



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: Office of the Mayor and the Oakland First Fridays community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community and City announce changes to March 1 Oakland First Fridays event

When tragedy struck in the Uptown neighborhood after February's Oakland First Fridays event, everyone involved in the festival knew that the next event could not be a business-as-usual affair.

In that spirit, City staffers and numerous First Friday stakeholders have been meeting together regularly over the last few weeks, to ensure that March 1 will be a unique event in the history of Oakland First Fridays. The meetings, hosted by Mayor Jean Quan and facilitated by Councilmember Lynette Gibson McElhaney, included members of the Oakland First Fridays community, Art Murmur organizers, local residents and neighborhood business owners. The result has been a developing working relationship that preserves the organic, community-grown spirit of Oakland First Fridays while tackling a collective responsibility to keep everyone safe at this growing Oakland mainstay.

People coming to the March 1 event will see numerous changes – some of the most noticeable will be:

1. Across the event, all the programming and performances will be united around themes of unity, diversity, healing and peace.
2. There will be two long moments of silence held across the entire event.
3. The event will end one hour earlier, at 9 p.m.
4. The footprint will be shortened, to take place along Telegraph Avenue from West Grand Avenue to 27th Street.
5. Public drinking of alcohol will not be allowed. Art galleries within the immediate vicinity will suspend alcohol service on March 1 as well.

“I have loved Oakland First Fridays and attended almost every one for six years. They are treasured, locally grown events, a social and creative engine and a big reason why Oakland was recently named among the 12 best ‘art places’ in the country,” Quan said. “Oakland draws 4 million visitors every year to more than 60 festivals and events without incident, and First Fridays are a great highlight.”

“Oakland First Fridays and Art Murmur represent the very best of Oakland: diverse communities finding healing and connection through a celebration of the arts,” said Gibson McElhaney, who represents the district where the popular event is held. “I am honored to have played a part in planning the March 1 event which will be a type of ‘second line’ celebration of Kianté Campbell and all of those we’ve lost to gun violence in our city.”

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Specific changes in programming for March 1 include a Peace Concert and Kiante Campbell stage featuring local artists and musicians, in partnership with 38th Notes, Oaklandish and RespectOurCity.org, to be held from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Telegraph Avenue between 25th and 26th streets.

There will also be a “Heal the Hood” stage on 24th Street and Telegraph Avenue, featuring poets, musicians, DJs and community groups.

A Solutions Salon on the topic of youth violence will be held at the New Parkway Theater from 4 to 6 p.m.

In addition, there will be numerous altars and peace vigils throughout the footprint, as a token of remembrance and healing.

Please note that the changes are specific to the March 1 event. Going forward, much more change is needed to keep Oakland First Fridays safe and sustainable. Both the City and the First Fridays organization are committed to continuing the dialogue around this issue, and widening the conversation to include the greater Oakland community in working together to create solutions.

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