2019 updates

To: Oakland Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas  
Fr: Margaretta Lin, JD, MA, Executive Director; Tim Tsai, MPP, Policy Justice Research Associate  
Re: **A Preliminary Policy Justice Analysis of Oakland’s Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness**

Per your request, we have conducted a preliminary analysis, from an economic justice framework, of the City of Oakland’s draft Plan to address homelessness being heard at the October 22nd Life Enrichment Committee. Our analysis integrates the following: 1) extensive economic justice policy expertise; 2) recent participatory action research conducted in partnership with the Goldman School of Public Policy, The Village, and East Oakland Collective; 3) research of the City’s FY17-19 strategies and expenditures; and 4) best practices from other cities. In addition, we conferred with leaders from the unhoused frontline groups, The Village and East Oakland Collective, regarding their assessment of the proposed Plan.

In FY17-19, the City expended \$40.4 million on homeless services and \$3.8 million on homeless prevention. See **Attachment A: Analysis of the City of Oakland’s FY17-19 Homeless Services and Affordable Housing Funds**. However, during this same time period of 2017 to 2019, Oakland saw a 47% increase in its homeless count, escalating from 2,761 to more than 4,000. Both feedback from unhoused people and evaluation data from the Urban Institute indicate that Oakland’s current continuum of care system is “broken.” The following is from the Urban Institute’s 2018 evaluation study of the Alameda County Continuum of Care system, which includes Oakland:

*"The number of people served and the number served who were newly homeless both fell (for the years 2014-2016). We believe this is the result of bottlenecks limiting the availability of services rather than a decrease in demand. The average length of time people spent in homeless programs nearly doubled from 230 days to 437 days. The HUD standard is that communities should exit people from homelessness within 30 days. The number of exits to permanent housing also fell, suggesting people are staying longer in homelessness programs because there are fewer permanent housing options available. Challenges and delays with exits “clog the pipeline” and make the system work less well for everyone."*<sup>1</sup>

*"Despite considerable annual investments, the number of people served in supportive housing has declined. The number served in emergency shelter has stayed flat. The number served in transitional housing has decreased as the county has shifted resources toward rapid re-housing, which was the only program that saw a sharp increase in people served. With the recent increase in homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness, part of the difficulty in serving more people may be a lack of*

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, Batko, Leopold, and Shroyer (2018) Final Report and Recommendations on Homelessness in Alameda County, CA <https://homelessness.acgov.org/homelessness-assets/docs/final-report-urban-institute.pdf> p.11-12

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*space in shelters and a lack of housing options that would allow people to exit shelter. Although the number of people moving into rapid re-housing has increased, it is not enough to offset the recent increase in homelessness, especially when people cannot initially access shelter as a stop gap.”<sup>2</sup>*

We are concerned about any plan that builds on the current system without fixing what’s been identified as broken.

The Plan proposes an unprecedented investment in generating 5,000 new units of housing for unhoused people and/or households at 0-20% AMI. This is the linchpin for Oakland’s ability to end homelessness.

Our **preliminary questions** of the proposed Plan are:

1. **Why is the goal for reducing homelessness (versus unsheltered homelessness) not more ambitious?** While the Plan has a laudatory goal of reducing *unsheltered homelessness* by half from the 2019 PIT levels by 2021, the goal for *reducing homelessness* to 3,000 people by 2021 would actually bring us to above 2017’s unacceptable Point In Time homeless count levels.
2. **How will the proposed new investments for temporary housing result in achieving the goal of reducing homelessness?** The Plan proposes significant new investments of over \$36 million for shelter beds and over \$11 million for temporary Rapid Rehousing subsidies. However, as lived experience of unhoused people and the 2018 Urban Institute evaluation of Oakland/Alameda County’s Continuum of Care program inform us, *providing a temporary shelter or the rapid rehousing program are not working to reduce or end homelessness because there is no place else to go once the shelter stay or temporary housing assistance has ended.*<sup>3</sup>
3. **Why does the Plan not address strategies to provide immediate, low-cost, and longer term housing for Oakland’s growing unhoused population that are being deployed in other cities?** Where are people supposed to live while they’re waiting for the 3 to 5 years, or longer, that it will take to build new units?
4. **Why does the Plan not address the structural barriers that are driving today’s homeless crisis?** The City must directly address the economic root causes of today’s homelessness in order to actually end its homeless crisis.

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<sup>2</sup> Id. at 12.

<sup>3</sup> The 2018 Urban Institute Report shows that “bottlenecks” in the system prevent people who use emergency shelters to exit into permanent housing. People who are currently in the shelters stay there longer, not allowing new beds to be freed up for new entrants. See Table 6 on page 12 of the report for administrative data. Id. at 11-12.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT: WHAT'S CAUSING OAKLAND'S NEW AND EXPLOSIVE HOMELESSNESS

In order to successfully reduce, prevent, and end Oakland's explosive trend of escalating homelessness,<sup>4</sup> there needs to be a shared understanding of the current drivers of today's homelessness. From the data, lived experience of unhoused people, and our extensive work on Oakland housing and economic justice issues for several decades, we believe that the main drivers are:

**1. Insufficient controls on the rental housing market where landlords are able to raise rents far above CPI levels and legally or constructively evict vulnerable tenants.**

For example, a recent survey conducted by the Goldman School of Public Policy in partnership with Just Cities and The Village (**Housing & Dignity Survey**) of unhoused people in Oakland's encampments found that private housing was the last housing unit prior to becoming homeless for about 64% of the respondents.<sup>5</sup>

**See Attachment B: Analysis of Oakland's Homelessness Rates Over Time Compared to Rental Housing Costs**

**2. Structural discriminatory barriers prevent residents returning home from prison from living with family members and/or accessing both public and private rental housing.**

Recent California criminal justice reforms that have attempted to right the wrongs of the State's history of mass incarceration have resulted in the return home of significant numbers of formerly incarcerated people.<sup>6</sup> However, as has been documented nationally and locally, people with criminal records face extensive structural barriers to accessing private rental, public housing, publicly subsidized nonprofit, and even Single Residential

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<sup>4</sup> The 2019 Point in Time (PIT) counted 4,071 homeless people in Oakland, a 47% increase since 2017. [http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019\\_HIRDReport\\_Alameda\\_FinalDraft\\_8.15.19.pdf](http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019_HIRDReport_Alameda_FinalDraft_8.15.19.pdf) p.10; <http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/City-of-Oakland-ES.pdf> p.1  
However, Alameda County data suggests that many more people experience homelessness during the year than the PIT count suggests. For example, a 2015 county study estimated that there were 9,297 unhoused people in Oakland in 2013, which was 2.45 times higher than the 2013 PIT count. Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless Program (2015) "Healthcare Needs Assessment for Persons Experiencing Homelessness" [https://www.achch.org/uploads/7/2/5/4/72547769/achchp\\_homeless\\_health\\_care\\_needs\\_assessment\\_2014-2015.pdf](https://www.achch.org/uploads/7/2/5/4/72547769/achchp_homeless_health_care_needs_assessment_2014-2015.pdf) p.13

<sup>5</sup> Tsai, Tim (2019) "Standing Together: A Prevention Oriented Approach to Ending Homelessness in Oakland" [https://www.justcities.work/s/WHITE-PAPER-Standing-Together\\_-A-Prevention-Oriented-Approach-to-Ending-Homelessness-in-Oakland.pdf](https://www.justcities.work/s/WHITE-PAPER-Standing-Together_-A-Prevention-Oriented-Approach-to-Ending-Homelessness-in-Oakland.pdf) p.12

<sup>6</sup> Many Alameda County residents who are on probation or parole live in Oakland--about 3,131 people. Alameda County Data Sharing Initiative Adult Probation Public Dataset Q4 2018 <https://data.acgov.org/d/yni5-bjvq/visualization> accessed October 20, 2019

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Occupancy (SRO) housing units. This is why the **Housing & Dignity survey found that 73% of encampment respondents had criminal records.**<sup>7</sup>

**3. Insufficient housing units that are affordable to people at the 0-20% AMI levels.**

Our analysis shows that for FY17-19, there was about \$205 million of City and County funds allocated for Oakland specific affordable housing projects with a total of 1,419 new housing units. However, only 34.8% of those total units were affordable to unhoused people and households at 0-20% AMI.<sup>8</sup> See Attachment A.

**4. Unequal access and racial discrimination to higher paying jobs in the new tech economy.**

Today's Bay Area inequitable economy of growth in high wage professional tech and related jobs AND low wage service jobs, coupled with persistent racial discrimination in the tech industry, are key drivers of today's homelessness explosion. Ending homelessness requires comprehensive jobs and anti-discrimination strategies to help Oaklanders achieve housing wage jobs.

## PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF WHAT'S WORKING ELSEWHERE

Despite rising rents across the nation, not all cities are experiencing a severe spike in homelessness rates AND some are actually reducing their homelessness rates by over 50% in the past few years. **See Attachment C: Analysis of Best Practice Cities.**

Our preliminary research shows that the cities that are making strides reducing and preventing homelessness have been engaging in significant investments in the following strategies:

1. Organize **one, unified, strategic collaborative** of government, service providers, philanthropy, and business led by a strong leadership team that dictated the strategies to be deployed, assigned roles to the right service providers with a proven track record, controlled the distribution of both public and private funds, and engaged in ongoing outcome data evaluation.
2. Create a **permanent housing subsidy program** to address ongoing income/housing gap. Research, including from HUD, has identified this as the most effective strategy at preventing homelessness.
3. Adequately resource other prevention strategies: **community street outreach; eviction protection including prior to receiving an eviction notice; landlord/tenant mediation; emergency rental assistance** funds.

<sup>7</sup> Tsai, Tim (2019) "Standing Together: A Prevention Oriented Approach to Ending Homelessness in Oakland" [https://www.justcities.work/s/WHITE-PAPER-Standing-Together\\_-A-Prevention-Oriented-Approach-to-Ending-Homelessness-in-Oakland.pdf](https://www.justcities.work/s/WHITE-PAPER-Standing-Together_-A-Prevention-Oriented-Approach-to-Ending-Homelessness-in-Oakland.pdf) p.11

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.39-40



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4. Increase funding levels for people on **general assistance** given escalating housing costs.
5. Increase **affordable housing development for people at 0% to 30% AMI**—the City of Oakland’s current policy prioritizes 20% of affordable housing for supportive housing.
6. “**Ban the box**” for private and publicly subsidized rental units given the pipeline from prison to homelessness.
7. Invest in strategies that create real pathways to **new economy jobs**.
8. Address **veteran discharge issues** with key service providers and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF PATH PLAN STRATEGIES**

**I. RACIAL EQUITY EVALUATION & CAPACITY BUILDING: Need Outcome Data**

- The \$600,000 evaluation and capacity building plan does not explicitly identify that it will include **outcome data**. It is essential for the City to know the outcomes from its specific investments, especially regarding how many people have found permanent housing solutions as a result of which strategy.

**II. PREVENTION: Need Much More**

- Preventing homelessness is more humane and less costly than waiting until someone is homeless and then helping them. However, the Plan **only targets 600-700 households** for prevention help.
- Our analysis of Oakland’s FY17-19 homeless services funding found that only 7.5% of the \$52 million in overall homeless services and prevention funding was spent on prevention with a focus exclusively on rapid rehousing. During this same time period, Oakland experienced a 47% escalation in the homeless count. We do not believe that continuing to under-spend on prevention will yield the desired outcome of ending homelessness.
- We recommend that the City **significantly increase prevention funding** including for:
  - Targeted and creative **grassroots outreach** strategies to reach people at risk of losing their homes where they are (i.e. ads in Social Service wait rooms or outreach to laundromats or Head Start centers or billboards/Bus ads, TV etc).
  - **Mobile legal and other prevention services** to reach the people most at risk of homelessness where they are rather than expecting people to come to the service providers.
  - Problem-solving with the landlord community leaders to identify strategies that would **incentivize landlords** to continue or begin renting to people at risk of

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homelessness. For example, the Landlord Risk Fund discussed in the May 28, 2019 LEC Report merits more investigation.<sup>9</sup>

- In addition to the City's new investments in ways to take rental housing out of the competitive market, strategic and creative structural policy solutions are also needed to address the new phenomenon of the financialization of housing that is escalating the eviction crisis. We will be working on a future Policy Justice report on policy recommendations to address the structural roots of today's homelessness.

### **III. REHOUSING PEOPLE QUICKLY: What is the Success Rate of the Rapid Rehousing Program in Today's Housing Market?**

- What is TODAY'S success rate of Rapid Rehousing funds in the Bay Area—**how many people are finding housing they can afford after 6 months of being in the Rapid Rehousing program?** While the Rapid Rehousing program may have worked effectively in Oakland during other time periods like the Great Recession when rents were much lower and there was less competition for the rental housing supply, Oakland's housing market today is extremely different.
- Are there more effective uses of the **requested \$11.25 million/year** for the Rapid Rehousing program that would result in immediate and **longer term housing, say for several years** rather than just 6 months?
- **Alternative longer term housing strategies** that should be adequately investigated include:
  - **Immediate, low-cost housing solutions** such as tiny homes or container homes in both nonprofit operated and self-governing encampments.
  - Catalyzing a **permanent housing subsidy program** that leverages funds from the County, State, Federal governments and the private sector.
  - A **Landlord Incentive Fund** developed with the landlord association leaders to incentivize landlords to begin renting for continuing renting to unhoused or at risk of unhoused people.

### **IV. INCREASE, IMPROVE, MAINTAIN CRISIS RESPONSE BEDS/SPACES: Why Invest \$36.4 million in Temporary Shelter Beds if They Do Not Lead to Permanent Housing Solutions?**

- We would **recommend providing the requested \$4.5 million/yr to maintain existing beds.**
- However, the proposed **\$36.4 million to add and operate 800** additional shelter beds is a very significant investment that calls into question the following: 1) is the existing shelter

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<sup>9</sup> City of Oakland Report #18-2223 September 30, 2019 "Informational Report on City's Five Year Plan to Address Homelessness in Oakland" <https://oakland.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7775357&GUID=3511A037-10EB-4D64-BE76-D7E7A3B2A3B5> p.19

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system resulting in people moving from the shelters into more permanent housing solutions; and 2) is there a better use of those funds that could result in longer term housing solutions?

- In interviews and surveys the Housing & Dignity Project conducted with unhoused people, not a single respondent recommended more resources for shelter beds.

*The interviewees and survey respondents for this project reported that they were disillusioned with the current services system, and were not receptive to aid workers or outreach employees because they knew that applying for homelessness services would only lead back to the street. The residents of the encampments were especially pessimistic about public services and vociferously stated that they would rather take their chances living on the street than suffer the indignity of waiting in a dirty, crowded, and restrictive shelter where you can't have many of your belongings or your pet only to be told there weren't any permanent housing units available for you.<sup>10</sup>*

As highlighted in a recent Shelterforce article, the division regarding the viability of shelters between people who are unhoused versus homelessness professionals has been going on for decades.<sup>11</sup>

- The **2018 evaluation study by the Urban Institute** of the Oakland/Berkeley/Alameda Continuum of Care performance over time found that the system was keeping people in “transitional” and “emergency” housing for longer, was serving fewer people, and was not able to serve as many newly homeless individuals because of “bottlenecks” in the services meant to move people out of the homelessness services sector and into permanent housing.<sup>12</sup>
- **Are there better ways to use the requested \$36.4 million that would result in immediate and longer term housing solutions?** See Section III for some alternative examples.

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<sup>10</sup> Tsai, Tim (2019) “Standing Together: A Prevention Oriented Approach to Ending Homelessness in Oakland” [https://www.justcities.work/s/WHITE-PAPER-Standing-Together\\_-A-Prevention-Oriented-Approach-to-Ending-Homelessness-in-Oakland.pdf](https://www.justcities.work/s/WHITE-PAPER-Standing-Together_-A-Prevention-Oriented-Approach-to-Ending-Homelessness-in-Oakland.pdf) p.27.

<sup>11</sup> Holtzman, Ben. “When the Homeless Took Over.” Shelterforce, October 11, 2019. [https://shelterforce.org/2019/10/11/when-the-homeless-took-over/?utm\\_source=sfweekly&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=101519](https://shelterforce.org/2019/10/11/when-the-homeless-took-over/?utm_source=sfweekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=101519).

<sup>12</sup> In 2018, 8,016 persons received shelter from the Alameda County homelessness services system, including 2,174 persons who were newly homeless. That same year, the Alameda County system placed 1,158 persons in “permanent housing” or 14.4% of the people who received shelter. However, 15% of persons who were successfully helped into permanent housing from the previous two years returned to the system seeking homelessness support services in 2018.

Tsai, Tim (2019) “Standing Together: A Prevention Oriented Approach to Ending Homelessness in Oakland” [https://www.justcities.work/s/WHITE-PAPER-Standing-Together\\_-A-Prevention-Oriented-Approach-to-Ending-Homelessness-in-Oakland.pdf](https://www.justcities.work/s/WHITE-PAPER-Standing-Together_-A-Prevention-Oriented-Approach-to-Ending-Homelessness-in-Oakland.pdf) p.26 This failure to find permanent housing for people is due to a “bottleneck” of affordable housing for people to move into after transitional or emergency housing.

Brown, Batko, Leopold, and Shroyer (2018) Final Report and Recommendations on Homelessness in Alameda County, CA <https://homelessness.acgov.org/homelessness-assets/docs/final-report-urban-institute.pdf> p.11

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**V. INCREASING & STABILIZING INCOME: A Promising Strategy**

- We support the Plan’s inclusion of the discussion of increasing and stabilizing income to address homelessness. This has been an under-utilized and under-funded strategy in Oakland.
- We recommend considering these additional strategies: 1) Working with employers to identify creative problem solving hiring and retention subsidies such as the development of an Employer Wage Subsidy program similar to the ARRA program operated by the County in partnership with the City OR perhaps local business tax breaks. 2) Investigating what’s working in cities like Houston that has estimated a 45% success rate of their “Income NOW!” program for unhoused residents in getting people into or keeping them in employment.<sup>13</sup>

**VI. ADDRESS IMPACTS OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS ON SHELTERED AND UNSHELTERED NEIGHBORS: Needs Expansion**

- While we applaud the Plan’s inclusion of sanitation services at homeless encampments, we question whether \$2 million is sufficient to serve 40 encampments.
- In addition, as contained in the UN Special Rapporteur for Adequate Housing’s 2018 Report, Oakland must upgrade its encampments to **human rights and dignity standards**, which would include **more showers** than what’s currently provided and the provision of **solar powered electricity, laundry** services.<sup>14</sup>
- We also strongly support the recommendations from unhoused leaders with The Village and East Oakland Collective that the City considers utilizing **community based sanitation services** that are less expensive, provides employment opportunities for unhoused people, and do not require OPD presence.

**VII. DEEPLY AFFORDABLE & SUPPORTIVE HOUSING: Expand the Model**

- We strongly support the proposal to generate 5,000 of new permanent housing units affordable to unhoused and 0-20% of AMI households. As demonstrated in best practice cities, this is a critical strategy to reducing/ending homelessness in Oakland.
- We also strongly recommend that the City issues RFPs that support **building innovation that are lower cost and faster to build** than the traditional multifamily development project, as well as the use of **permanent housing subsidies**.
- Dedicating significant funds to wholistic housing projects serving the re-entry population is critical to addressing today’s homelessness epidemic.

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<sup>13</sup> Public records request to Workforce Solutions pertaining to Income NOW! program, July 25th, 2019. For more information about the program, contact Houston Coalition for the Homeless <http://www.homelesshouston.org/contact/>

<sup>14</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context*, A/73/310/Rev.1 (19 September, 2018) <https://www.undocs.org/A/73/310/rev.1> p.12

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- Rather than the Plan’s proposed 40% set-aside of of all Oakland affordable housing funds for homeless or at 0% to 20% AMI households, we strongly recommend a **set-aside of at least 50%, if not higher**.

**VIII. Ending the Prison to Homelessness Pipeline**

- An effective plan to end homelessness and also address issues of racial equity must explicitly address the structural housing barriers faced by formerly incarcerated people.
- Passing the **Fair Chance Housing ordinance** for Oakland developed by Just Cities and the Alameda County Fair Chance Housing Coalition is essential for removing the structural barriers for formerly incarcerated to live with family members or independently. We applaud the partnership with you, Councilmembers Reid and Kalb, and City Attorney Barbara Parker!
- The City should also partner with the County and State in the development of **wholistic re-entry housing**.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**Analysis of the City of Oakland’s FY17-19 Expenditures on Homeless Services and Affordable Housing**

<b>Homelessness Funding In Oakland (FY17-19)<sup>15</sup></b>		
<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Homelessness Services	\$40,416,728	78.3%
Homelessness Prevention*	\$3,852,436	7.5%
Displacement Prevention**	\$7,350,000	14.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$51,619,164</b>	100.0%

<b>Affordable Housing Spending and Units in Oakland FY2017-2019</b>					
<u>City of Oakland Dollars (Various Funding Sources)</u>	<u>City A1 Dollars</u>	<u>Regional A1 Dollars</u>	<b>TOTAL: All Affordable Units @ 80% &amp; Below AMI</b>	<b>Affordable Below 30% AMI (Not PSH)</b>	<b>PSH for Homeless</b>
\$76,722,398	\$49,323,209	\$78,710,569	1,419	50	445
Grand Total Oakland and A1 Dollars			\$204,756,176		

\*The prevention funded programs were exclusively for Rapid Rehousing, providing about 6 months worth of rent subsidy.

\*\*The \$7.35 million for displacement prevention includes funds from the City of Oakland, Alameda County, and the foundation-funded Keep Oakland Housed programs.

Data was gathered from numerous publicly available sources.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> City of Oakland Public Records Request #18-3146 <https://oaklandca.nextrequest.com/requests/18-3146>

<sup>16</sup> Alameda County list of affordable housing project dollars and units in Oakland [http://www.acgov.org/board/bos\\_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg\\_02\\_05\\_19/GENERAL%20ADMINISTRAT%20ION/Regular%20Calendar/CDA\\_276107.pdf](http://www.acgov.org/board/bos_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg_02_05_19/GENERAL%20ADMINISTRAT%20ION/Regular%20Calendar/CDA_276107.pdf); City of Oakland city funds allocations to measure A1 projects <https://oakland.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6989670&GUID=949D749A-4907-42BF-B96B-1BF80479A301>; Alameda County regional A1 allocations [http://www.acgov.org/board/bos\\_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg\\_02\\_05\\_19/GENERAL%20ADMINISTRAT%20ION/Regular%20Calendar/CDA\\_276107.pdf](http://www.acgov.org/board/bos_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg_02_05_19/GENERAL%20ADMINISTRAT%20ION/Regular%20Calendar/CDA_276107.pdf); City of Oakland report, status update on Measure A1 projects (numbers of units per project) [http://www.acgov.org/board/bos\\_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg\\_02\\_05\\_19/GENERAL%20ADMINISTRAT%20ION/Regular%20Calendar/CDA\\_276107.pdf](http://www.acgov.org/board/bos_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg_02_05_19/GENERAL%20ADMINISTRAT%20ION/Regular%20Calendar/CDA_276107.pdf); Oakland Housing Authority April 29 2019 Special Meeting Minutes (numbers of units for 95th & international project) <https://oakland.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6989670&GUID=949D749A-4907-42BF-B96B-1BF80479A301>

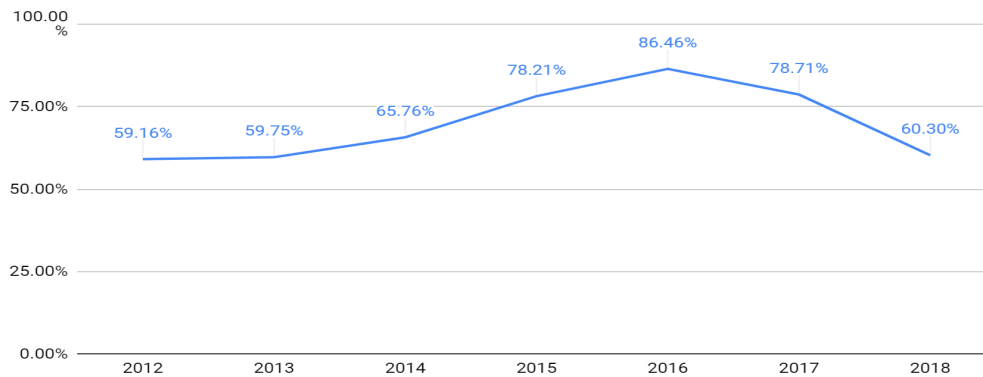
## ATTACHMENT B:

### Analysis of Oakland’s Homelessness Rates Over Time Compared to Rental Housing Costs

Zillow conducted a study in 2018 that analyzed the effect of rental increases as a percentage of median household income on homelessness numbers in a city. They found that for every percentage point that median rents exceeded 32% of median household income, homelessness would increase exponentially.<sup>17</sup> Median rents in Oakland (as measured by the Zillow Rental Index) have been double the 32% threshold since 2012 (see below).<sup>18</sup>

#### Cost to Oakland Renters 2012-2018

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Household Renter Income) and Zillow Rental Index



The longer rents remain above the 32% threshold, the more people end up homeless as their resources run out. Though the trends show cost burden going down as time goes on, the number of people becoming homeless continues to increase.<sup>19</sup>

City of Oakland Public Records Request #19-904 <https://oaklandca.nextrequest.com/requests/19-904>

<sup>17</sup> Glynn, Byrne, and Culhane (2018) Inflection Points In Community-level Homeless Rates

[https://works.bepress.com/dennis\\_culhane/228/](https://works.bepress.com/dennis_culhane/228/)

<sup>18</sup> US Census Bureau American Fact Finder, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_17\\_5YR\\_S2503&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_5YR_S2503&prodType=table)

Zillow Rental Index Time-Series: Multi-Family, SFR, Condo/Coop, \$ by Zipcode

<https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>

<sup>19</sup> Income and population estimates: US Census Bureau American Fact Finder, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates Table S2503

[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_17\\_5YR\\_S2503&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_5YR_S2503&prodType=table)

ZRI: Zillow Rental Index Time-Series: Multi-Family, SFR, Condo/Coop, \$ by Zipcode

<https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>

2019 median renter income data: National Low-Income Housing Coalition 2019 median family income estimates

<https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/california>

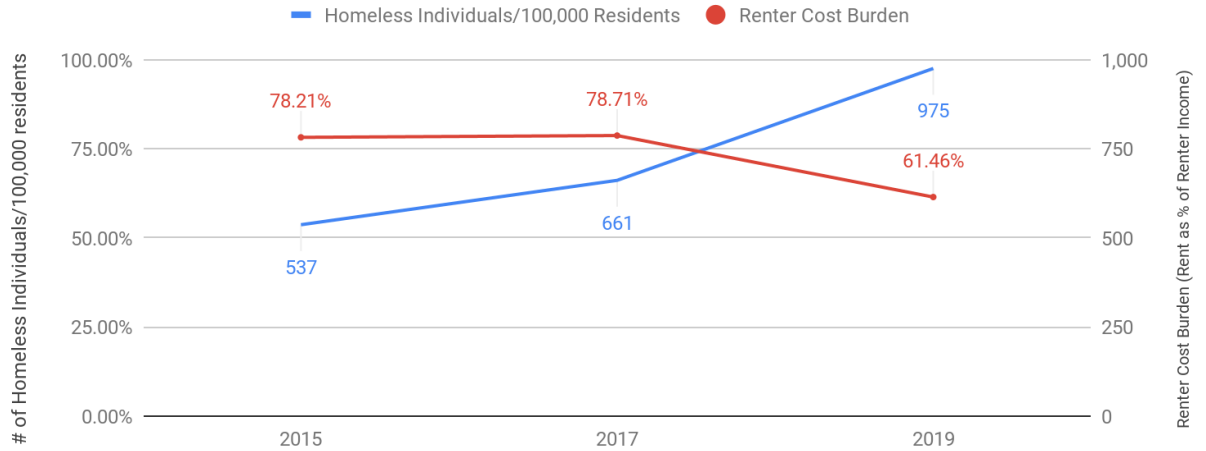
Homelessness Counts: EveryoneHome Point In Time Count Reports (2015-2019)

<http://everyonehome.org/home/continuum-of-care/everyone-counts/>

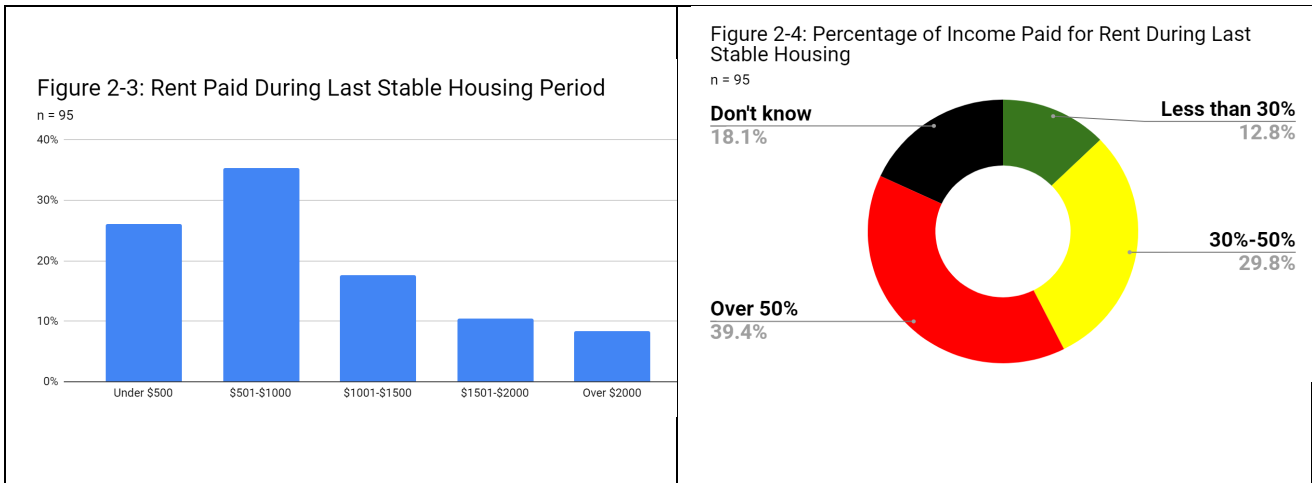
**A Policy Justice Memo for Oakland Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas**

**Oakland Homelessness and Rent 2015-2019**

Statistics from Zillow, ACS 5-year estimates, and HUD



The newly homeless are working-class, formerly incarcerated, elderly, and persons with disabilities with limited means to make a living in the labor market and do not have the resources or networks to move to cheaper locales. The residents of Oakland’s encampments were already living in the cheapest housing available when they lost their housing.<sup>20</sup>



<sup>20</sup>Tsai, Tim (2019) “Standing Together: A Prevention Oriented Approach to Ending Homelessness in Oakland” <https://www.justcities.work/resources> p.17



**ATTACHMENT C**  
**Analysis of Best Practice Cities**

Despite rising rents across the nation, not all cities are experiencing a severe spike in homelessness rates AND cities like Atlanta and Houston are actually reducing their homelessness rates by over 50% in the past few years.

City	2018 Median Rent	Median Rent Change 2011-2018	Median Rent Change 2014-2018	2018 Homeless PIT Count	Homeless Population Change 2011-2018	Homeless Population Change 2014-2018
<b>Atlanta</b>	<b>\$1,538</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>3,076</b>	<b>-55%</b>	<b>-36%</b>
Boston	\$2,606	44%	11%	6,188	13%	3%
Denver	\$2,055	53%	26%	5,317	11%	-20%
Los Angeles	\$2,866	32%	26%	49,955	44%	45%
New York	\$2,291	31%	12%	78,676	54%	16%
Oakland	\$2,959	75%	57%	5,496**	32%	29%
Philadelphia	\$1,213	14%	11%	5,788	-6%	1%
Salt Lake City	\$1,431	32%	20%	1,804	-11%	-16%
San Francisco	\$4,244	44%	19%	6,298	11%	-2%
Seattle	\$2,492	47%	26%	12,112	35%	35%
<b>Houston</b>	<b>\$1,550</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>4,143</b>	<b>-51%</b>	<b>-23%</b>
National	\$1,439	16%	12%	552,830	-11%	-4%

\*Median rent data from Zillow April 2018 ZRI

\*\* Homeless population estimated using HUD Homeless Point-in-Time Counts based on Continuum of Care defined areas.

May include more regions than just the city in question. The Oakland PIT included utilizes the PIT for the Continuum of Care area which includes the rest of Alameda County.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/ahar/#2018-reports>

Just Cities contacted Atlanta and Houston key officials and providers and learned the following:

1. THE critical ingredient that enabled both cities to effectively reduce their homelessness populations was having ONE set of LEADERs organize ONE REGIONAL

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COLLABORATIVE effort that included all public agencies, nonprofit providers, community leaders, and business leaders. In Houston, it was the Mayor who organized the regional collaborative. In Atlanta, it was the Mayor and County officials who collaborated on organizing the regional effort.

2. The single most effective strategy for addressing, solving, and preventing homelessness is housing first. This means providing people with affordable, adequate, and private housing before addressing any other issue.

For example, Atlanta's HAVEN program employs a multi-agency public/private network of property owners, service providers, and nonprofits to find supportive housing for 1,412 households.<sup>21</sup> They have a strong partnership with their local Continuum of Care Agency, Partners for HOME, and leverage outside funds such as Dekalb County mental health services for supportive services.<sup>22</sup>

3. The best way to raise funds is to consolidate, centralize, and streamline all funding streams meant to address homelessness (federal, state, county, local, private, and philanthropy). It's important to have elected and non-elected officials take strong leadership roles in convincing organizations to cooperate with continuum of care efforts.

For example, both Atlanta and Houston reached out to private donors and convinced them to donate to centralized funds instead of individual causes. Atlanta launched the "Home First" program in 2017 and called for the Atlanta business community to donate \$25 million that would be matched with a \$25 million city bond.<sup>23</sup> The funds would be used to build over 500 units of permanent supportive housing. This is just one example of the strategies both cities used to harness the power of their philanthropic communities and direct their energies towards solutions that work.

4. Work with external agencies to provide a broad suite of services to the household. IE: job finding help, linking up with social welfare benefits, life training skills.

For example, Houston's continuum of care partnered with Workforce Solutions, a statewide agency, to provide job training, temporary financial assistance, and career counseling to homeless individuals. From 2016-2019, they served 2,607 individuals and estimate a 45% success rate of getting people into employment or keeping them in employment.<sup>24</sup>

5. Reduce barriers to obtaining subsidized housing and benefits.

For example, Houston Mayor Annise Parker convened an organization to take over the Continuum of Care functions shortly after she became assumed office in 2010. This organization, the Houston Coalition for the Homeless, included official representatives from every major law enforcement, social welfare, and nonprofit agency in the region. They sat

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<sup>21</sup> Atlanta Housing Authority (2019) "Annual Report" <https://www.atlantahousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/HA-Atl-GA-006-2019-MTW-Ann.-Rpt.pdf> p.30

<sup>22</sup> Call with Cathryn Marchmann, Executive Director for Partners for HOME. July 3rd, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> United Way of Greater Atlanta Regional Commission on Homelessness "Homefirst Atlanta 2018 Annual Report"

<sup>24</sup> Public records request to Workforce Solutions pertaining to Income Now program, July 25th, 2019



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together and went through the process of applying for and obtaining permanent housing in Houston and talked across agencies to reduce the burden on applicants.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Gimme Shelter: The California Housing Crisis Podcast “L.A., Houston Mayors on Housing and Homelessness” <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/matt-levin-2/gimme-shelter-the-california-housing-crisis-podcast/e/57477997>