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Oakland in Transition:
A Report on the Talking Transition Survey

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Oakland in Transition: A Report on the Talking Transition Survey

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Executive Summary

In Spring 2023, the City of Oakland launched Talking Transition, a large-scale survey of Oakland residents (n=9,334) regarding their attitudes and preferences in the policy areas of housing and homelessness, crime and public safety, and economic development. The following policy options were the highest rated across all respondents.[1]

Housing and Homelessness

- ❖ Build affordable housing by converting existing structures into living spaces
- ❖ Make it easier for developers to build affordable housing
- ❖ Expand rental assistance programs, including for renters who do not control their lease
- ❖ Provide emergency financial assistance for people facing eviction
- ❖ Provide mental health and substance use support programs
- ❖ Build temporary shelters, such as tiny homes/cabins and safe RV parking sites
- ❖ Invest in programs to provide trash and sanitation services around encampments

Crime and Public Safety

- ❖ Invest in improving the 911 dispatch system, including improving response times by educating the community about what situations require a gun and a badge to respond and what alternative services exist
- ❖ Increase the number of officers by improving graduation rates of police academies
- ❖ Expand programs that send mental health professionals instead of police for non-violent cases or instances involving people experiencing mental health crises
- ❖ Expand programs to reduce guns on the streets and gang-related shootings
- ❖ Invest in models that provide 18 to 25-year-old Oaklanders a one-stop-shop for accessing housing, wraparound services, and job/career training
- ❖ Invest in recreational programs and after-school programs for young Oaklanders
- ❖ Create more affordable, supportive, transitional housing with wraparound services for people who were previously incarcerated
- ❖ Create more employment programs for individuals recently reentering their communities

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[1] For a more detailed analysis, including how responses breakdown by zip code, see the "What does Oakland want?" section below. Appendix A represents additional, concrete recommendations offered by Oakland residents in short answer responses.

Economic Opportunity

❖ Expand programs to connect high school students to paid job training programs

❖ Expand programs to connect high school students to post-secondary education opportunities, including community colleges

❖ Create year-round work opportunities for 18 to 25-year-old Oaklanders

❖ Increase police foot patrols around commercial corridors

❖ Make permitting faster and reduce permitting fees for small businesses

❖ Increase access to affordable childcare and care for seniors for working families

❖ Increase the minimum wage

❖ Protect workers in vulnerable jobs, including care workers (children, seniors), restaurant workers, and those in the "gig" economy (drivers for companies like Uber/Lyft, day laborers, delivery drivers, cleaners, etc.)

While survey results indicate priority areas for many Oaklanders, the purposive sampling techniques used for data collection prevent the use of these data for exact statistical inference. Hence, the authors of this report suggest that recommendations derived from this kind of purposive sampling be confirmed and nuanced through a stratified random sample survey, focus groups with relevant communities, and further consultation with the Talking Transition Design Team and other Oakland stakeholders. The Community to Community Impact Engine (C2C) at Mills College at Northeastern University (MCNU) plans to expand this work through community-partnered research with the City of Oakland and Oakland-based community organizations.

Introduction: Talking Transition

In Spring 2023 the City of Oakland, under the leadership of Mayor Sheng Thao, launched a large-scale survey of Oakland residents. The *Talking Transition* survey sought to engage a diverse segment of Oakland residents around the issues of housing and homelessness, crime and public safety, and economic development. The City aimed to understand the frustrations and preferred policy directions of Oaklanders and use this information to guide strategic programming and investments.

To achieve this goal, the city enlisted the help of a Design Team comprised of eleven prominent community-based organizations (CBOs). These CBOs worked closely with City administrators to define critical areas of inquiry and policy options. They also relied on extensive planning and community engagement, including two town halls in West and East Oakland, to ensure that the survey reached a broad range of Oakland residents. The CBOs helped recruit a team of over 50 youth Data Fellows to lead an extensive canvassing effort in neighborhoods historically underrepresented in the City's decision-making process. Through this initiative, the survey reached nearly 10,000 Oakland residents (n=9,334).

In Summer 2024, the city teamed up with C2C researchers at MCNU to analyze survey results and develop an action agenda for advancing Oakland-based community research. The following report sheds light on the policy preferences of Oaklanders regarding housing and homelessness, community safety, and economic development.

May 2023	City officials and design team develop Talking Transition survey with public input
Aug 2023	Tallking Transition survey disseminated through major canvassing effort & two town halls, generatting nearlly 10,000 responses
Sep 2023	Town Talks hosted at McClymonds High School (9.16.23) & Castlemont High School (9.23.23)
Oct 2023	Oakland Tallking Transition Initatives outlined during "State of the City" address
Mar 2024	City of Oakland & Mills College at Northeastern University partner to anallyze survey data for Oakland in Transition policy report
Jan 2025	City of Oakland & Mills College at Northeastern University partner to anallyze survey data for Oakland in Transition policy report

Figure 1. Talking Transitions Development Timeline

The State of the City

The City of Oakland is known for its rich cultural diversity, vibrant arts scene, and deep history of activism and social justice. It is home to iconic landmarks like Lake Merritt, the Fox Theater, and the Oakland Museum of California. Touted as a cultural mecca, Oakland has a strong legacy of both political activism and the arts. It is the birthplace of the Black Panther Party and the city about which Gertrude Stein famously quipped that the "there, there" of her childhood had disappeared. The city is also recognized for its unique blend of urban and natural environments, with beautiful parks, hills, and waterfronts.
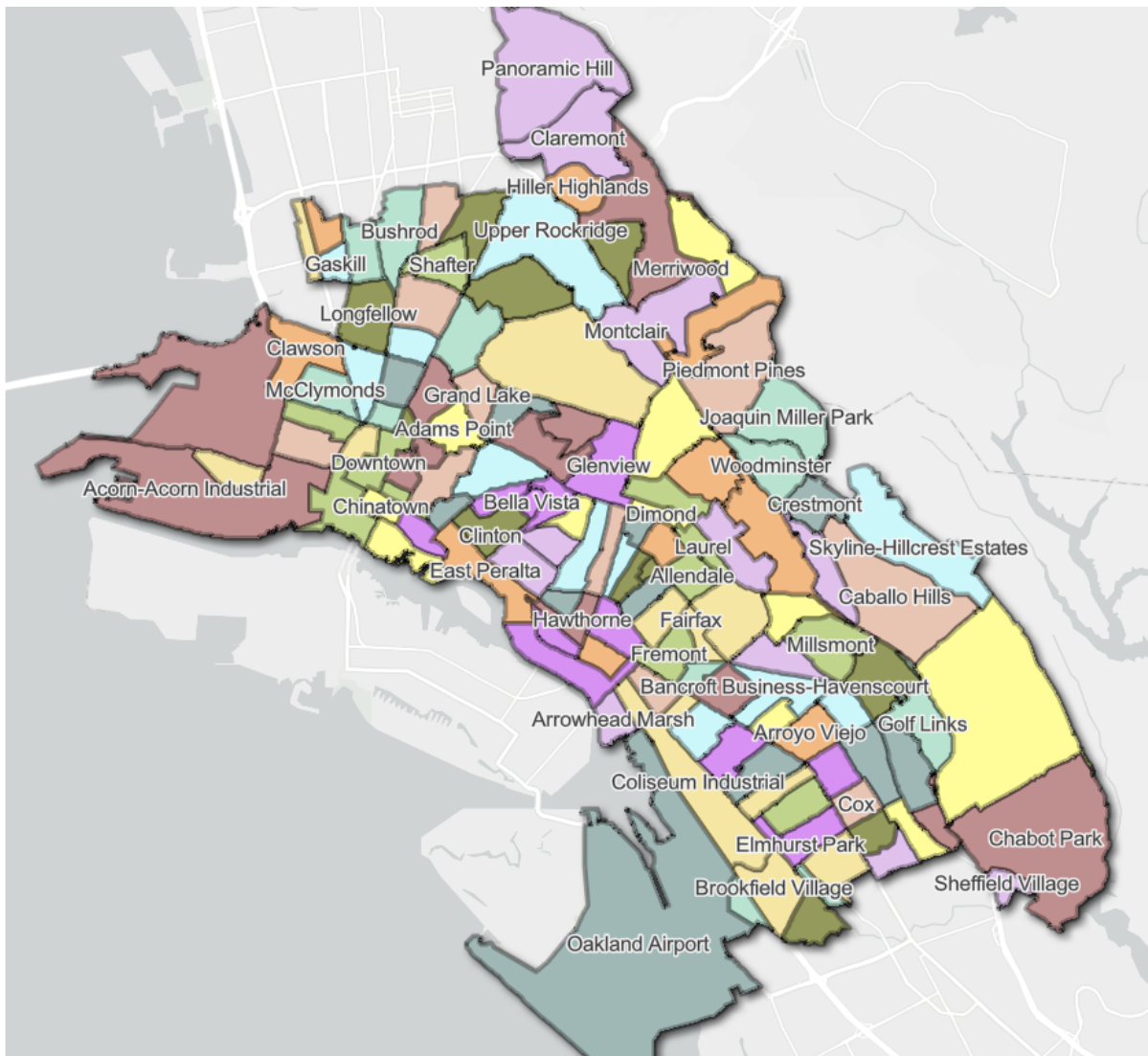
Figure 2. Map of Oakland Neighborhoods

With a population over 440,646, Oakland is the eighth largest city in California and the third largest city in the San Francisco Bay Area (DeBolt 2021; U.S Census 2020). Figure

2 shows a color-coded map of Oakland's neighborhoods, although these are not official boundaries (Leonard 2023). Oakland is bordered by Berkeley to the north, Emeryville and Alameda to the West, and San Leandro to the South. Piedmont, an independent municipality within the boundaries of Oakland, is the gold-colored polygon on the map above.
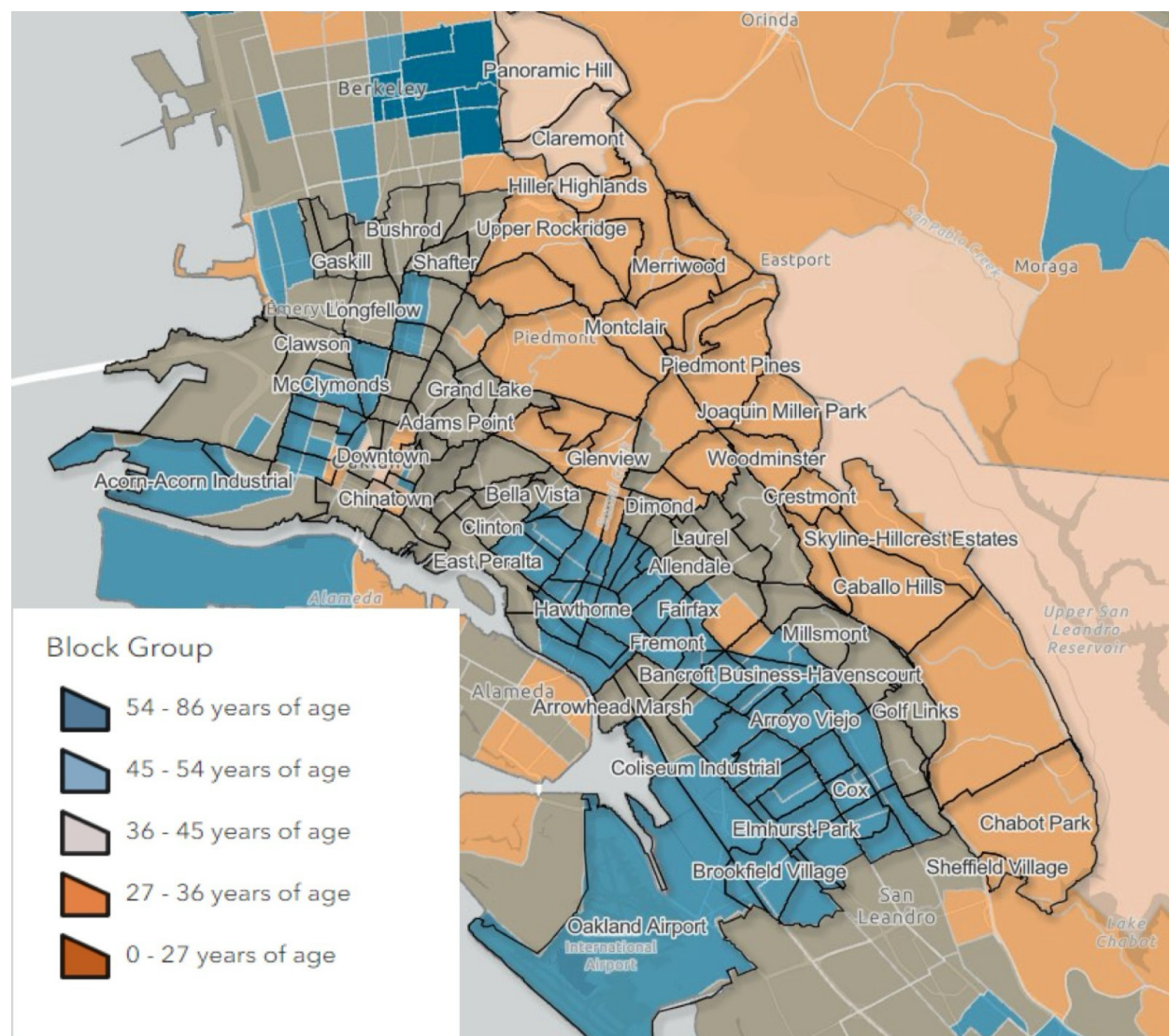
Figure 3. Oakland Block Group Mapping by Age

Figure 3 represents the age of Oakland residents with a median age of 38.7 (U.S. Census 2023) and an average age between 36 and 45. The Oakland Hills have a higher average range (45 - 54), while East Oakland has a lower average range (27 – 36).

Oakland is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse cities in the United States (City of Oakland 2022b), a feature that has only increased over the past 10 years (DeBolt 2021). Figure 4 shows a dot density map, which represents race and ethnicity across

Oakland. The largest racial/ethnic group in Oakland is Hispanic/Latino (28.8%), which grew from 25% in 2010 to surpass Whites (27.2%, up from 25% in 2010) and Black or African American (21.2%, down from 27% in 2010) (U.S. Census 2020). The Black/African American population has trended downward from 47% in the 1980s to 44% in the 1990s largely due to displacement and gentrification (DeBolt 2021; Orenstein, 2022), dropping up to 46% overall (Black Policy Report 2024).
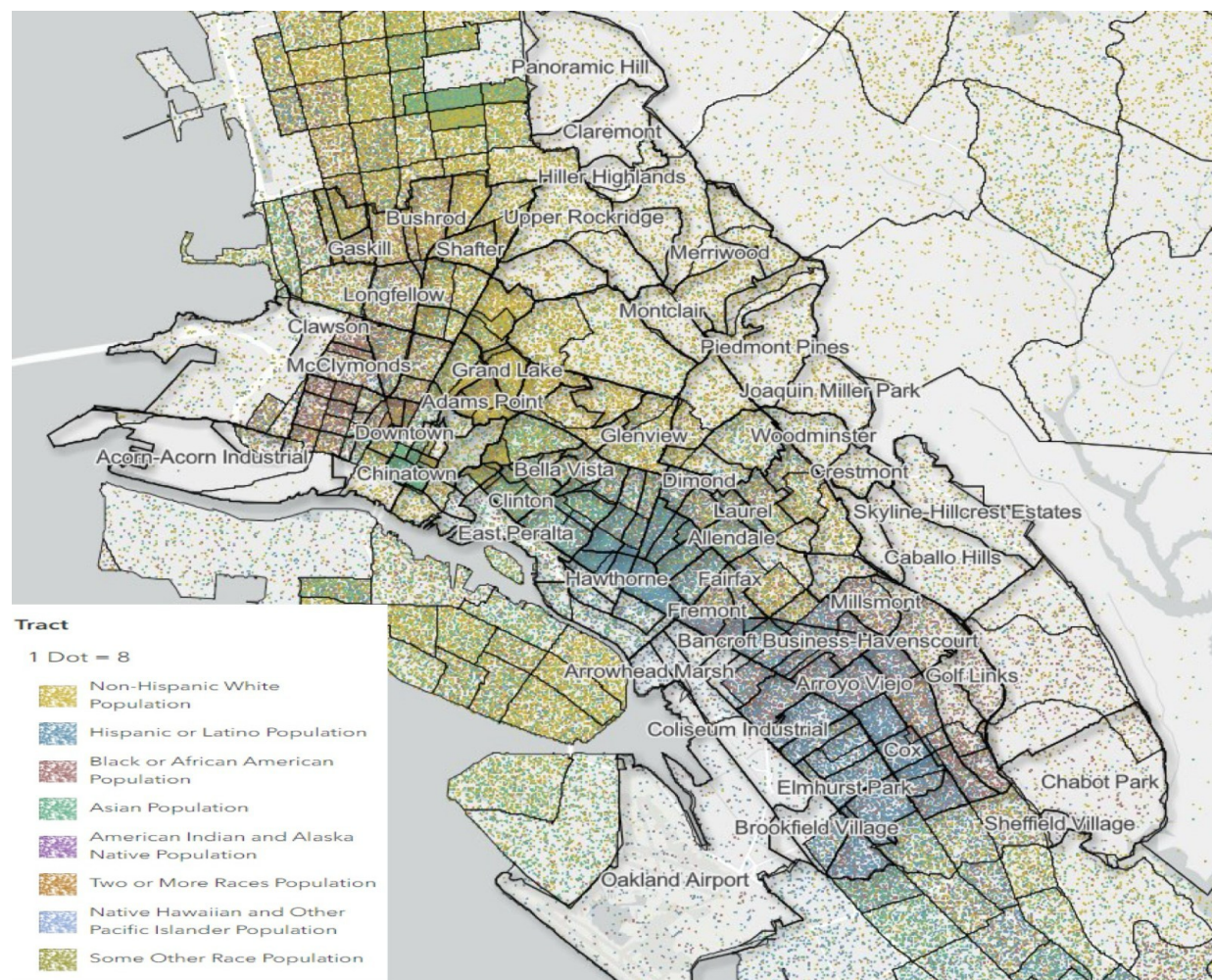
Figure 4. Oakland Race & Ethnicity Dot Density Map

The Asian population decreased slightly from 16% in 2010 to 15% in 2020, although the total number of Asians increased by 7% overall (DeBolt 2021; U.S. Census 2020). The remaining racial/ethnic groups are American Indian (0.31%), Pacific Islander/Hawaiian (0.65%), and "other" (0.76%), which combine to account for less than 2% of Oakland's overall population (U.S. Census 2020).

Current Challenges

Housing and Homelessness

Oakland struggles with providing housing, economic opportunity, and community safety. Over the past decade or more, Oakland has seen rents spike, propelled by gentrification of the downtown area and a housing shortage that has fallen far behind state mandated goals for affordable housing (Gilchrist 2022; Orenstein & BondGraham 2022; Richards 2018). During the same period, Oakland's population experiencing homelessness surged, almost doubling between 2013 and 2019, from 2,132 to 4,071 (City Challenge Oakland 2022a).

Currently the average homeownership rate in Oakland is just under 44%, whereas the state average is nearly 56% (U.S. Census 2023). Although housing costs have been trending downward, the average value of homes in Oakland ranged in 2022 between $800,000 and $900,000 (Leonard 2023). A recent analysis by Redfin (2024a) on the housing market showed that as of July 2024, the average median listing price for homes in Oakland is estimated at $875,000. According to the U.S. Census (2023), the median payment for occupied rental units was $1,838. However, recent market trends among various real-estate firms show the median average monthly rental price ranges between $2,200-$2,500 for a 1-bedroom apartment (Apartments.com 2024; Redfin 2024b; RentCafe 2024; Renthop 2024; Zillow 2024). Furthermore, estimates show that to afford the monthly asking rent in Alameda County, renters need to earn a minimum of $49.42 per hour of full-time employment, which is 3.1 times the minimum wage in Oakland (Mazzella 2023). 48% of households in Oakland are considered rent-burdened, defined as more than 30% of household income going toward rent (City of Oakland 2018).

Gentrification, characterized by the displacement of low-income communities, especially in communities of color, is driven by rising property values, rent increases, and the influx of wealthier residents. Historically, these communities have faced systemic disinvestment and exploitation, including redlining and predatory lending. According to the Urban Displacement Project at UC Berkeley (2018), over 80% of the gentrifying census tracts in the East Bay area were once rated as "hazardous" (red) or "definitely declining" (yellow) by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation that introduced redlining.

Gentrification is associated with forced evictions, the dismantling of community networks, and increased social and health inequities. Rather than viewing these processes as the inevitable consequence of development, gentrification reinterprets these outcomes because of unjust economic policies and insufficient protections for vulnerable populations. For example, according to Poblet (2024), corporate investors "snatched up a shocking 42% of homes lost to foreclosure, 93% of which are in the flatlands" and home to the largest Black and Latino populations in Oakland. Cities like

New York and Los Angeles are consistently used as prime examples of gentrification (Kamin 2019; Nguyen 2022). But between 2013-2017, according to the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, the Oakland-San Francisco metro areas have accounted for the highest surge in "high-intensity" gentrification (31.5%), outpacing all other major metropolitan areas (Richardson et al. 2020).
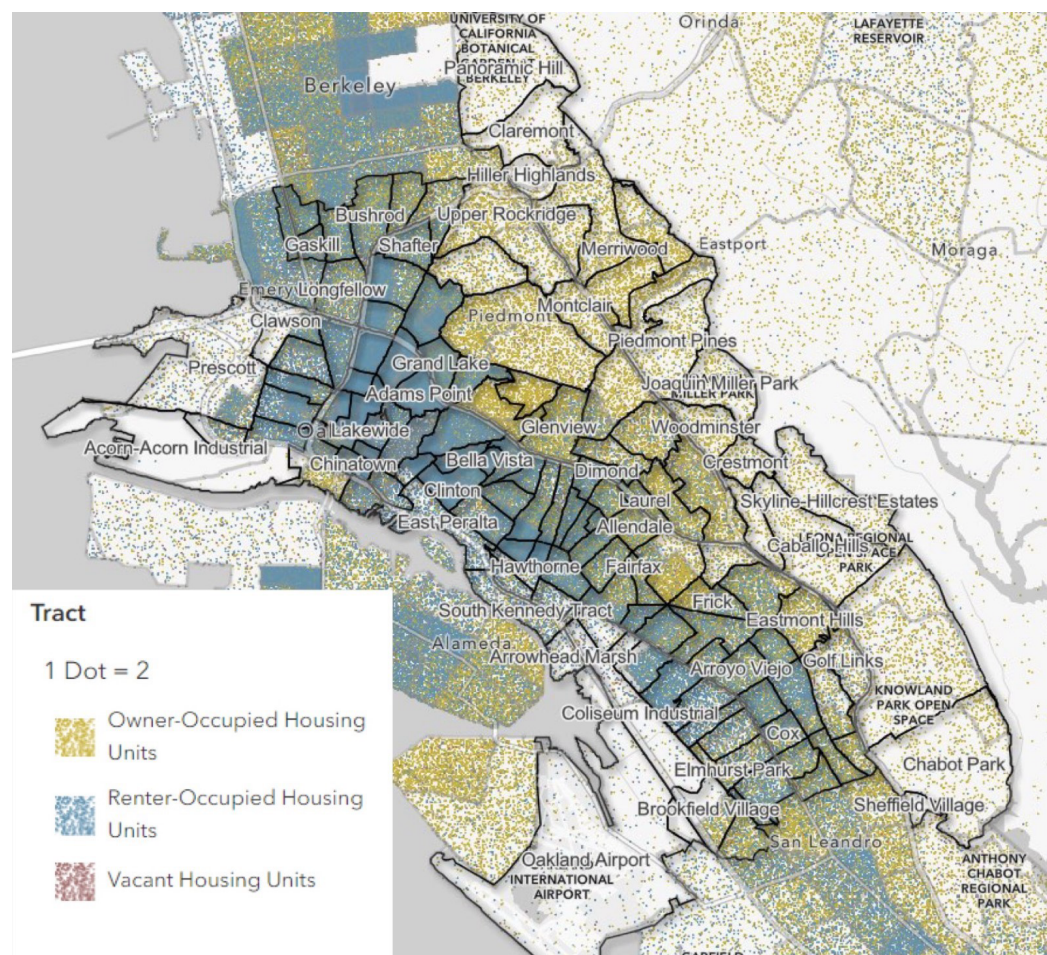
According to the World Population Review (2024), there are over 170,000 housing units occupied in Oakland with 58% of housing units being renter occupied and 42% being homeowner occupied. Figure 5 shows a dot density map which displays owner, renter, and vacant demographics among Oakland residents. Renters, represented by the blue dots, live primarily in Downtown and West Oakland. In North Oakland and the Oakland Hills, by contrast, residents are primarily homeowners.

Figure 5. Oakland Housing Occupancy Dot Density Map (the number of vacant housing units are minimal compared to other types and are therefore not visible at this scale)

In addition to gentrification, rapidly rising home prices and rents lead to homelessness. Since 2019, the population of people experiencing homelessness has increased by 24% in Alameda County with Oakland accounting for nearly half of the unhoused population (Ravani 2022). As of 2022, there are an estimated 5,055 unhoused people in the Oakland area and over 9,000 in Alameda County (EveryOneHome 2022, 2024). The actual number may be higher due to the displacement of unhoused people during COVID (the survey was last administered in 2019) and the survey's reliance on people enrolled in or observed at shelters at the time of the count (EveryOneHome 2022, 2024).

Approximately 80% of Oakland's homeless population is unsheltered, with 55% having been homeless for more than a year. This issue impacts some neighborhoods and racial

groups more than others. For example, 70% of people experiencing homelessness are Black, even though Blacks represent only 24% of Oakland's population overall. People with disabilities, mental illnesses, and veterans also face heightened risks of homelessness (City Challenge Oakland 2022a). Meanwhile, West Oakland receives the most service requests related to homeless encampments. Since the 2022 point-in-time count, homelessness showed a 3% drop in their overall count, in part due to a 19% increase in sheltered homelessness and an 11% drop in unsheltered homelessness (EveryOneHome 2024).

Oakland spends an estimated $120 million each year on addressing homelessness, far short of the $2.46 billion in upfront capital investment and $2 billion in operating costs required over a 20-year period (Roseman 2022, 43). Currently, that figure is well above the City's allocation of $3.63 million to City Administrators Office Homelessness Division's (FY 2022-23) and even the City's entire operating budget of $1.7 billion (City of Oakland 2023a; Orenstein 2022b). However, true estimates of designated funding to address homelessness are difficult to assess because these services are not included in the city's budget (City of Oakland 2023a).

Economic Development

Meanwhile, economic opportunities have staggered, worsened by the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. Once noted for its affordability, the sharp rise in cost of living has led to a steady outmigration of residents, businesses, and investors, leaving office vacancies in the Downtown district at an all-time high of 30% in 2023 (Waxmann 2024). Currently, the city faces a historic budget deficit of $360 million (Wolfe 2024a) and may file for bankruptcy in the coming months.

Oakland's median household income is $93,146 and the average household income is above $145,0000. Nearly half (47.8%) of Oakland households reported an income of at least $100,000, with the largest portion (23.7%) reporting an income of $200,000 or more (U.S. Census 2020). Figure 6 shows a color-coded demographic map representing household income. The average income ranges from $48,600 - $84,000. Oakland Hills and North Oakland households represent the highest incomes at $121,000 - $200,000. Throughout East Oakland are the lowest incomes ranging from $12,400 - $48,000.

Figure 6. Oakland Block Group Mapping by Income

In 2017, California made efforts to increase economic investment opportunities for lower-income communities by implementing place-based policies, such as Opportunity Zones (OZs). Currently, Oakland has an estimated 30 census tracts designated as opportunity zones throughout the city (City of Oakland 2022a, see figure 7). Through OZs, investors may receive several financial taxes and capital incentives for long-term investments. Case studies on opportunity have found that OZ census tracts are more likely to show an increase in investor funding than non-OZ tracts (Kurban et al. 2022). However, much of the research shows that gentrification within OZ tracts spurs investment and demonstrates a "clear" pattern between gentrification and the outmigration of lower-income community members from OZs (Kurban et al. 2022). According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (2022), OZs may have been a well-intentioned effort to expand economic opportunity. Still, the results may not be beneficial for current residents and may force low-income residents to leave due to the financial implications of intense gentrification.
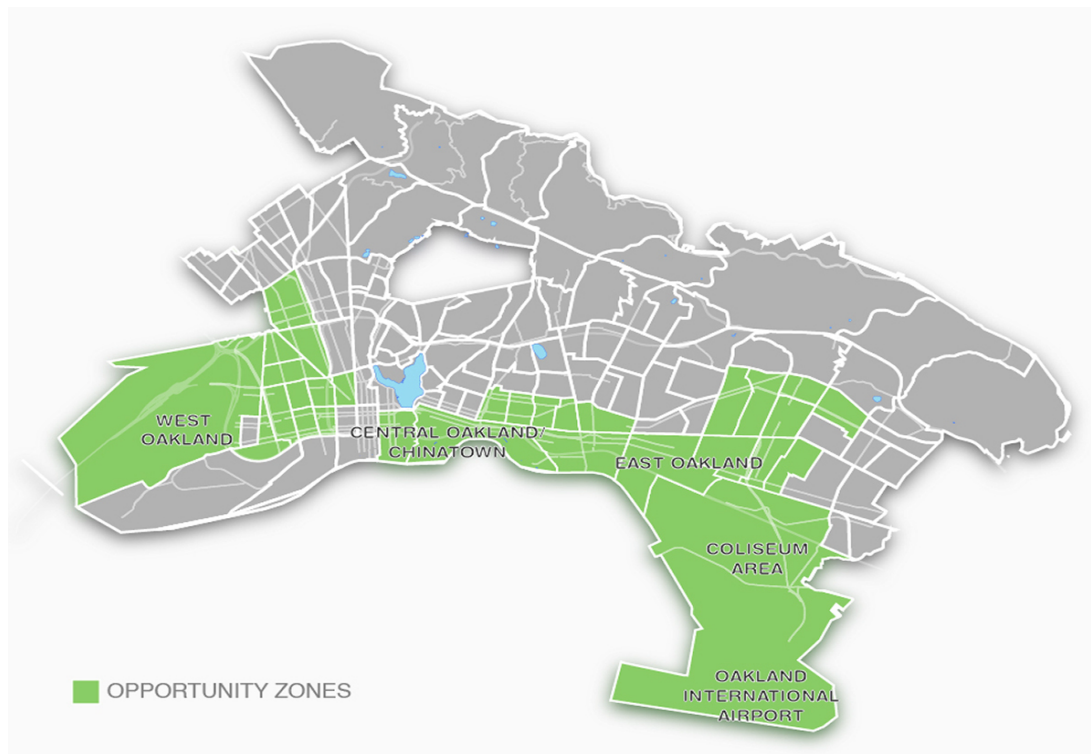
Figure 7. Oakland's 30 census tracts that have been designated Opportunity Zones

Community Safety

Financial insecurity and a poor economic outlook have led to a sharp increase in violent crime in Oakland. The Oakland Police Department recorded 134 homicides in 2021 – the highest number since 2012 and a nearly 80% increase since 2018 – leading the City's Violent Crime Index to rise by 18% over the past decade (City Challenge Oakland 2022b). Addressing public safety has become the "center of Oakland politics over the

past several years" (Echeverria 2024). From 2022 to 2023, overall reported crimes rose 18%. While homicide rates in Oakland since 2022 have stayed consistent, there was an increase other rates of reported crimes, such as assaults (21%), robbery (38%), larceny (17%), auto theft (45%), and burglaries (23%) (Bollag & Hernandez 2024; Echeverria 2024). In 2023, the State of California partnered with the City of Oakland to increase police presence and surveillance. The State deployed the California Highway Patrol to assist city law enforcement and helped install 480 Flock cameras, automated license place scanning cameras that can identify that have been stolen or used in the commission of a crime (Newsom 2024a). Since February 2024, Oakland has seen a 33% drop in crime overall. Homicides are down 17%, assaults 7%, rapes 21% and burglaries 50% (Rosenberg 2024b). Additionally, the State of California recently signed an agreement that would use National Guard attorneys to prosecute cases in Alameda County (Newsom 2024b).

Business recovery from shelter-in-place policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw over 400 businesses close, and 2,000 businesses lose licensure, has been hampered by burglaries, vandalism, and safety concerns for employees and customers (Schmahmann et al. 2021). Personal service (30%), retail (30%), and food/beverage (29%) industries make up a sizable portion of businesses in Oakland (Schmahmann et al. 2021) and are among the most severely impacted by crime. Notably, the cannabis industry, a major industry in Oakland, estimated $5 million in losses in the month of November 2021 due to crime (Debolt 2022). Additionally, Koreatown Northgate Community Benefit District (KONO) found that 94% of more than 160 surveyed businesses reported crime and 59% considered closing or moving their businesses elsewhere (Lin 2023).

Due to mounting frustration, over 200 businesses closed for two hours in protest of the City's perceived lack of concern about public safety in commercial districts (Ramos 2023). Some of Oakland's largest corporations have taken concerns about safety into their own hands. Blue Shield of California, Clorox, Kaiser Permanente, and Pacific Gas & Electric announced a joint $10 million-dollar security program to protect employees (Kaiser Permanente 2024).

Oakland is caught in a perfect storm of rising housing costs and gentrification, business disinvestment, lack of investor confidence, and urgent concerns about public safety. The Downtown Oakland Specific Plan aims to reverse these trends by increasing housing, revitalizing local businesses, enhancing public safety, and modernizing Downtown (City of Oakland 2024b; Larson 2024; Rosenberg 2024a). Additionally, recent reports show that crime has dropped 33% overall in the City of Oakland due to strategic investment in evidence-based violence prevention initiatives, such as Operation Ceasefire (Kennedy et al. 2001; Rosenberg 2024b).

Methodology

The Talking Transition survey aimed to understand Oakland residents' vision for the future of their city and translate that vision into concrete policy objectives that city administrators could implement. The City of Oakland hired HR&A Advisors to facilitate this community-led process. Using participatory design methods, HR&A worked with city officials and the Design Team to narrow onto three major policy areas – housing and homelessness, community safety, and economic development – and articulate corresponding policy options. The survey comprised 10 multiple-choice questions, and survey respondents could select up to three policy options in response to each question.

Outreach and Engagement

The survey used purposive sampling, a non-probabilistic sampling technique, to conduct strategic outreach to Oakland residents. Survey participants were recruited through social media, town halls, and street canvassing, especially targeting neighborhoods typically underrepresented in Oakland's policy agenda. Participants took the survey either online or on paper.

The City and the Design Team made a strong effort to engage residents who face barriers to digital access and who are historically underrepresented in policy decision making. They disseminated the survey on social media platforms and held two town halls. The City and Design Team also hired Youth Data Fellows to do extensive door-to-door canvassing. These Data Fellows collected an additional 2,000 paper surveys, boosting participation from residents with low access to digital platforms.

Town halls were held in West Oakland and East Oakland to target areas that are historically underserved and underrepresented. Around 50 youth Data Fellows gathered on September 16, 2023, at McClymonds High School before canvassing West Oakland. Youth were high school and early college-aged individuals recruited from 11 youth-serving organizations in the Oakland community and trained to conduct community canvassing. The event served as an opportunity for them to develop a peer network, while also acting as a launch point to engage directly with West Oakland residents. They gathered paper and digital surveys with paper surveys later digitized manually.

The second town hall was held on September 23, 2023, at Castlemont High School in East Oakland and attracted over 140 attendees, mostly local residents. The event included in-depth discussions of issues such as housing and public safety and provided opportunities for direct interaction between residents and local officials. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and insights on topics like housing, homelessness, public safety, and economic development, providing qualitative data to complement quantitative survey findings. The town halls and street canvassing efforts

were crucial for including a broad cross-section of Oakland communities, ensuring that diverse perspectives were included in the survey results.

Analytic strategy

The report used several techniques to analyze the survey data. Tabulations were done on the survey data overall to identify the policy options that respondents favored most. They were also done on self-reported demographic information (age, gender, race and ethnicity, housing status, income, and zip code) to determine if there are significant differences among respondents. Second, a thematic content analysis was conducted on the short answer responses to the "other, please specify" sections after each of the ten multiple choice questions. Responses were first open-coded and grouped into different themes based on response types. These responses were then counted and select quotations were chosen to illustrate popular policy options. Finally, spatial analysis techniques such as dot density and color-coded demographic maps were used to visually represent the distribution of respondent demographics and the distribution of support for certain city policy priorities across different regions of Oakland.

Limitations

Despite the sizable response rate, Talking Transition encountered challenges surrounding outreach capacity, language barriers, and the representativeness of survey data regarding race and ethnicity, age, and income levels. The survey team aimed to reach diverse communities by enlisting youth Data Fellows to canvas neighborhoods, although this outreach effort presented its own logistical challenges. The survey was translated into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Arabic, reflecting the largest non-English speaking populations across Oakland. While the survey design and recruitment methods indicate that the survey should not be viewed as statistically representative of Oakland, we suggest that the survey offers valuable information about the priorities of many Oaklanders, which can be explored through further stratified random sample surveys and focus groups.

Who responded to the survey?

A total of 9,334 individuals took the Talking Transition survey (see Table 1). Most respondents fell within the 25 to 64 age range with the largest group (2,372, 25%) in the 35-44 range. 5,107 respondents identified as female and 3,572 identified as male. 336 people chose not to disclose their gender, and 259 respondents identified as non-binary or gender nonconforming, while 60 chose "gender identity not listed here." In terms of income, 2,889 survey respondents (31%), the largest category, indicated an annual income of more than $125,000, which is above the mean income of $91,000 for Oakland. 972 respondents (10%) reported making less than $25,000. Additionally, 1,591 respondents chose not to report their income.

Most respondents either owned (4,722, 51%) or rented (3,212, 34%) their home. 768 respondents lived with someone without paying rent and 320 rented a living space or garage within a house or apartment. Furthermore, 123 respondents identified as unhoused or in non-permanent housing, such as a car or tent. The most prevalent racial and ethnic demographics were White (3,597), Hispanic (1426), Black or African American (2,157), and Asian (1,029). Other ethnic groups included Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (75) and American Indian or Alaska Native (70). Of the remaining respondents, 491 identified as multiracial and 488 respondents selected "other".

Table 1. Respondent Count Demographics

Variable	Frequency	
	N	%
Respondents	9334	
Age		
<18	794	8.5
18-24	516	5.5
25-34	1474	15.8
35-44	2372	25.4
45-54	1738	18.6
55-64	1139	12.2
65-74	837	8.9
75-84	413	4.4
85+	51	0.5
Race/Ethnicity		
White (Non-Hispanic)	3,597	38.5
Hispanic or Latinx	1,426	15.3
Black or African American	2,157	23.1
Asian	1,029	11.0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	75	0.8
American Indian or Native Alaskan	70	0.7
Multi-racial	491	5.3

Other	488	5.2
Gender Identity		
Male	3,572	38.3
Female	5,107	54.7
Non-binary	259	2.8
Unlisted	60	0.6
No Response	336	3.6
Housing		
Homeowner	4,722	50.6
Renting Apt	3,212	34.4
Renting a Room	320	3.4
Living with someone, but does not pay rent	768	8.2
Unhoused	123	1.3
Other	189	2.0
Income		
Less than $25,000	972	10.4
$25,000 - $39,999	661	7.1
$40,000 - $59,999	786	8.4
$60,000 - $74,999	662	7.1
$75,000 - $99,999	891	9.5
$100,000 - $124,999	882	9.4
$125,000+	2,889	30.9
No response	1,591	17.0

Neighborhood Engagement

The survey captures responses from Oaklanders in different areas of the city. Respondents were from nearly 100 different zip codes, although most (97%) were concentrated in 14 zip codes with 9300 responses overall (see Table 2).

Table 2. Zip Code & Neighborhood Count Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	
	N	%
Respondents	9,300	
Zip Code (*Neighborhood*)		
94601 (East Oakland, Fruitvale, San Antonio)	774	8.3
94602 (Glenview, Allendale, Upper Fruitvale)*	774	8.3
94603 (Elmhurst, Leona Heights)	510	5.5
94605 (Seminary, Maxwell Park, Oakmore)	1,086	11.6
94606 (Chinatown, Jingletown, Deep East Oakland)	579	6.2
94607 (West Oakland)	599	6.4
94608 (Emeryville, West Oakland)*	474	5.1
94609 (Temescal, North Oakland)	502	5.4
94610 (Grand Lake, Lakeshore, Cleveland Heights)*	737	7.9
94611 (Montclair)*	797	8.5
94612 (Downtown Oakland)	434	4.6
94618 (Rockridge)*	504	5.4
94619 (Redwood Heights, Glenview)	759	8.2
94621 (Coliseum, Oakland International Airport area)	453	4.8
Other	318	3.4

* Several zip codes overlap with Piedmont or Emeryville, which are separate municipalities. Survey participation of residents outside of Oakland is expected to be low.

The single largest group of respondents came from the 94605-zip code, comprised of the Seminary, Maxwell Park, and Oakmore neighborhoods and accounting for 11.6% of all survey respondents. Five other neighborhoods had roughly the same representation. Respondents from 94611 (Montclair) accounted for 8.5% of survey respondents, while 94602 (Glenview, Allendale, and Upper Fruitvale) and 94601 (East Oakland, Fruitvale, and San Antonio) were equal, with 8.3% of respondents. 8.2% of respondents were from 94619 (Redwood Heights and Glenview) and an additional 7.9% of respondents were from 94610 (Grand Lake, Lakeshore, and Cleveland Heights).

Lower but still significant representation came from 94607 (West Oakland) at 6.4% and 94606 (Chinatown, Jingletown, and Deep East Oakland) at 6.2%. Respondents from 94603 (Elmhurst, Leona Heights) comprised 5.5% of respondents, and 94618 (Rockridge) and 94609 (Temescal, North Oakland) comprised 5.4%. 94608 (Emeryville, West Oakland) and 94621(Coliseum and Oakland International Airport area) made up 5.1% and 4.8% of responses, respectively. Lastly, 94612 (Downtown Oakland) accounted for the smallest number of survey respondents with 4.6%. All other zip codes combined for 3.4% of total responses.

What do Oaklanders want?

Residents were asked to select their top three policy preferences in response to each of ten questions in the thematic areas of housing and homelessness, community safety, and economic opportunity. The following is a report on citywide and zip-code specific results.

Housing and homelessness

The survey affirmed the City's goal to house all Oaklanders. However, a sharp rise in the cost of living and a shortage of affordable housing options have made it increasingly difficult for low- and middle-income residents to keep up with rising rents and home prices. Furthermore, a dramatic increase in homelessness presents additional challenges. Survey respondents were asked what policy priorities would help to house all Oaklanders, protect renters and homeowners, and support people experiencing homelessness.

What should the city prioritize to house all Oaklanders?

Oakland has a duty to house its citizens and offer affordable housing for those who are low income. —Oakland resident

What should the City prioritize to house all Oaklanders?

Convert buildings into affordable housing — 4709

Ensure all affordable housing projects are built by Oaklanders receiving a living wage with benefits — 3947

Make it easier for developers to build housing priced at average or above-average rent — 3243

Invest in programs to protect renters and prevent displacement — 3011

Advocate to the County to expand housing services for those leaving jail or recently hospitalized for mental health/substance use — 2631

Advocate to the State to build more temporary and transitional housing for unhoused residents — 2275

Make it easier for developers to build affordable housing — 2107

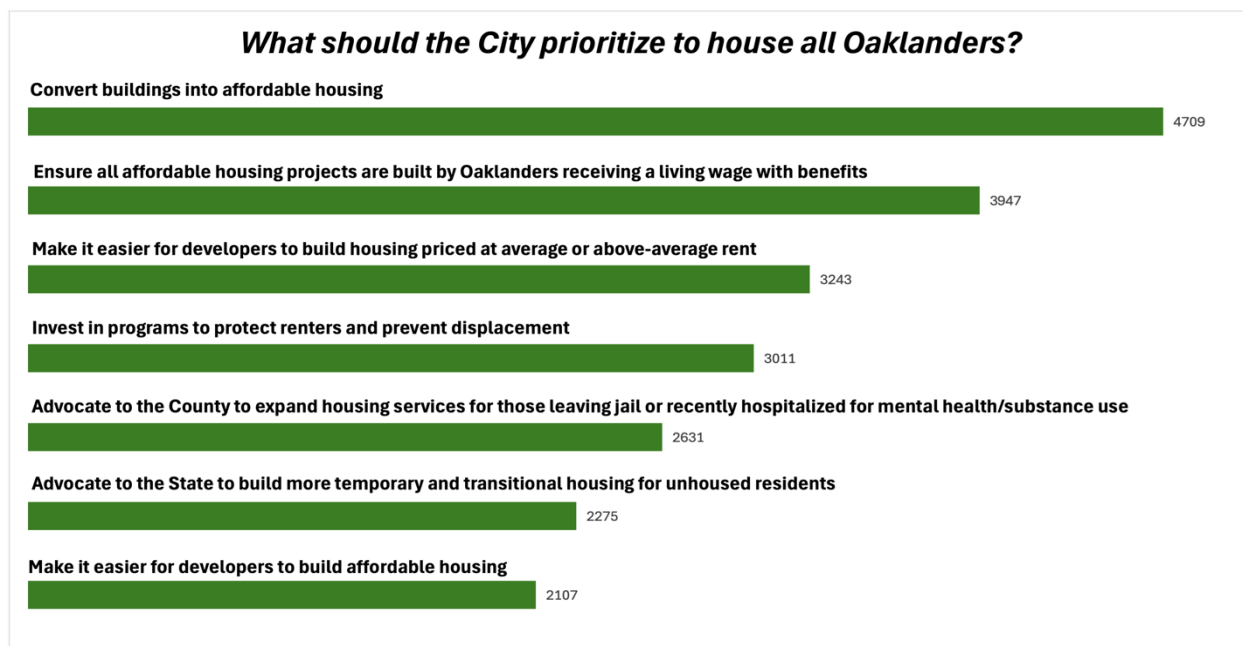*Figure 8. Number of Responses to Priorities for Housing all Oaklanders*

Increasing the stock of affordable housing units was the clear priority across Oakland, although how to accomplish this goal is complex (see figure 8). 50% of all respondents advocated for converting existing buildings into affordable housing, which presents a win-win solution by boosting the housing supply while reducing blighted, abandoned,

and underutilized structures. 43% of all respondents indicated that the city should streamline permitting and reduce fees for developers to build new affordable housing. While this option was popular overall, wealthier areas composed of the neighborhoods from 94619, 94605, 94610, 94602, 94618, 94607, 94611 zip codes showed the strongest support for easing restrictions and creating incentives for this kind of development (see figure 8).
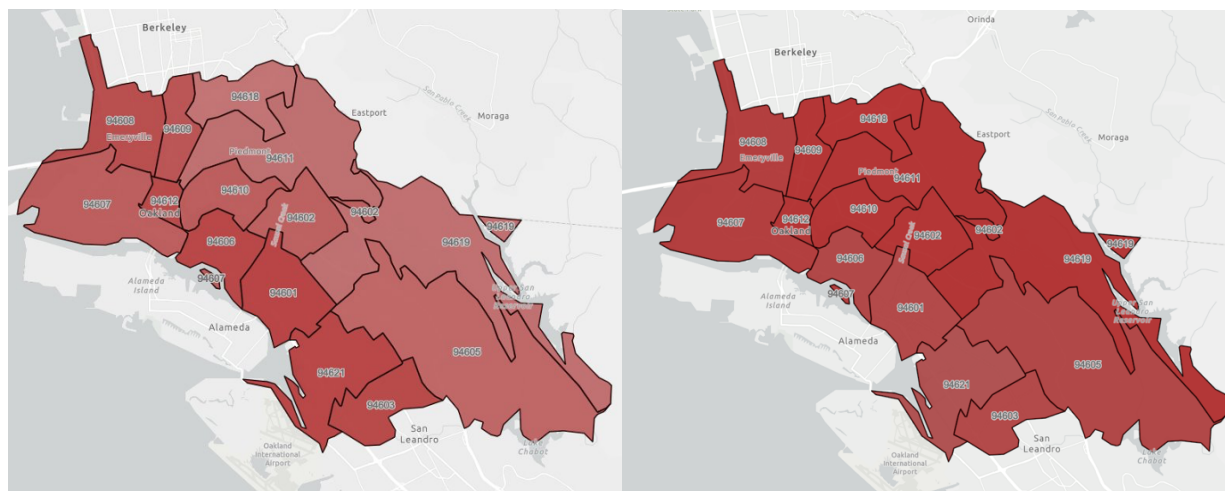
Figure 9. Make it Easier for Developers to Build Affordable Housing (left) and Invest in Programs to Protect Renters and Prevent Displacement (right)

Meanwhile, respondents from lower-income areas within the 94608, 94609, 94612, 94601, 94606, 94603, 94621 postal codes (see figure 9) demonstrated a stronger preference for protecting renters and preventing displacement (29% support overall).

Oakland residents also championed programs and services that provide housing for people experiencing homelessness and prevent people in vulnerable situations from losing their homes and ending up on the streets. 35% of survey participants citywide advocated for state support for more temporary and transitional housing for Oakland's unhoused populations and 32% of respondents prioritized expanding Alameda County housing services for individuals transitioning from jail, hospitals, and mental health and substance use facilities.

Increasing the stock of affordable housing units was the clear priority across Oakland

Two policy options that were de-prioritized by survey participants were to make it easier for developers to build housing priced at or above market value (24%) and to ensure that affordable housing projects are built by Oaklanders receiving livable wages (23%). While these options were the less popular, the number of survey respondents in favor of them is still significant,

suggesting that many Oaklanders are in favor of creating more housing by any means necessary and keeping development in Oakland "in-house."

In the short answer section, respondents offered additional ideas about how to increase the supply of affordable housing, whether by streamlining permitting for ADU construction, densifying neighborhoods, eliminating renter protections for small landlords, preventing corporations from flipping houses and driving up rents, creating programs for low-income residents to become homeowners, and converting existing space in commercial districts or underutilized and abandoned properties into incentivizing rental and housing units. One respondent offered a suite of ideas: "Implement a land value tax to encourage the best use of land and deter speculators, heavily penalize (25%) tax on all empty and abandoned parcels, and create a housing insurance plan to guarantee housing to renters without forcing landlords to keep tenants."

Respondents also commented on housing solutions for the unhoused, many suggesting that mental health and substance use issues are a root cause of homelessness and advocating for holistic, individualized approaches to the situation: "Deal with the mental health crisis that is the antecedent to 95% of the homelessness we see. Even those addicted to drugs were/are frequently mentally ill and had to manage it on their own all these years. We can change the path they traveled, so we need to find a place to put these people that is humane and kind but also keeps them safe and off the streets." Another respondent wrote, "Survey unhoused and find out what individuals refuse housing or services. Find out what individuals are homeless due to financial hardship, Domestic Violence, or other circumstances out of their control. and would like housing and other services. Based on that information we should implement two different strategies. One strategy for the individuals that refuse services. A second strategy for those that want the services."

How should the city protect renters and make sure people can stay in their homes?

"More housing is the only way to bring the cost of rent down long term. Rental assistance programs and emergency financial assistance are good temporary measures, but long term, the only way to control the price in my opinion is to add to the supply of housing." —Oakland Resident

How should the City protect renters and make sure people can stay in their homes?

Build new affordable rental housing
5163

Expand rental assistance programs, including for renters who do not control their lease
4488

Protect against housing discrimination, including for race, incarceration history, and eviction history
3561

Provide emergency financial assistance for people facing eviction
3526

Provide legal services to people facing eviction
3188
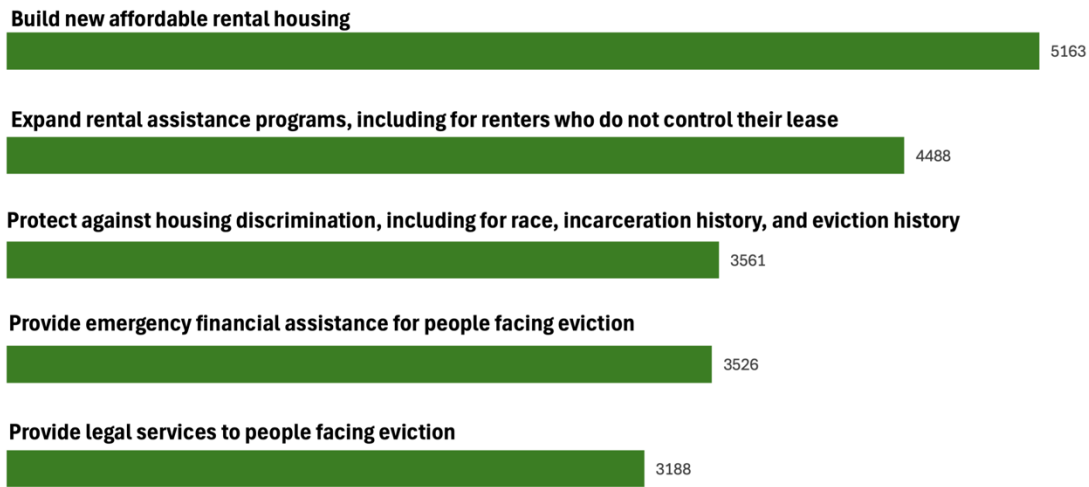
Figure 10. Number of Responses to Priorities to Protect Renters

Once again, Oakland residents viewed increasing the stock of affordable housing as the best way to protect renters and keep people in their homes (see figure 10). While 55% of all survey participants prioritized building new affordable rental housing, this option was slightly de-prioritized among neighborhoods within the 94601 94603,94606, 94608 flatland neighborhoods (see figure 11), that tended to prioritize emergency financial assistance for people facing eviction and protections against housing discrimination (both received 38% support citywide) more than their neighbors in the hills (see figure 11). After building new affordable housing, expanding rental assistance programs received the second most support, with 48% of all respondents selecting this option.

> *"Reconsider the term 'Affordable' in this city that has seen such extreme displacement and income and wealth inequality. Funding equally in each city district for schools, services, and resources. Stronger controls limiting excessive investment properties by large corporations and excessive profiteering. Support neighborhoods and local ownership to ensure peace and comfort."*
>
> **—Oakland Resident**

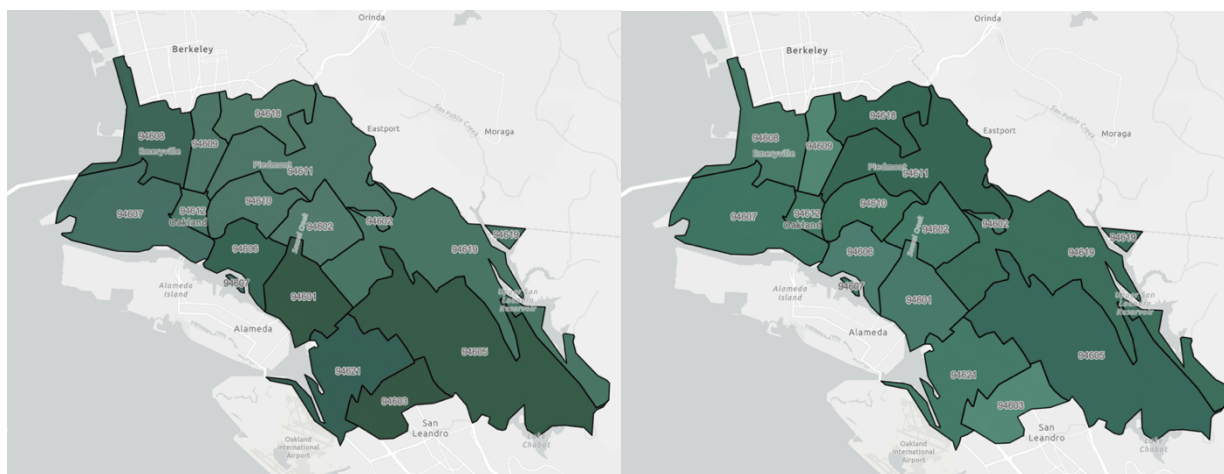*Figure 11. Build new affordable rental housing (left) and Provide emergency assistance for people facing eviction (right)*

Providing access to legal services for people facing eviction, while the least popular option overall, was still selected as important by 34% of respondents. While affordable housing is expected to lower rents overall, creating mechanisms for short-term relief when people lose their job or face a family emergency is therefore viewed as an important way to increase housing stability and prevent displacement that can lead to other problems.

In the short answer section, concerns about non-corporate landlords emerged. 15 respondents discussed the need to protect small landlords to incentivize construction of ADUs. As one resident put it, "Support small quantity housing providers to keep them interested in continuing to provide housing rather than forcing them to continue to house renters who don't pay or who damage property or who harm or threaten those providers or other renters." Other respondents suggested incentive programs that would allow landlords to make property improvements without raising rents. Overall, these respondents emphasized the need to balance renter protections with the stress and disincentives this creates for landlords. One resident advocated for raising federal funds to provide emergency relief, removing the burden from city taxpayers, and another endorsed the value of mediation services in landlord-tenant disputes. Several respondents advocated for higher taxes on corporate landlords and restrictions on house flippers, Airbnb, and related conglomerates.

How should the city support people experiencing homelessness?

Regarding homelessness in Oakland, survey respondents showed the strongest support for mental health and substance use services (58% citywide) and building more temporary shelters (47% citywide), with roughly the same level of preference across Oakland zip codes. Of all respondents, 40% also advocated for improving the conditions of current encampments by investing in trash and sanitization services. Also, 35%

24

emphasized the need for programs to support people experiencing homelessness regardless of legal status and 33% advocated for the county to expand wrap-around services. Only 16% of respondents advocated for removing fees and fines for "illegal parking" that would affect people living in their cars (see figure 12).

How should the City support people experiencing homelessness?

Provide mental health and substance use support programs
5448

Build temporary shelters, such as tiny homes/cabins and safe RV parking sites
4373

Invest in programs to provide trash and sanitation services around encampments
3740

Ensure programs to support people experiencing homelessness are available to all regardless of their legal status.
3388

Advocate to the County to expand wrap-around services at existing supportive housing sites
3087

Remove illegal parking fees and fines for people living in their cars
1516

Figure 12. Number of Responses to Priorities for the Support of People Experiencing Homelessness

In the short answer section, 28 survey respondents mentioned expanding services and housing solutions for Oakland's unhoused population. Some advocated for formalizing current encampments by building public infrastructure for them like sewage, community showers, and basic equipment. Others advocated the tiny homes model that has taken off in other cities with sizeable, unhoused populations like Los Angeles, Houston, and Dallas. These respondents believed that semi-formalizing encampments or constructing tiny homes and tiny neighborhoods would enhance security for people experiencing homelessness and surrounding communities and that such measures should come with wraparound mental health and substance use services. Frustration was also noticeable in the short answers with 36 respondents advocating draconian and likely counterproductive solutions, such as enforcing vagrancy laws and removing encampments.

Community safety

Oakland has grappled with issues related to community safety, challenges that further intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the City works to recover and rebuild, community-led safety services that address the root causes of violence are critical to fostering well-being for all Oakland residents. The survey asked respondents to identify policy priorities regarding neighborhood safety and beautification, improving policing,

and enhancing support for youth and previously incarcerated individuals. Responses focused on increasing the size of the police force, improving 911 response times, and getting tougher on crime. The top policy priority across all three questions in this section was to strengthen law enforcement, which also came through clearly in the short answer section.

How can the city make your neighborhood safer?

How can the City make your neighborhood safer?

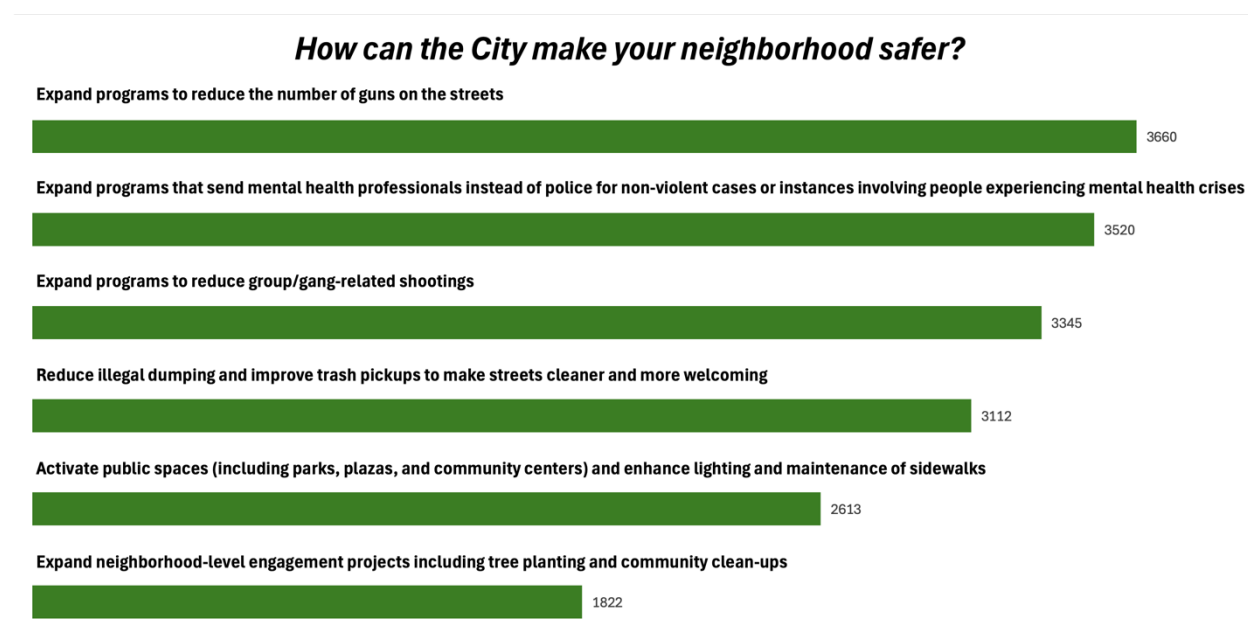|	
Expand programs to reduce the number of guns on the streets	3660
Expand programs that send mental health professionals instead of police for non-violent cases or instances involving people experiencing mental health crises	3520
Expand programs to reduce group/gang-related shootings	3345
Reduce illegal dumping and improve trash pickups to make streets cleaner and more welcoming	3112
Activate public spaces (including parks, plazas, and community centers) and enhance lighting and maintenance of sidewalks	2613
Expand neighborhood-level engagement projects including tree planting and community clean-ups	1822

Figure 13. Number of Responses for Priorities to Make Oakland Neighborhoods Safer

For improving neighborhood safety, respondents emphasized the need to reduce gun violence as well as support alternative interventions to de-escalate conflict in non-violent cases (see figure 13). Across respondents, 39% prioritized expanding programs that reduce the number of guns on the streets and 36% prioritized programs that reduce gang-related shootings. These two policy options received the strongest support among the neighborhoods within 94602, 94605, 94610, 94611, 94618 and 94619 communities (see figure 14).

"We need more foundational programs so the future generations can break the cycle of crime. Education, support systems, early detection, risk ... invest in teachers, partner with influential figures (churches, celebrities like Curry's) to change the course of what's normal. Support parents, single mothers, and fathers."
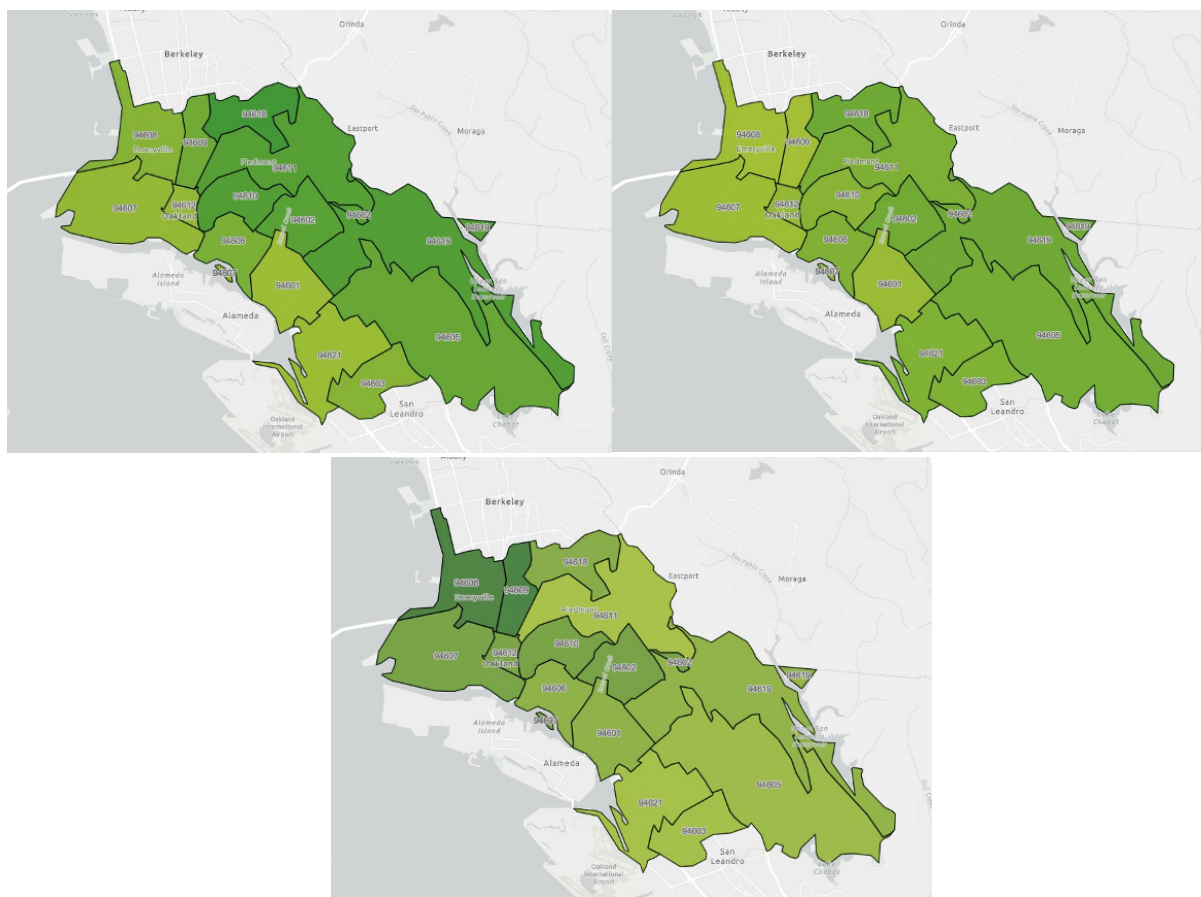
—Oakland Resident

Figure 14. Expand programs to reduce the number of guns on the streets (top left); Expand programs to reduce group/gang-related shootings (top right); and Expand programs that send mental health professionals instead of police for non-violent cases or instances involving people experiencing mental health crises (bottom)

Meanwhile, deploying mental health professionals instead of police officers in non-violent cases, which aims to reduce the burden on law enforcement and lower the risk of escalation, was most popular among communities within 94607, 94612, 94608, and 94606, receiving 38% support overall (see figure 14).

Improving the community environment through reducing illegal dumping and increasing trash pickups was also popular citywide (34%) and was the most popular option among respondents residing in neighborhoods from 94601 and 94603 (see figure 15). An additional 28% of participants, especially among those residing in 94609, 94608, 94607, 94612, emphasized the need to make better use of public spaces, including parks and community centers, while enhancing lighting and sidewalk maintenance (see figure 15).
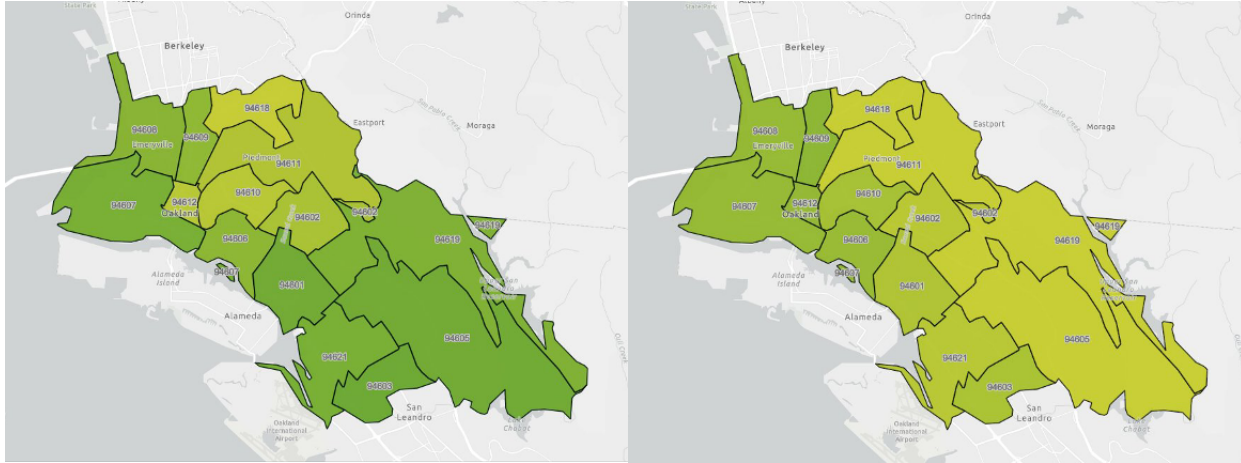
Figure 15. Reduce illegal dumping and improve trash pickups to make streets cleaner and more welcoming (left) and activate public spaces (including parks, plazas, and community centers) and enhance lighting and maintenance of sidewalks (right)

Policy options that were consistently rated lower include expanding neighborhood engagement projects (20%), increasing victim support services (13%), and expanding support for survivors of gender-based and domestic violence (13%).

In the short answer responses, nearly 700 respondents favored increasing the police force to make Oakland safer. One community member captured this overwhelming sentiment as follows: "Whatever it takes, even if it is the entire budget, to get an adequate police force to deal with the problem." Increasing accountability for those who commit crimes was another prevalent response, with 450 short answers demanding more prosecution and prison time for wrongdoers and heavier patrolling for law enforcement. Calls for getting tough on crime arose from the feeling that crime tends to go unpunished. As one person stated: "You currently do not have accountability for anyone committing crimes. People should go to jail if they are convicted guilty of committing a crime!" Lastly, community members expressed dissatisfaction with the current 911 response system with nearly 150 responses calling for improvements to officer response times.

How should the city improve policing in Oakland?

"We need more presence of officers in communities. Officers that know and interact with community members. Police officers that are FROM OAKLAND. We need the presence of effective policing to restore faith in the police. We need the police to keep our communities safe, but they must be visible, engaged, and familiar to our community." —Oakland Resident

How should the city improve policing?

Invest in improving the 911 dispatch system, including improving response times by educating the community about what situations require a gun and a badge to respond and what alternative services exist
4592

Increase the number of officers by improving the graduation rates of police academies
3523

Have police officers patrol by foot or bicycle instead of car
2656

Improve officers' education and socialization of Oakland's diverse communities outside the context of crime
2613

Invest in civilian oversight and engaging the community to oversee safety measures
1845

Ensure a diverse range of Oaklanders, including young adults, participate in the OPD hiring process
1746

Improve the mental health support officers receive
1731

Expand community-led training for police officers
1715

Broaden and improve responses to human trafficking, including training on engaging survivors
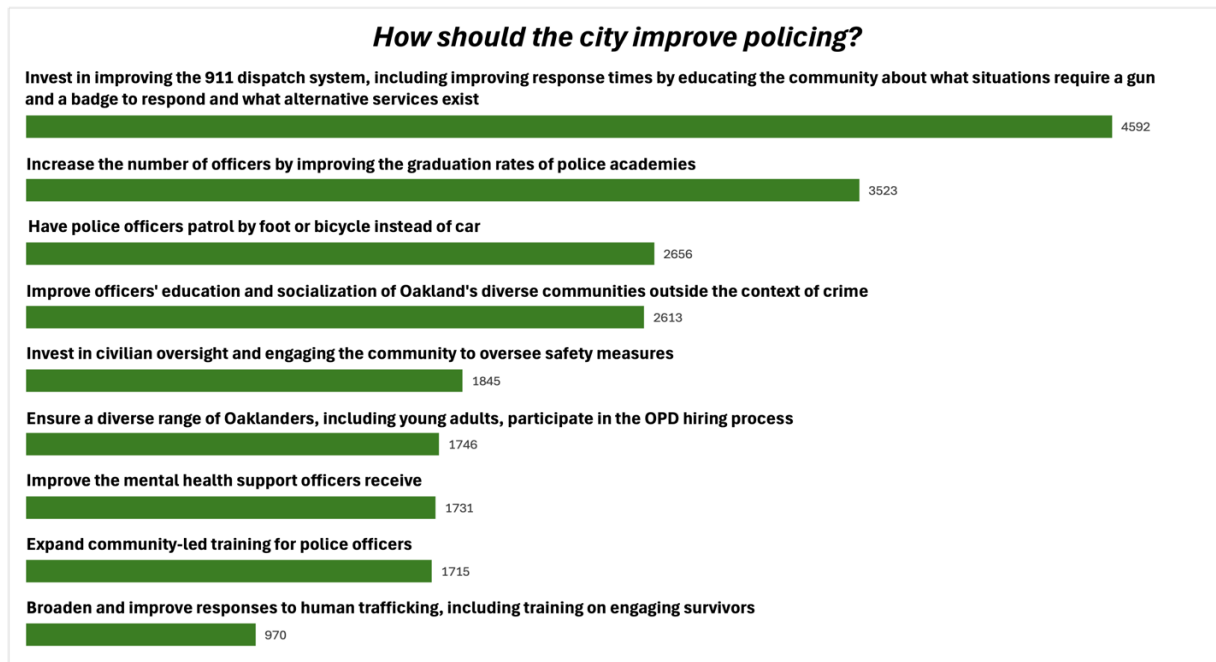970

Figure 16. Number of Responses for Priorities on Improving Policing

Policing remains a contentious issue in Oakland, with the community expressing diverse views on how to improve law enforcement. One area of consensus is around the need to improve the 911 dispatch system, which received 50% support overall (see figure 16). As one community member wrote, "We need to feel like they [Oakland PD] are going to show up and that 911 is going to answer the phone." Yet the desire to see the number of police officers increase, though widely popular (38% overall), was disproportionately represented by residents from 94618, 94611, 94602, 94610, 94605, and 94619, skewing overall results (see figure 17).
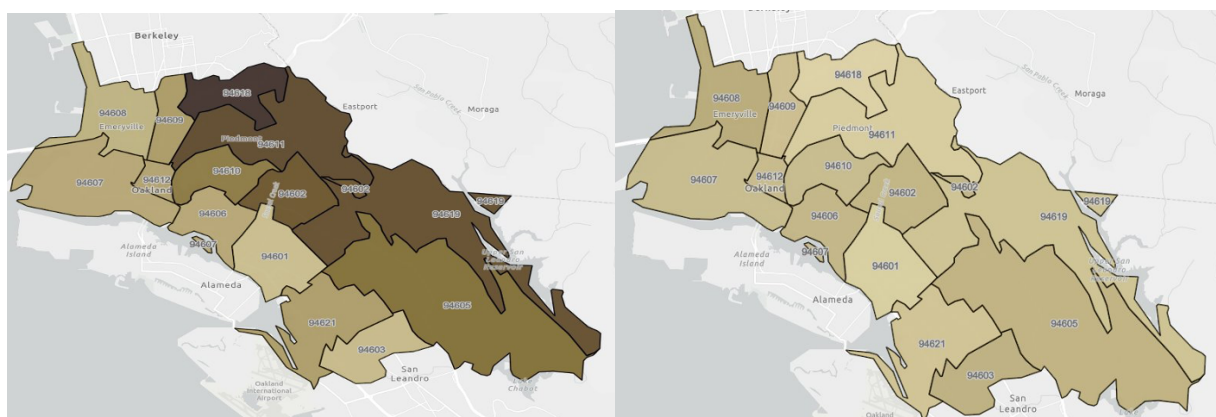

Figure 17. Increase the number of officers by improving graduation rates of police academies (left) and Improve officers' education & socialization of Oakland's diverse communities outside the context of crime (right)

After improving 911 response times, the most popular options in the neighborhoods within 94608, 94603, 94621 was improving officers' education and socialization with

Oakland's diverse communities, which was also widely popular with 28% support overall (see figure 18). Another policy option that received widespread support was having police patrol on foot or bicycle instead of by car (28%).

Lower on the list of survey respondents' priorities were investments in civilian oversight of safety measures (20%), improving mental health support for officers (19%), and supporting diversity in the OPD hiring process (19%). Expanding community-led trainings for officers received 18% of respondent support, while broadening and strengthening the response to human trafficking was the lowest priority for survey respondents overall (10%).

The citywide emphasis on increasing the police force was echoed in the short answers where about 261 survey respondents indicated a desire to increase the number of officers on the streets. An additional 211 respondents called for stronger enforcement, primarily through more police presence and arrests citywide. This priority stems from a widespread perception that lack of consequences for wrongdoers does not deter them from repeated offenses. As one respondent wrote: "*The police should not have to do their job repeatedly because criminals are back out on the streets with no consequences for their actions. More police don't solve poor prosecutorial work.*"

How should the city keep young Oaklanders and their families safe and reduce potential involvement in the justice system?

Invest in models where community members help other community members and collectively decide how to intervene in family dysfunction to protect kids and guide them to a healthier lifestyle. —Oakland Resident

"Want to Reduce Gun Violence in Oakland? Invest in Culture, Experts Say" (Nastia Voynovskaya, Sep 12, 2022) Los Rakas perform at Town Nights in Oakland's Fruitvale neighborhood on July 15, 2022. The free event was hosted by Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ). (Beth LaBerge/KQED)

Investing in the future of Oakland's youth and reducing their contact with the criminal justice system are seen as critical components of long-term community safety. The survey results reflect a strong consensus on the need for comprehensive support systems that provide young people with the resources and opportunities to thrive (see figure 20). As one survey respondent put it: *"Give them a reason for being here."*

How should the City keep young Oaklanders and their families safe and reduce potential involvement in the justice system?

Invest in models that provide 18 to 25-year-old Oaklanders a one-stop-shop for accessing housing, wraparound services, and job/career training — 4199

Invest in recreational programs and after-school programs for young Oaklanders — 3803

Invest in diversion programs to support youth before illegal activity escalates — 3542

Improve access to mental health and substance use services — 3043

Invest in youth reentry services, including school placement and healthcare services — 2450
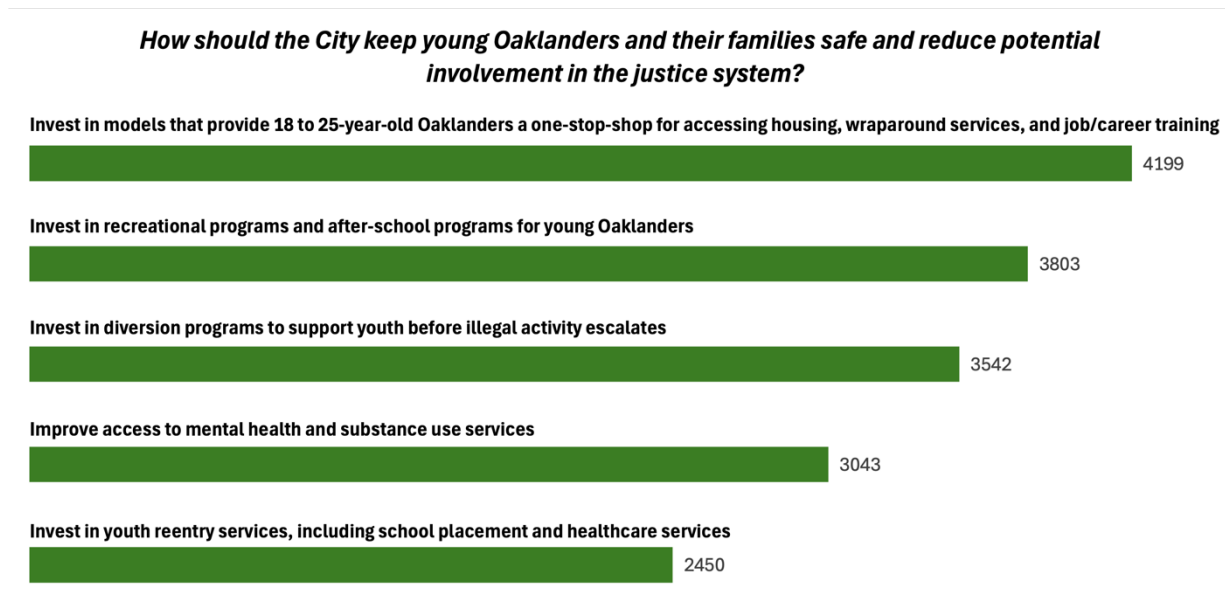
Figure 18. Number of Responses for Priorities to Keep Young Oaklanders and their Families Safe and Reduce Potential Involvement in the Justice System

For example, 45% of all respondents showed support for investing in "one-stop shop" services for 18- to 25-year-olds that offer access to housing, wraparound services, and job training, and these results were evenly spread across neighborhoods. In addition,

41% of all respondents prioritized investing in recreational and after-school programs for young Oaklanders, although respondents within the 94608, 94601, 94612, 94603, and 94621 showed slightly less interest than other zip codes (see figure 19).
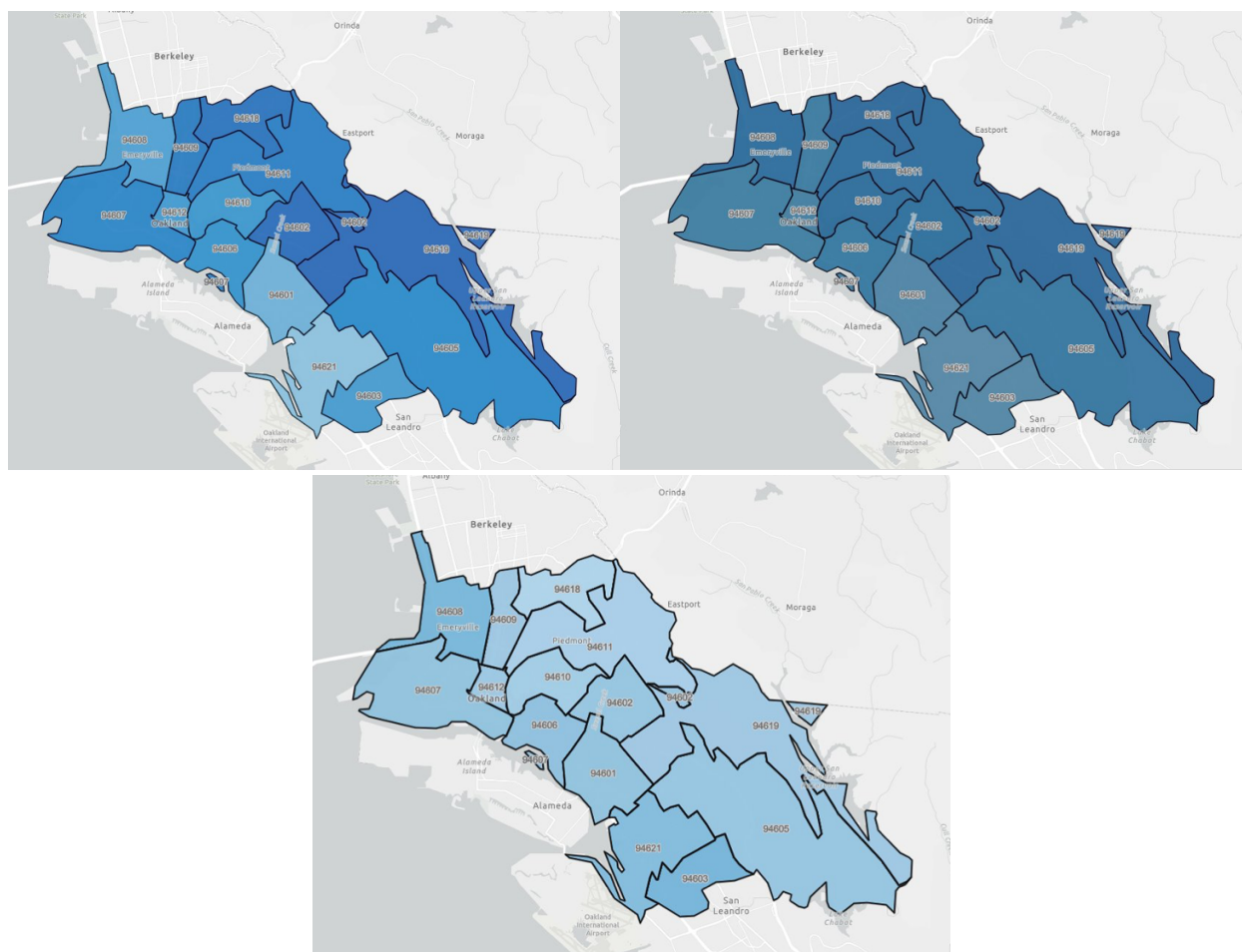

Figure 19. Invest in recreational programs and after-school programs for young Oaklanders (top left); Invest in diversion programs to support youth before illegal activity escalates (top right); and Invest in youth reentry services, including school placement and healthcare services (bottom)

The next most popular option were diversion programs (38% citywide), although this option proved more controversial with a split between neighborhoods in the Oakland Hills (94611,94608, 94618, 94602, 94610, 94619) that favored this option and flatland neighborhoods (94609, 94607, 94612, 94601,94606, 94603,94621, 94605) that preferred other options (see figure 19).

Among the other policy initiatives, 33% of all respondents also highlighted the need for improved access to mental health and substance use services for youth. An additional 26% prioritized investing in reentry services, including school placement and healthcare, a policy area for which communities from the 94608, 94603, 94621 areas showed a slightly higher preference (32%, 32%, 30%, see figure 23). Lower priority initiatives included expanding support for victims of human trafficking (18%),

increasing accessibility of existing programs by removing barriers like legal status and language proficiency (15%), and improving support and protection for foster youth (15%).

In the optional short answer section, 60 respondents wrote either "all of the above" or "all selected" and 51 provided write-in responses about enhancing the police force and law enforcement, possibly responding to the first part of the survey question ("How can the city keep young Oaklanders and their families safe?"). An additional 40 respondents wrote about investing in public education and youth programs and services, frequently connecting lack of youth support to poor outcomes. One respondent explained: "Make sure that Oakland schools stay open. School closures and strikes are a significant cause of young Oakland men becoming gang affiliated. Another wrote: "Invest in the schools. Make the schools clean and safe and amazing. Send these kids to college."

How should the city support Oaklanders who have been previously incarcerated?

"Allowing those who are formerly incarcerated to have access to government assistance programs for food and housing. Denial of basic needs is guaranteeing recidivism."

—Oakland Resident

Successfully reintegrating formerly incarcerated individuals into the community is essential for reducing recidivism and promoting public safety. The survey results show strong support for employment programs and affordable, transitional housing.
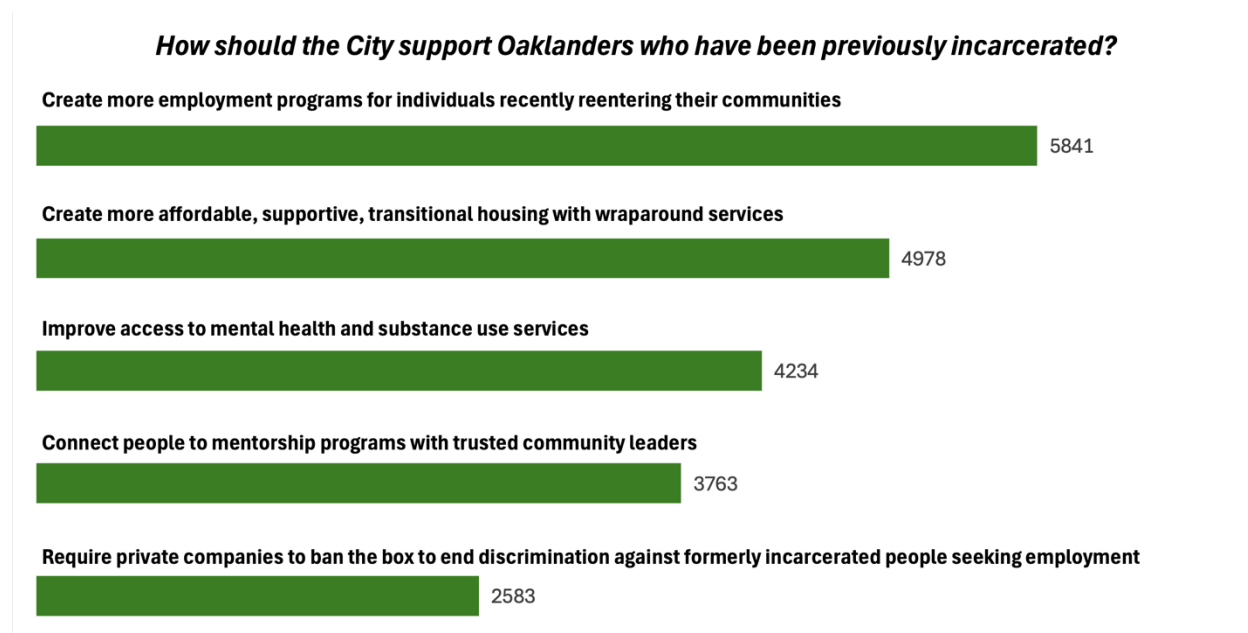

Figure 20. Number of Responses for Priorities to Support Oaklanders Who Have Been Previously Incarcerated

The highest priority for reintegrating formerly incarcerated individuals was to create more employment programs for individuals reentering their communities (63% citywide, see figure 20). 53% of respondents also emphasized the need for more affordable, supportive, and transitional housing with wraparound services — a policy option that received the strongest support in the 94608, 94609, 94612, and 94603 communities (see figure 21).
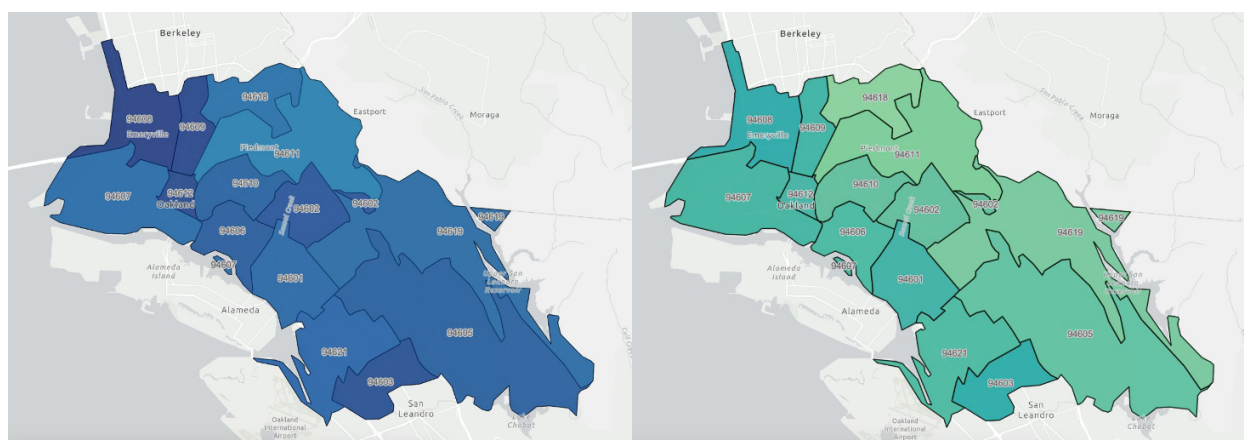

Figure 21. Create more affordable, supportive, transitional housing with wraparound services (left) and Require private companies to "ban the box" to end discrimination against formerly incarcerated people seeking employment (right)

An additional 45% of all respondents prioritized improving access to mental health and substance use services. Combined, these three policy options – employment, transitional housing, and mental health and substance use services – suggest that survey respondents endorse a holistic approach to reintegrating formerly incarcerated individuals into their communities. An additional 40% of survey participants advocated connecting individuals to mentorship programs with trusted community leaders. The lowest priority area was requiring private companies to "ban the box" (28%), which aims to reduce discrimination against formerly incarcerated people seeking employment. Banning the box, while a lower priority overall, received greater support from the Oakland flatlands, comprised of neighborhoods within the 94608, 94609, 94607, 94612, 94601, 94606, and 94603 communities (see figure 21).

Community member write-in responses also aligned with several of the Talking Transition proposed action priorities. Nearly 230 written responses supported services for the formerly incarcerated population. Among the services advocated for, expansion of employment opportunities was the most cited among community members with just over 100 responses. Additionally, 58 responses advocated for investments in existing programs that provide supportive services for the formerly incarcerated. While expanding access to employment remains the top priority, some respondents emphasized the importance of meaningful employment. As one respondent stated,

34

"Fund programs that will connect youth with meaningful work that will make them feel part of the community again…" Other respondents noted services that they view as essential for successful reentry, including mental health and other wrap-around services (48), access to affordable housing (27), and educational opportunities (24). As a community member wrote, "If you want to help them turn their lives around after being incarcerated then help them with what they need, such as basic literacy, job training, and relocation if needed."

Corpsmembers in Civicorps Paid Jobs Training Program, Oakland, Ca

Economic Opportunity

The lack of affordable housing, concerns about community safety, and disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an outmigration of residents, businesses, and investors from Oakland and a historic budget deficit. The city wants to reverse this trend by creating economic opportunities that preserve community identity in Oakland and that more equitably distribute wealth. Survey respondents answered questions about policy measures that would support small businesses, keep Oakland youth gainfully employed, and support working families.

What should the city do to support small businesses in Oakland to thrive?

"The most important thing we can do to support small businesses in Oakland is to keep our streets and people safe. Before COVID, I constantly shopped and dined in Oakland. I will freely admit that I rarely do either anymore in Oakland -- mostly out of my own concern… Please make the streets safer so my community feels safer spending time and reinvesting in Oakland" —Oakland Resident

What should the City do to support small businesses in Oakland to thrive?

Increase police foot patrols around commercial corridors

3910

Make permitting processes faster and reduce permitting fees

3279

Activate downtown and public spaces, including investments in lighting and sidewalk repair

2768

Enforce illegal dumping violations along commercial corridors

2416

Support short-term leases to make it easier for emerging entrepreneurs to rent space

1841

Provide financial support for business-owners who wish to install security cameras

1823

Figure 22. Number of Responses for Priorities to Support Small Businesses in Oakland to Thrive

Overall, 42% of survey respondents endorsed supporting small businesses in Oakland by increasing police presence in commercial districts (see figure 22), although the strongest support for this option came from respondents within the 94611, 94618, 94602, 94610, 94605, and 94619 communities (see figure 23). Respondents from 94603 and 94621 exhibited a stronger preference for security cameras and job skills training, respectively.
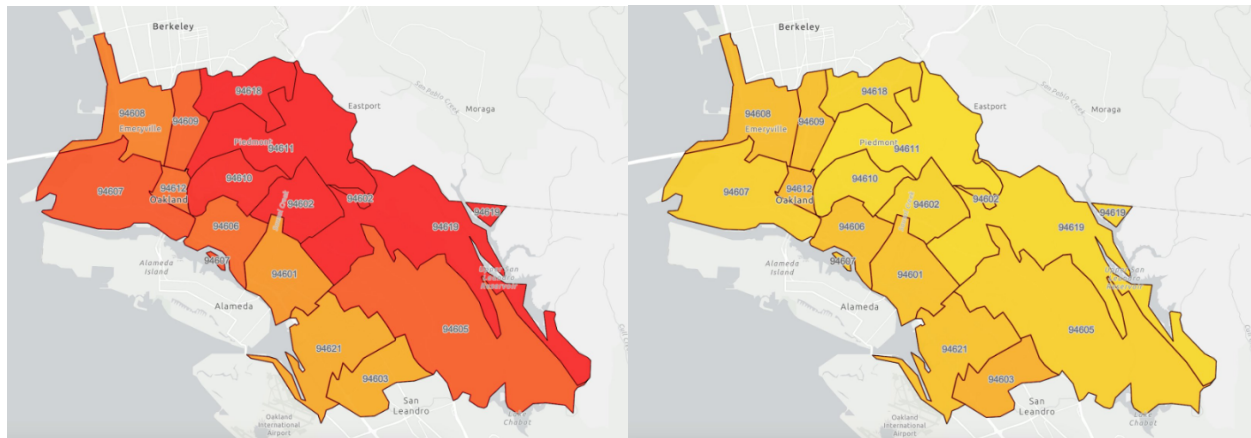

Figure 23. Increase police foot patrols around commercial corridors (left) and Support short-term leases to make it easier for emerging entrepreneurs to rent space (right)

36

The City of Oakland celebrated Small Business Week from April 28 to May 3, 2024 with in-person and virtual panels, workshops, and resource fairs for small business owners and entrepreneurs.

There was more consensus around expediting the permitting process and reducing licensing fees, with 35% support overall. 30% advocated for activating downtown and public areas by improving lighting and repairing sidewalks and 26% supported enforcing illegal dumping violations in commercial areas. 20% of respondents prioritized short-term leases to support emerging entrepreneurs who want to rent brick-and-mortar spaces, and this option received slightly stronger support from the Oakland flatlands (94608, 94608, 94612, 94601, 94606, 94603, and 94621) than from the Oakland hills (see figure 23).

> *"There's so much potential for Oakland's economy but it has to be safe so the area will attract consumers."*
>
> **—Oakland Resident**

20% advocated for businesses to receive financial assistance to install security cameras, 19% advocated for removing barriers for small entrepreneurs to access city contracts, and 17% for skill training and technical support that is accessible in several languages. The lowest priority options were incentivizing "high road" small businesses to provide quality jobs for local residents (13%) and expanding the façade and tenanting improvement program (10%).

Among written responses, 61 responses were in support of re-activating commercial districts such as Downtown Oakland by calming vehicle traffic and increasing foot traffic. As one respondent explains, "Traffic-calm and pedestrianize as many commercial streets as possible to make them more inviting to foot traffic, thus boosting patronage." Other responses aligned with priorities to incentivize small businesses, such as easing the permitting process (10), tax incentives or reductions (48), and enhancing the affordability and availability of commercial spaces (55). Concern about affordable rent was also on top of Oaklanders' minds. One community member response serves as an example of the collective feeling towards this concern "Control rent prices for businesses. I have seen so many long-time establishments close down because of rent. How can we support our local business, small business, BIPOC business, when they are being pushed out by high rent prices."

Notably, respondents overwhelmingly emphasized addressing concerns for public safety as a means for supporting small businesses to thrive. About 129 responses called for action from the city to reduce crime and protect small businesses, while around 240 responses advocated stricter enforcement through stronger police presence, enhanced surveillance (cameras, CCTV), and increasing investigations and arrests. Summarizing a. major theme in the short answer responses, one respondent wrote that "the most important thing we can do to support small businesses in Oakland is to keep our streets and people safe."

How can the city help young Oaklanders access good jobs?

"I would like to see training and mentoring for ALL Oakland high school students on the importance of 1) graduating from high school 2) attending trade schools or community college to gain skills and 3) financial mentoring so they operate within their means as young adults."

—Oakland Resident

How can the City help young Oaklanders access good jobs?

Expand programs to connect high school students to paid job training programs
5251

Expand programs to connect high school students to post-secondary education opportunities, including community colleges
4632

Create year-round work opportunities for 18 to 25-year-old Oaklanders
4178

Create intentional pipelines for employment at the City of Oakland with living wages and benefits
3209

Make job training programs accessible by providing language access and basic skill development training
2699

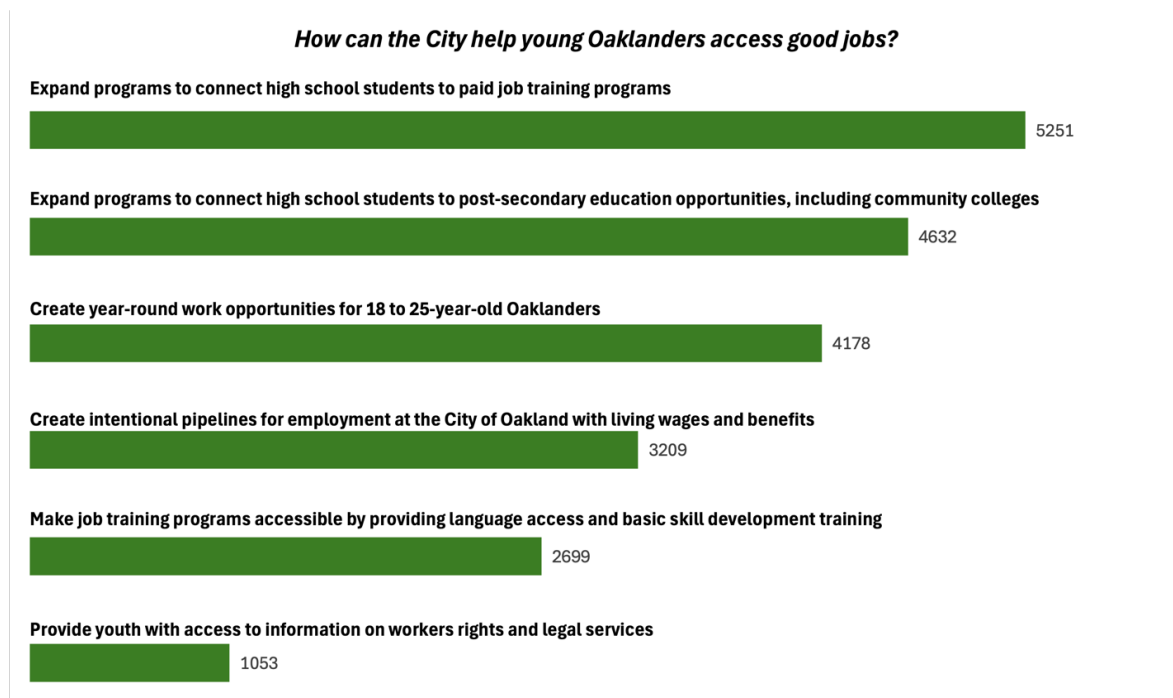Provide youth with access to information on workers rights and legal services
1053

Figure 24. Number or Responses for Priorities to Help Young Oaklanders Access Good Jobs

To connect young Oaklanders with good jobs, 56% of respondents highlighted the importance of paid job training for youth (see figure 24), with this option receiving the strongest support among respondents from the 94611, 94618, 94602, 94619 communities (see figure 25). 50% of respondents, with emphasis in the same areas, prioritized expanding programs that connect high school students to post-secondary education opportunities, including community colleges. Hence, paid work experience and higher education were viewed as the top priorities when it comes to helping Oakland youth succeed on a tough job market.
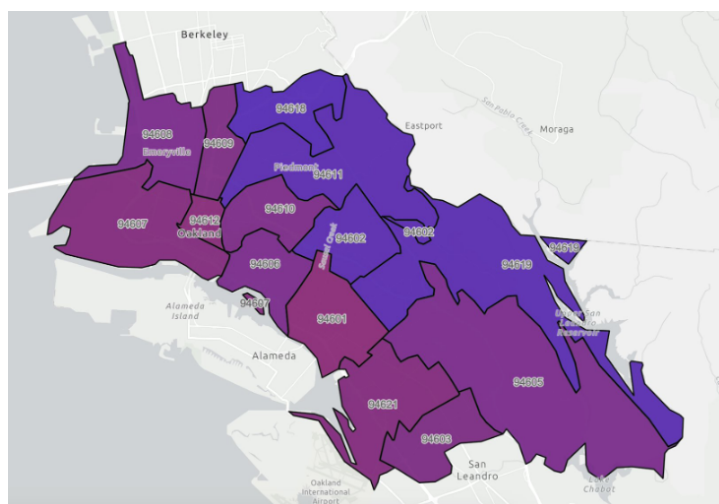

Figure 25. Expand programs to connect high school students to paid job training programs

45% prioritized year-round work opportunities for 18 to 25-year-old Oaklanders. 35% of respondents stated a preference for creating employment pipelines in the City of Oakland. Living wages and benefits were a lower priority overall but received relatively strong support in Oakland's flatlands as compared to the hills. Additionally, 29% indicated that job training programs should be accessible by providing language access and basic skill development. By contrast, only 11% indicated a need to provide youth with access to information on workers' rights and legal services.

Short answers echoed survey options. About 51 responses endorsed expansion of youth workforce development, including employment options, access, and training opportunities for careers across a variety of sectors. Many respondents emphasized opportunities in the trade professions. "Provide classes in high school that are focused on technical job, skills and skills that can be readily use by youth. Not all youth can afford to go to college and or are interested in going to college, but it is finally important that they learn a skill that can provide that a future and sustainable income." Over 40 responses called for improvements to the education system to better prepare youth for entering the workforce.

What should the city prioritize to ensure new and existing jobs meet the economic needs of all residents?

"Develop an economic strategy to revitalize Oakland's trades and manufacturing industries... Provide tax and other economic incentives to businesses to set-up and hire in Oakland. Make Oakland an attractive place to do business" —Oakland Resident

What should the City prioritize to ensure new and existing jobs meet the economic needs of all residents?

Increase access to affordable childcare and care for seniors
4182

Increase the minimum wage
3359

Protect workers in vulnerable jobs, including care workers (children, seniors), restaurant workers, and those in the 'gig' economy
3084

Help employers find affordable health care plans
2856

Enforce worker rights protections, including minimum wage and sick leave
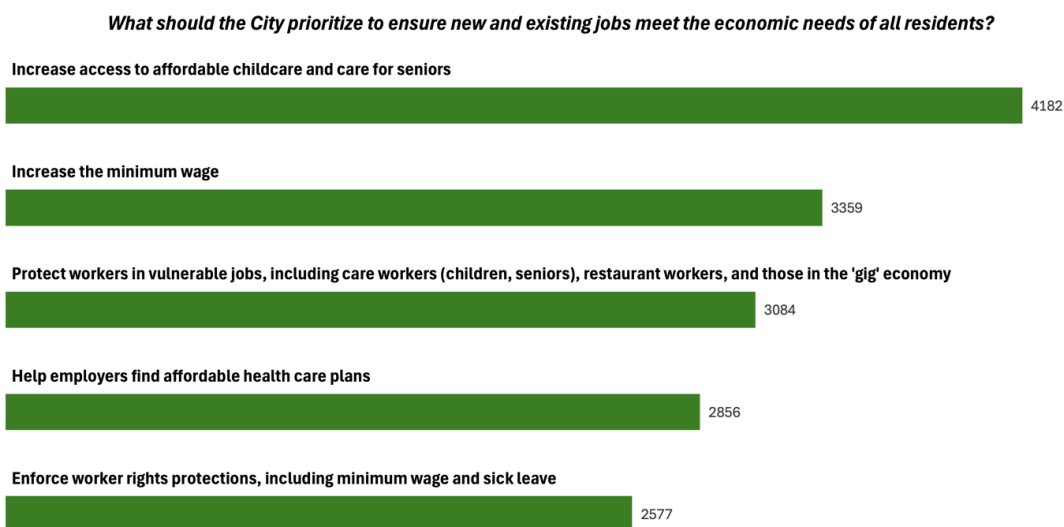2577

Figure 26. Number of Responses for Priorities to Ensure New and Existing Jobs Meet the Economic Needs of all Residents

With regard to meeting the economic needs of all Oakland residents, survey respondents prioritized access to affordable child- and senior care. By contrast, protecting workers' rights through minimum wage and sick leave was viewed as a lower priority. Across all respondents, 45% identified increasing access to affordable child- and senior care as the top priority (see figure 26).
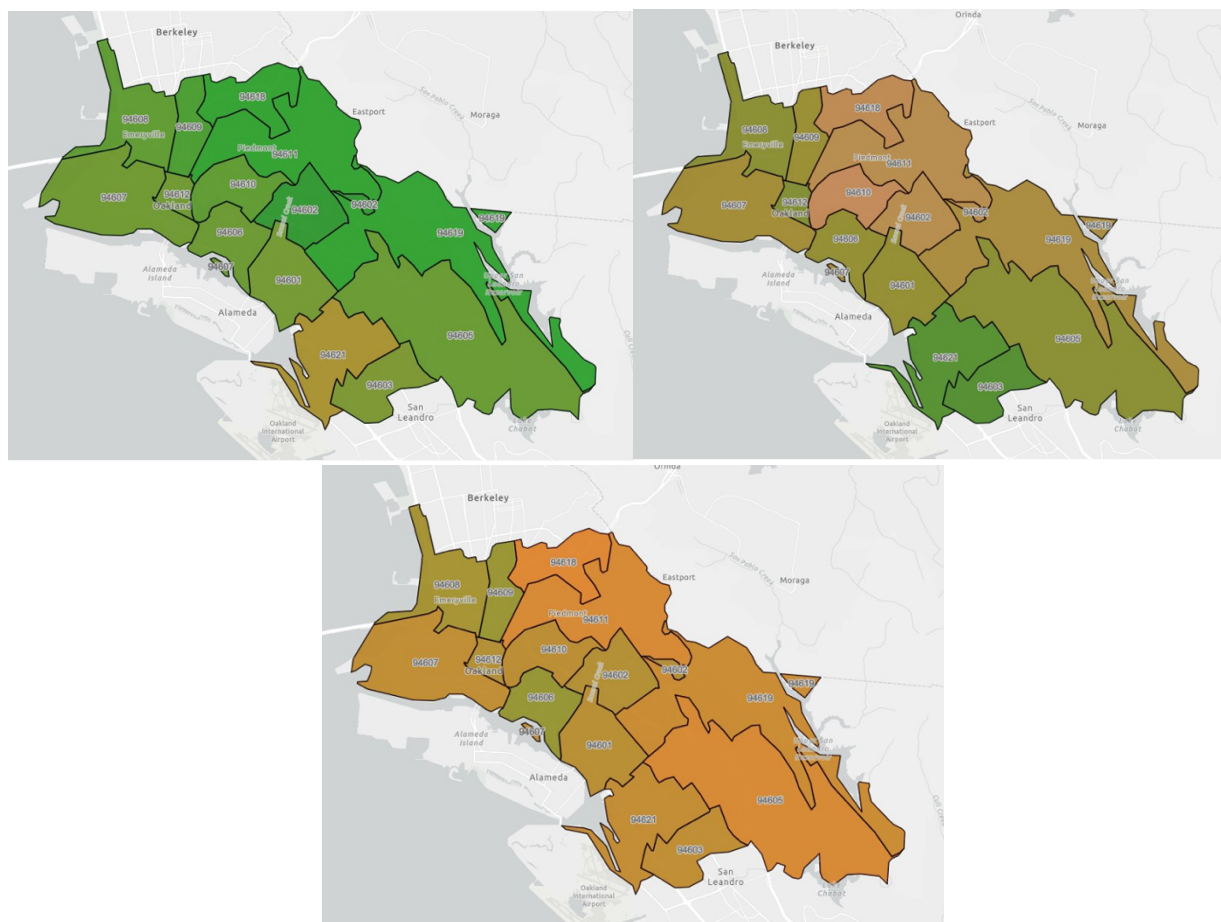

Figure 27. Increase access to affordable childcare and care for seniors (top left); Increase the minimum wage top (right); and Protect workers in vulnerable jobs, including care workers, restaurant workers, and those in the "gig" economy (bottom right)

The slightly lower preference for this option among Oakland's flatlands (94607, 94612, 94601, 94606, 94610, 94603, 94621, and 94605, see figure 27) were offset by their much stronger preference for a livable wage (36% overall) and protections for care workers, restaurant workers, and workers in the gig economy (34% overall) (see figure 27).

The fourth most popular policy option overall was affordable healthcare (31%) for which respondents from the Oakland Hills (94611, 94609, 94602) demonstrated a stronger preference. Other proposed policies for worker protections were found less important, such as helping employees understand their rights and connecting them to resources (14%), training programs for small businesses to understand worker rights laws (13%),

and strengthening anti-discrimination policies in hiring and the workplace in general (12%), although these policy options were more pronounced among the Oakland flatland communities (94609, 94607, 94612, 94601, 94606, 94603, and 94621, see figure 28)
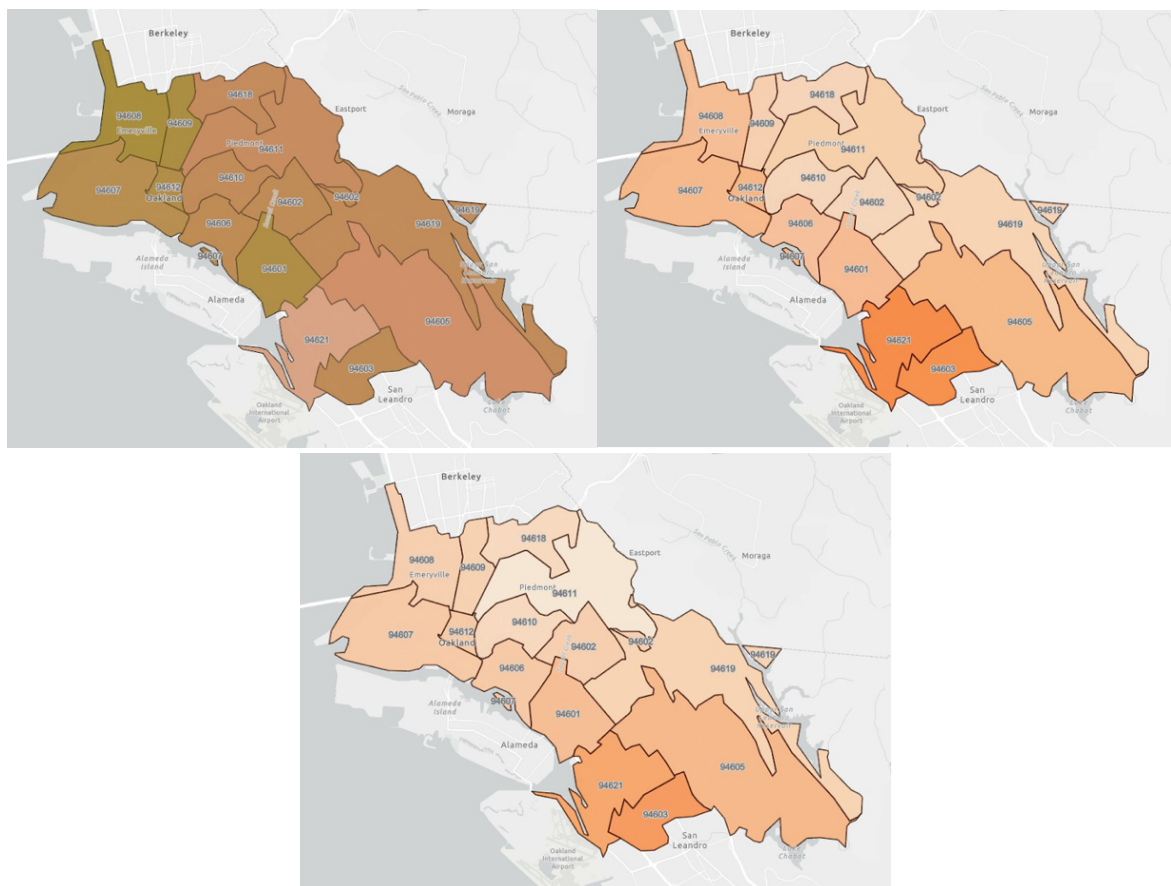

Figure 28. Help employees understand their rights and connect to resources and services (top left), Create an employer training program so small business owners understand worker rights (top right), and strengthen anti-discrimination policies (bottom)

Responses from the written short answers included some support that aligned with the city priority options, such as 22 responses calling for better access to health care, 42 supporting increasing wages, and 18 responses advocating for employees' protections and rights. Community members also called for meeting economic needs by creating more employment and training opportunities (70), supporting employers through reducing barriers or "red tape" for new businesses (73), and tax incentives for businesses (41). The largest portion of written responses from community members centered around public safety. Specifically, 144 responses called for the city to address crime in the city, while about 58 additional responses included suggestions for addressing crime, such as hiring more officers and stricter carceral punishment.

Key Findings and Implications

The survey results report on a diverse cross-section of Oakland residents regarding their attitudes and policy preferences in the areas of housing and homelessness, crime and public safety, and economic development. While the survey team successfully recorded a large sample of Oakland residents and reached underrepresented groups across Oakland, it is important to bear in mind that results are not a random sample and do not represent the entire population of Oakland residents. They should therefore be used for policy setting only as a supplement to other data.

With regard to strengthening **housing security** for Oakland residents, the top priority among survey respondents was to create more affordable housing. Respondents linked affordable housing to ensuring housing for all Oaklanders and renter protections, and in textual responses noted that a robust supply of affordable housing is intrinsically related to the affordability of homes and rental units and to reducing homelessness. In other words, making housing affordable has downstream effects on many other aspects of housing security.

As for how to increase the supply of affordable housing, survey respondents suggested that the city should prioritize converting existing structures into housing units and should make it easier for developers to build affordable housing by streamlining permits and lowering taxes and fees. Respondents also expressed a strong preference for strengthening rental assistance and emergency relief programs for renters and homeowners, so that they do not lose their homes during unexpected emergencies.

Regarding homelessness, survey respondents identified their top priority as building temporary shelters and infrastructure for encampments. In short answer responses, they explained that the City should create semi-formal or regulated encampments that provide safety, basic infrastructure, and services to the unhoused population. These "homeless parks," along with investments in temporary shelters, would provide people experiencing homelessness with more decent and dignified conditions, and would allow for removal of encampments in other areas. There was also strong emphasis on mental health and substance use services, reflecting a "housing first" philosophy to serving the unhoused.

Regarding **community safety**, survey respondents were clear in their call for strengthening law enforcement. In short answers, there was a general sense that crimes in Oakland are going unpunished. "You currently do not have accountability for anyone committing crimes. People should go to jail if they are convicted of committing a crime!!!" The top policy priorities that came through in the statistical and qualitative data were to improve 911 response times, increase the police force, and punish wrongdoing. However, some of the more reactionary attitudes were tempered by calls to strengthen education programs and support services for youth and to educate and

socialize police officers with Oakland's diverse communities, this policy option being especially popular in West and East Oakland. The same neighborhoods also emphasized sending mental health professionals to help de-escalate non-violent situations.

Other policy options that attracted widespread support were to expand programs that reduce gun violence and gang-related shootings. There was also strong support for upstream measures that strengthen community support, including the beautification of Oakland neighborhoods by reducing illegal dumping, trash clean ups, and investments in public space. In short answer responses, many respondents discussed paying youth to help with neighborhood cleanups and public space improvements.

For individuals who were previously incarcerated, survey respondents counseled a holistic approach, ranking – in this order – employment, transitional and affordable housing, mental health and substance use services, and peer mentorship support.

In the domain of improving **economic opportunity**, survey respondents placed the strongest emphasis on supporting small business owners and generating employment opportunities and a strong safety net for working youth, family members with childcare and eldercare responsibilities, and low-wage workers. Regarding small business owners, survey respondents advocated for increasing police presence in commercial districts, making infrastructure investments to activate and beautify downtown areas, and helping business entrepreneurs expedite the permit process and reduce licensing fees.

Investments in working youth was a consistent priority across the survey. For the youth demographic, survey respondents emphasized job training, employment pipelines, post-secondary education programs, and year-round employment opportunities. In short, the key to success is viewed in terms of expanding opportunities for community college and credential programs and paid work that leads to a job on the other side. Respondents also highlighted assistance for workers with family responsibilities, worker protections, and a higher minimum wage.

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Appendix A: Resident Short Answer Comments and Suggestions

This appendix highlights concrete policy suggestions from Oakland residents in the short answer sections of each survey question.

Housing

- Support small quantity housing providers to keep them interested in continuing to provide housing rather than forcing them to continue to house renters who don't pay or who damage property or who harm or threaten those providers or other renters. That will create a larger pool of potential providers willing to rent out their properties.
- Get rid of all the Airbnb and Bungalow clones and their infinite child companies by forcing back hotel taxes with no room for negotiation. Provide assistance for small landlords who had non-paying tenants but make them sign that they won't evict for (period covered here) missed rent as receipt condition.
- Increase commercial building tax, limit residential property ownership by prospective landlords/conglomerates, prioritize selling property to native Oakland individuals, deprioritize selling to corporate/business interests.
- Collaborate with big banks to create a financial pathway that offers loans with a 2% to 3% interest rate to create an opportunity for low-income people to purchase a house in Oakland.
- BUILD a lot of AHUs infill behind existing houses. Make it very attractive to homeowners and overhaul all the sticky permitting process. Make sure empty houses get occupants. Tax unoccupied housing
- Crack down on house flippers, and restrain AirBnB, corporate landlords, and landlords who own more than 5-10 rental units. Jointly, these are all responsible for creating housing scarcity and jacking up the prices to ridiculous heights.
- Lower barrier to constructions. We need more supply. There are too many constraints such as ridiculous fees, one of the highest transfer taxes in East Bay. Need more housing of every type fast and at low costs. Construction costs are already too high.
- We need more homeownership. 31% own their home. 69% Rent. We don't need to build more rentals.
- Implement a land value tax to encourage the best use of land and deter speculators, heavily penalize (25%) tax on all empty and abandoned parcels, and create a housing insurance plan to guarantee housing to renters without forcing landlords to keep tenants
- Study Utah's tiny home project as well as models in Houston/Dallas. Work with neighboring cities because it seems like folks are sending their unhoused folks to

Coordinate with Alameda and Richmond. There are tons of empty buildings that could provide jobs in conversions and low (below market) housing.

Homelessness

- Assertive community treatment (ACT) programs but add to these a minimum of bi-weekly monitoring to ensure that the mentally ill remain on their medication and are not damaging their apartments. Provide some housing conditioned upon landlord's ability to have the City remove the person to crisis housing or a hospital if the person fails to take medication, damages the place, or fails to respect other residents. Protect people who are housed so that they do not have to move to more expensive housing because they are afraid of criminals and the homeless.
- Survey unhoused and find out what individuals refuse housing or services. Find out what individuals are homeless due to financial hardship, Domestic Violence, or other circumstances out of their control. and would like housing and other services. Based on that information implement two different strategies. One strategy for the individuals that refuse services. A second strategy for those that want the services.

Community safety

- Blanket the communities with PD trained stewards like UCPD student community service officers... escort services by CSO's carrying police radios. Police are not responding to these communities in a timely manner. If a part-time young "eyes and ears" CSO radioed for help the police would respond to protect their own in a way they do not currently. This works magically on UC campuses to eliminate assault and also prevent vandalism community officer could radio for help the police would respond to protect their own
- Get children and adults involved in meetup groups, hobbies, activities. Keep garbage cans (recycling too) more abundant with collection services. Take a note from Japan. Include free self-defense / yoga classes in parks. Start early, don't delay. Enable safe, free places for artists to paint. Educate, reduce fears, provide Fix all the holes and cracks on every street. Every single street needs to be repaved and remarked.
- More and better street cleanup along with a marketing campaign that encourages people to keep their city clean - focus on community pride; focus on people cooperating to pitch in to make Oakland a better place

Policing

- Prioritize strategies to prevent/reduce car break ins/thefts, car jackings, robberies/burglaries. Annual community meetings with police where neighbors can elevate concerns, ways to report suspicious/concerning behavior that doesn't

rise to the level of making a police report, but may provide info about what to watch out for clues about patterns, etc

- Graduates of the Police Academy should have to commit to serve at least five years in the OPD. Graduates can leave for other communities too soon. We are paying to train but not reaping the benefits of trained officers staying in Oakland.
- Better psychological screening before hiring
- Establish more neighborhood police stations (i.e. Japan's "koban" system) to engage and develop community relationships and respond more quickly to calls
- Historically, community officers in OPD have not faced the same promotion path as other officers and it's been harder for community officers to get promoted. Change this, make it easier for community officers to get promoted and we will see a renewed interest in officers taking more of a community path and mindset to their jobs
- Periodic mandatory training to learn about deescalate situation, use adequate force.
- Require four-year degree, or significant amount of coursework in sociology, psychology, conflict mediation, and history to be an officer.
- Invest in MACRO so that they can operate 24/7. Also allow direct access to the MACRO/DVP without calling 911
- Invest in automation and cameras (LPR, CC, etc...) and should be made available to police on patrol so they can respond faster
- Invest in technology (drones with cameras) etc.

Reentry

- Provide wage subsidies and insurance for businesses to incentivize hiring formerly incarcerated people
- Push the state for better job training for people while incarcerated with links to companies for job placement; tech included not just manual labor
- Expand expungement program so that those who have been railroaded due to racial disparities can clear their records and reclaim their lives
- Expand and expedite services and programs for previously incarcerated people to be able to clean up their record, expunge things.
- Advocate to HUD to remove the ban on providing housing to people with criminal backgrounds
- Work with Life After Next for step-up rental assistance; $1,500 a month while on parole
- Ensure that people coming out of prison are provided with living wage jobs around 60k in the Oakland area. Too often the jobs programs offered to the recently incarcerated are predatory in that they are low pay. It almost guarantees that people will be encouraged to return to higher paying crime just to survive.
- Jails need to altered towards a European model like Germany
- Please look at the research on ban the box, a number of studies show this isn't effective in the long term as employers use other measures (often race) as a proxy

to discriminate. Better to try and eliminate stigma with employers that proudly embrace transitional employment opportunities

Youth employment

- Do a campaign on billboards etc. to educate youth and offer free training in trades and free transportation
- Provide classes in high school that are focused on technical job, skills and skills that can be readily used by youth. Not all youth can afford to go to college and or are interested in going to college, but it is finally important that they learn a skill that can provide a future and sustainable income.
- The job postings cannot just live online, they need to be made available at High Schools and Community Colleges and Universities. I saw good jobs on City of Oakland website, had I not visited the website, I would have never known about them. Most teens aren't visiting City of Oakland website. Flyers, posters, ads in streaming sites like Sound Cloud, Pandora, Spotify, etc.
- Expand access to trade programs, allow early access to trade schools to high schoolers
- Create a skilled trades apprenticeships with jobs after apprenticeship is completed with cities and partner businesses.
- Have job fairs so people can go in person.
- There is a national disconnect between the amount of jobs available and those who are looking for jobs--something like 3:1. There are plenty of jobs. We need to train Oaklanders to be able to fill the high-paying jobs that are currently going unfilled. Many of these are jobs that aren't in the office, and could meet the needs of unemployed or underemployed or workers in low-paying jobs. Yet we don't have the organizational capacity to train and link these people to these jobs. What a shame. We need to gather people from outside the city of Oakland's bureaucracy and political groups to figure out how to make this match work. Current efforts are failing and will continue to fail unless we bring employers and workforce training experts into the mix.

Economic opportunity

- Create a program that pays hard-to-employ residents (people on probation, youth, low income) to clean up the city streets. Maybe pay them by the pound of trash they collect to incentivize them to work.
- Address the statistically 2 biggest roots of crime: 1) cultural segregation - encourage racial, ethnic, and class integration in all neighborhoods. Provide subsidized housing in the hills and gentrify East Oakland. Everyone should have neighbors who look different from themselves. 2) wealth inequality. Tax

unearned income, especially inherited property. Use that money to support those born into poverty. Increase minimum wage, but also cap maximum income. Reduce hours before employers have to pay overtime (30-35 hours) so that available work is distributed among more people. Mandate that benefits of labor efficiency due to technology be distributed equally to all employees.

- Experiment with universal income and prioritize reparations; invest in clean use sites where people suffering from substance use disorder can be connected to recovery services; invest in mental health support services to address root causes; implement longer term strategies centered on the exponential development of affordable housing instead of over relying on temporary and transitional housing; partner with churches and organizations with available parking lot space as sites for future housing; incentivize conversion of old office spaces into affordable housing

Economic needs

- Build non-condensed housing for young city employees that gives them 5 year access to affordable housing as part of their work.
- Create a city-wide "Medicare for all" program that uncouples health care from employment
- Subsidize payroll for small business owners so they can afford to pay more without going out of business
- Enforce wages that actively match with the housing market. There should be no question that a person can afford a one bed, one bath apartment in a decent area. AND: when minimum wage increases, increase other wages proportionally. If fast food workers can make $20/hr, enforce higher-ranking jobs to make proportionally more. I make $50,000 and I'm only SURVIVING. I should be able to LIVE and have all my bills paid by my work.
- Create City entry level jobs like litter pick-up, median cleaning and gardening, graffiti painting
- Hold job fairs at community events (e.g. farmers markets, concerts) for city, union and private employers to break down barriers between public and employers
- Provide more opportunities for green jobs. Have Oakland become and economic hub for generating those types of jobs
- Create citywide huge bulletin boards with job postings for all kinds of jobs for people for whom Internet searches are barriers
- Partner with large corporations to create job training programs and internships. Make that a requirement for any large corporation located in Oakland, i.e. Clorox or Kaiser, etc.

Small business development

- Facade improvement should include replacement windows, doors, and repair of damage as a result of crime, and fortification to prevent crime
- Loan and grant program for small business startups
- Whatever happened to the Public Bank? Access to financing was the main reason I failed to open a local grocery store.
- Provide fee waivers for small businesses like the hotdog vendors that the coliseum is targeting. Workshops for how to fill out those forms if there currently aren't any.
- Create an office for worker-owned cooperative development (like in NYC) and incentive conversion of existing business into worker owned cooperatives. Incentivize city contracting of coops through procurement policies.
- Lower parking meter costs in commercial areas. Add parking spaces and eliminate bad bike lanes like Telegraph Ave. Demolish the Clay Street Parking garage and build new parking lot
- Reduce procedural/tax burdens which are the largest barriers to entry for small businesses. Drowning in logistics and city required costs.
- Create policy that demands owners of commercial available space to become affordable if vacant more than 6 months, and do not give the option to pay a fee to remain empty. Our commerce areas need to be full to attract people downtown and to encourage local money to stay local.

Appendix B: Current Services, Partnerships, and Initiatives

This appendix outlines efforts underway in Oakland to address housing, homelessness, economic opportunity, and public safety.

Affordable Housing

Two major initiatives in Oakland and a good source for additional insights in the domain of affordable housing are the 2022 Oakland City Challenge and the Oakland Housing Element. The City Challenge was a year-long public engagement effort aimed to bring city officials and residents together to create and implement resident-driven solutions to pressing urban issues (City Challenge Oakland, 2022a). The Housing Element, a component of the city's general plan, was designed to align policies with the city's housing needs while preserving existing housing stock and setting priorities for new development (City of Oakland n.d.c). Initiatives that stemmed from the Housing Element include the reassessment of housing permits and repurposing real estate for affordable housing.

The urgent need to accelerate construction of affordable housing and address homelessness has led to initiatives such as converting vacant lots and buildings into new affordable units and investing in temporary shelters. For example, the City announced a $14.3 million dollar award to Dignity Moves, a Housing Consortium of the East Bay, as part of California's Homekey program. The funding will go to converting a vacant lot located at 9418 Edes Ave/606 Clara St. in Oakland's 7th district into 467 affordable housing units, which will be called Dignity Village (City of Oakland 2024a; Dignity Moves n.d.). This initiative focuses on housing security for unhoused seniors, the fastest growing demographic facing homelessness (Marion 2024).

According to Garcia et al. (2023), faith-based institutions, which own more than 170,000 acres of land statewide (five times the size of Oakland), hold significant, untapped potential to generate more affordable housing. The approval of Senate Bill 4, which streamlines the process for constructing affordable housing on land owned by religious institutions, seeks to unleash this potential (California YIMBY n.d.). In a recent example, Strive Real Estate LLC, which advocates for affordable housing, applied to renovate the Brooklyn Presbyterian Church in the Clinton neighborhood, which has been abandoned for over seven years (Nelson 2023; Precision Property Measurements n.d.). The new project will create 42 new housing units, 23 of which will be designated as low-income (Nelson 2023).

In January 2024, the City made improvements to its permitting process for routine construction projects, including painting, plumbing, electrical, heating and ventilation, and solar panel installation. It introduced 10 new rapid permits and consolidated 24 different permits into six types. These updates to the City's permitting process, which

was widely perceived as onerous, aims to streamline and simplify the permit process and reduce unnecessary delays (City of Oakland 2024c; Singh-Hudson 2024).

On October 15, 2024, the city announced several successes in efforts to address concerns over affordable housing in Oakland. Through the City's Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), over 1,500 affordable housing units are currently under construction, with 50% of these units dedicated to housing people who are exiting homelessness. According to Thao in her "State of the City" address, 84% of these residents would have lost their home without their support (KTVU 2024, 16:52). Overall, the City received $350 million through Measure U and $144 million from state grants (e.g. Project Homekey) into affordable and transitional housing projects (Wolfe 2024b). Finally, the City announced the establishment of an interfaith task force composed of local community leaders that will advocate on behalf of the city for continual housing support (KTVU 2024, 17:35).

Homelessness

The City has ramped up its efforts to build temporary shelters and infrastructure and to increase mental health and substance use services for those living in encampments, two of the highest priorities for Oakland residents according to the *Talking Transition* survey. One of the major setbacks for the City in addressing homelessness was securing funding to support these efforts amidst a historic budget deficit. However, the City of Oakland has managed to secure several funding sources. Through California's Homekey program, which converts local hotels and motels into permanent housing, the City secured $67.4 million between 2022-2024 to convert six hotels (City of Oakland 2023d, 2024a; Wang 2023). According to Wang (2023), these hotel conversion projects have resulted in the construction of 323 newly available units since 2022. With more Homekey applications in the pipeline for additional funding, the City could see an additional 222 units modified for permanent housing (Wang 2023).

Additionally, the City received $7.2 million through the Encampment Resolution Fund to resolve concerns over three longstanding encampments. The funding aims to provide wraparound services, offer temporary shelter, and assist with transitional housing for 150 residents by Fall 2024, with the goal of permanently housing them by Fall 2025 (City of Oakland 2024d). In the spring of 2023, the City issued an executive order and cleared several encampments, including Wood Street, the largest encampment in the city. Since then, construction has begun to build affordable housing at the site of the encampment (Orenstein 2024). During the "State of the City" address, Mayor Thao announced that 85% of residents from Wood Street accepted supportive services following the closure of the encampment, while others were offered other sheltering options.

Economic Opportunity

In May 2024, the City announced an agreement to sell 50% of its shares of the Oakland Coliseum to African American Sport and Entertainment Group (AASEG), which would bring in $105 million. The sale allows the City to avoid $63 million in cuts needed to redress its $117 million budget deficit (Ravani 2024). The deal preserves the iconic Oakland arena as an entertainment hub and comes with major investments in affordable housing. AASEG has committed to engaging the East Oakland community and proposed a $5 billion dollar project to develop the coliseum and create housing and business space (Wolfe 2024a).

Philanthropic partnerships have also taken strides to provide economic opportunities in disadvantaged neighborhoods. In 2023, Rise East, a partnership comprised of community organizations (Oakland Thrive & Black Cultural Zone) launched an initiative to invest $100 million in a community within East Oakland known as the "40x40" block. The Rise East agenda follows a 10-year plan of investing in several key areas of need, such as improving youth education, reducing community violence, increasing affordable housing, boosting the local economy, and expanding health care (Romero 2023). In addition, the Black Cultural Zone was named a recompete finalist, making it eligible for a $20-50 million award for implementation funding under the Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program (U.S. Economic Development Administration 2023). The East Oakland partnership will focus on revitalizing distressed areas in East Oakland through focused case management, job placement, and small business support. This initiative will support veterans, caregivers, returning citizens, and others who have experienced prolonged disengagement from the workforce.

Over time, Oakland has launched initiatives aimed at closing the racial wealth gap and expanding access to jobs. These efforts include training and mentoring Oakland residents for good jobs, supporting small businesses and local organizations, and maintaining clean, safe, and vibrant commercial corridors. Specific actions include improving access to affordable childcare, enforcing workers' rights, and offering job training programs. A recent effort by Oakland native and former NBA player Jason Kidd as well as current NBA player Jaylen Brown seeks to bridge the racial wealth gap with the launch of a non-profit organization, Oakland Xchange (PR Newswire 2024). Xchange, which is partnering with Oakstop, aims to create $5 billion in net value for historically marginalized communities. Oakland Xchange plans to address the racial wealth gap by integrating real estate development, business education, technology, and cultural competency to foster economic growth (PR Newswire 2024). Xchange will also partner with several educational institutions, such as UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business and Stanford University's Graduate School of Business to fuse university resources in the various Xchange locations and establish hubs for growing investment (PR Newswire 2024).

Other initiatives, such as Activate Oakland, aim to revitalize commercial districts across Oakland, by sponsoring events and activities that draw foot traffic. One success story was the Prescott Night Market, established in the summer of 2024 in West Oakland, which will transition into a brick-and-mortar location in 2025 (Bradshaw 2024).

Having recently suffered the loss of its three flagship teams, Oakland is also looking for new opportunities to redevelop its sports entertainment market. The arrival of the Oakland Ballers (B's), an independent baseball team established in 2024 following the relocation of the Athletics, has boosted the City's sports profile, as have the Oakland Roots, the City's first soccer team. The City's partnership with the Bay Area Host Committee (BAHC) plans to restore the Bay Area as a central hub for sports entertainment, with plans to host the 2025 NBA All-Star Game, the 2026 NFL Super Bowl, and the 2026 FIFA World Cup, a move that is estimated to have an economic impact of 1.4 billion (BAHC 2024).

The City has also made strides to make Oakland an epicenter for tech and clean energy jobs with the recent launch of the California Hydrogen Hub at the Port of Oakland, which will generate an estimated $2.9 billion in value and over 200,000 union jobs (Newsom 2024c). Additionally, the City's inclusion in the Bloomberg's American Sustainable Cities initiative provides over $400 billion in available funding to address climate change and racial and wealth inequity. There is also some discussion of establishing an HBCU institution in Oakland, with the City setting its sights on the former Holy Names University campus as a potential location (Kanik 2024).

Public Safety

On May 30, 2023, Oakland City Councilmember Dan Kalb organized a community meeting on crime and violence at Oakland Technical High School where hundreds of residents voiced frustrations about the surge in crime (Raguso 2023; Swan 2023). Community members and business owners called for increased police presence, faster 911 response times, and policies that are tough on crime (Raguso 2023). In a push to address residents' concerns, the City announced a major upgrade to Oakland's 911-dispatch with the goal, following Governor Newsom's mandate, that 90% of calls for service be answered within 15 seconds or less (Romero 2024).

Public safety and housing security intersect, often affecting similar populations and requiring simultaneous investments in neighborhood safety, police accountability, and programs that address the root causes of violence. UC Berkeley's Possibility Lab has spearheaded the Firsthand Framework for Policy Innovation, a bold initiative focusing on grassroots, community-driven solutions for public safety in Oakland's most challenging neighborhoods. Collaborating with local organizations like Trybe and the City's Department of Violence Prevention, the project has engaged in extensive community outreach, including focus groups and town halls, to capture and redefine

indicators of community well-being. This initiative aims to develop policies that go beyond traditional policing, incorporating support for youth, mental health services, and economic security. This bottom-up approach empowers residents to shape the solutions to the issues they face daily, such as violence, homelessness, and lack of basic services. The initiative's early successes have drawn attention from policymakers in Sacramento and beyond, positioning it as a potential model for community-led public safety reform in other cities facing similar challenges (Levy et al. 2024).

Another significant effort is the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland program (MACRO), which manages non-violent incidents without police intervention (City of Oakland, n.d.a, n.d.b). Officially launched in 2022, MACRO is designed to provide non-law enforcement responses to non-violent, non-emergent 911 calls, particularly those involving behavioral health, substance use, and unsheltered individuals. Modeled after the successful CAHOOTS program in Eugene, Oregon (Beck et al. 2020), MACRO's primary goals include reducing negative outcomes from law enforcement interactions, particularly for BIPOC communities, increasing access to community-based services for people in crisis, and alleviating the workload and expenses of the Oakland Police and Fire Departments by redirecting appropriate 911 calls to this alternative response system. Within the first few months of implementation, MARCO received over 2,000 calls for service, with the majority (73%) being calls for wellness checks (Freeman 2022).

Following the appointment of a new police chief and reinvestment in crime prevention strategies, such as Operation Ceasefire, Oakland is currently on pace to record under 100 homicides in 2024, a 30% reduction from 2023 and the lowest number since 2019 (KTVU 2024). The City has also made technology updates to increase safety, such as installing 290 Flock safety cameras that read license plates and overhauling its 911 operating system. 911 response time improved from 36 to 51% in calls answered within 15 seconds (KTVU 2024). The City also plans to collaborate with the Federal Aviation Administration and Privacy Advisory Commission to establish a first-responder drone program, which will triage calls and provide real-time, live-feed information to officers. Finally, Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention secured $2 million in federal funding (City of Oakland 2024e) and an additional $3 million in funding from Kaiser Permanente to implement proactive public safety measures (Joshi 2024).

Appendix C: Original Talking Transition Survey (in English)

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey. In this survey, we will ask you about three topics that Oaklanders have shared as top priorities for the City: affordable housing and homelessness, community safety, and economic opportunity. **All responses will be anonymous.**

To continue the conversation, join us at our upcoming public events on **September 16 and September 23, 2023** and stay updated at http://www.oaklandca.gov/talkingtransition.

About You

1. Where in Oakland do you live?
   (insert ZIP Code): __a_____
2. Please select your age range

   15 or younger

   16 or 17

   18-24

   25-34

   35-44

   45-54

   55-64

   65-74

   75-84

   85 or older
3. Which of the following best represents your gender identity?

   Woman

   Man

   Non-binary or Non-conforming

   Gender identity not listed here

   I prefer not to answer this question.
4. What is your approximate household income?

   Less than $25,000

   $25,000 to $39,999

   $40,000 to $59,999

   $60,000 to $74,999

   $75,000 to $99,999

   $100,000 to $124,999

   $125,000 or More

I prefer not to answer this question.

5. Please select the racial identity that best represents you. (Select all that apply)

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White (Hispanic or Non-Hispanic)

Other, please describe: _____

6. What is your ethnic identity? (Please select all that apply)

White/European

Black/African American

East Asian

South Asian

Native American/Indigenous or Alaska Native

West Asian/Middle Eastern

Southeast Asian

Caribbean

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Mexican

Central American

South American

Other Hispanic or Latino

Multi-ethnic

Prefer not to answer

Other, please describe: _____

7. Which of the below best describes your housing situation? (Please select one)

I own my home/apartment

I rent my home/apartment

I rent a living space/garage within a house or apartment

I live with someone but do not pay rent

I am currently unhoused, living in a shelter, or living in another non-permanent place (e.g., car or tent)

Other, please describe:

Housing all Oaklanders

Housing and homelessness continue to be one of the top priorities for Oaklanders. Almost half of all renters in Oakland spend more than 30% of their income on rent, BIPOC Oaklanders are struggling the most with high costs of housing, and there are

over 5,000 unhoused residents living in the city. How can the City make sure everyone in Oakland has access to affordable, safe, quality housing?

8. What should the City prioritize to house all Oaklanders? (Select your top 3).

Advocate to the state to build more temporary and transitional housing for unhoused residents

Invest in programs to protect renters and prevent displacement

Advocate to the County to expand housing services for those leaving jail or recently hospitalized for mental health/substance use

Make it easier for developers to build affordable housing

Ensure all affordable housing projects are built by Oaklanders receiving a living wage with benefits

Make it easier for developers to build housing priced at average or above-average rent

Convert buildings into affordable housing

I prefer not to answer this question

Other, please specify:_____

9. How should the City protect renters and make sure people can stay in their homes? (Select your top 3)

Provide legal services to people facing eviction

Protect against housing discrimination, including for race, incarceration history, and eviction history

Expand rental assistance programs, including for renters who do not control their lease

Build new affordable rental housing

Provide emergency financial assistance for people facing eviction

I prefer not to answer this question

Other, please specify: _____

10. How should the City support people experiencing homelessness? (Select your top 3).

Provide mental health and substance use support programs

Build temporary shelters, such as tiny homes/cabins and safe RV parking sites

Invest in programs to provide trash and sanitation services around encampments

Advocate to the County to expand wrap-around services at existing supportive housing sites

Remove "illegal parking" fees and fines for people living in their cars

Ensure programs to support people experiencing homelessness are available to all regardless of their legal status.

I prefer not to answer this question
Other, please specify:_____

Improving Community Safety

Oakland has a long history of community playing a role in keeping Oakland safe. COVID-19 disrupted the delivery of critical services to the most vulnerable members of our community and led to increased instances of gun and gender-based violence, taking a significant toll on Oakland's Black and brown communities. How might Oakland improve community-led services to increase safety by addressing root causes of violence, and supporting previously incarcerated individuals to access healthcare, housing, and jobs?

11. How can the City make your neighborhood safer? (Select your top 3)

      Expand programs that send mental health professionals instead of police for non-violent cases or instances involving people experiencing mental health crises

      Expand programs to reduce group/gang-related shootings

      Expand programs to reduce the number of guns on the streets

      Expand programs to reduce gender-based violence and support survivors of domestic violence

      Increase victim support services

      Activate public spaces (including parks, plazas, and community centers) and enhance lighting and maintenance of sidewalks

      Reduce illegal dumping and improve trash pickups to make streets cleaner and more welcoming

      Expand neighborhood-level engagement projects including tree planting and community clean-ups

      I prefer not to answer this question

      Other, please specify:_____

12. How should the City keep young Oaklanders and that their families safe and reduce potential involvement in the justice system? (Select your top 3)

      Invest in youth reentry services, including school placement and healthcare services

      Invest in models that provide 18 to 25-year-old Oaklanders a one-stop-shop for accessing housing, wraparound services, and job/career training

      Improve access to mental health and substance use services

      Invest in diversion programs to support youth before illegal activity escalates

      Expand support for victims of human trafficking, including programs that provide emergency housing

Make existing programs accessible by removing barriers based on legal status or language proficiency

Invest in recreational programs and after-school programs for young Oaklanders

Better protection and support for foster youth

I prefer not to answer this question

Other, please specify:_____

13. How should the City best support Oaklanders who have been previously incarcerated? (Select your top 3)

Create more affordable, supportive, transitional housing with wraparound services

Create more employment programs for individuals recently reentering their communities

Improve access to mental health and substance use services

Connect people to mentorship programs with trusted community leaders

Require private companies to "ban the box" to end discrimination against formerly incarcerated people seeking employment

I prefer not to answer this question

Other, please specify:_____

Improving Policing

Police are charged with the important role of enforcing the law while upholding the constitutional rights of community members. For over twenty years, the Oakland Police Department has been working to leave federal monitoring and build trust with Oakland's diverse communities.

14. How should the City improve policing in Oakland? (Select your top 3)

Increase the number of officers by improving graduation rates of police academies

Have police officers patrol by foot or bicycle instead of car

Improve the mental health support officers receive

Invest in improving the 911 dispatch system, including improving response times by educating the community about what situations require a gun and a badge to respond and what alternative services exist

Ensure a diverse range of Oaklanders, including young adults, participate in the OPD hiring process

Invest in civilian oversight and engaging the community to oversee safety measures

Broaden and improve responses to human trafficking, including training on engaging survivors

Expand community-led training for police officers

Improve officers' education and socialization of Oakland's diverse communities outside the context of crime

I prefer not to answer this question

Other, please specify:_____

Economic Opportunity for all Oaklanders

The City's future economy should be one that supports all Oaklanders to thrive by removing barriers to opportunity. How can the City promote inclusive economic development, create investments that support jobs with living wages, attract competitive firms, and support small business owners?

15. What should the City do to support small businesses in Oakland to thrive? (Select your top 3).

Provide skills training and technical support (including on workers' rights) and make sure training is accessible in multiple languages

Make permitting processes faster and reduce permitting fees

Activate downtown and public spaces, including investments in lighting and sidewalk repair

Expand façade and tenanting improvement programs

Increase police foot patrols around commercial corridors

Provide financial support for business-owners who wish to install security cameras

Enforce illegal dumping violations along commercial corridors

Support short-term leases to make it easier for emerging entrepreneurs to rent space

Remove barriers for small entrepreneurs accessing City contracts

Incentivize high-road small businesses to provide quality jobs to local residents

I prefer not to answer this question

Other, please specify:_____

16. How can the City help young Oaklanders access good jobs? (Select your top 3)

Expand programs to connect high school students to paid job training programs

Expand programs to connect high school students to post-secondary education opportunities, including community colleges

Create intentional pipelines for employment at the City of Oakland with living wages and benefits

Create year-round work opportunities for 18 to 25-year-old Oaklanders

Provide youth with access to information on workers' rights and legal services

Make job training programs accessible by providing language access and basic skill development training

I prefer not to answer this question

Other, please specify:_____

17. What should the City prioritize to ensure new and existing jobs meet the economic needs of all residents? (Select your top 3)

Increase the minimum wage

Help employers find affordable healthcare plans

Create an employer training program so that small business owners better understand worker rights laws

Help employees understand their rights and connect employees to resources and services

Increase access to affordable childcare and care for seniors

Strengthen anti-discrimination policies in hiring and in the workplace

Protect workers in vulnerable jobs, including care workers (children, seniors), restaurant workers, and those in the "gig" economy (drivers for companies like Uber/Lyft, day laborers, delivery drivers, cleaners, etc.)

Enforce worker rights protections, including minimum wage and sick leave

I prefer not to answer this question

Other, please specify:_____

Additional Demographic Questions

18. How many children (under 18) live in your household? _____

19. How many seniors (65 and above) live in your household? _____

20. Do you identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, or Asexual (LGBTQIA+)?

Yes

No

I prefer not to answer this question

21. Do you identify as a person with a disability or other chronic condition?

Yes

No

I prefer not to answer this question

22. If you are a canvasser, please enter your code here. If not, please skip this question. _____