

NEWS FROM THE OAKLAND ETHICS COMMISSION

CITY OF OAKLAND Public Ethics Commission

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Public Ethics Commission Urges New Approaches to Transparency in Oakland

Charged with ensuring fairness, openness, honesty, and integrity in City government, the Oakland Public Ethics Commission released a report evaluating Oakland's transparency at the Commission's public meeting on January 6, 2014.

The Commission's report, [*Toward Collaborative Transparency*](#), outlines 25 recommendations for how the City can enhance its openness as well as its collaboration with its citizens. The goal is collaborative transparency: government opens up and facilitates citizen understanding and participation, and community participants collaborate to bring meaningful change. The Commission urges the City to share more and better information about its own performance and process and encourages participation by citizens that goes far beyond the traditional "three minutes at the mic" approach at a public meeting.

"Oakland's current mix of innovation, civic engagement, and recent history of growing openness make this a significant moment for change toward greater transparency that reflects 21st century thinking and technology, and better meets our community's needs," said Aspen Baker, Vice-Chair of the Public Ethics Commission and Chair of the subcommittee that conducted the review. "This report is a roadmap for the City to become more collaborative and transparent, improving its performance and citizen trust along the way."

At Baker's request, the Public Ethics Commission initiated a review of Oakland City government transparency in January 2013 and issued initial recommendations to City officials to improve the public's access to public records. Given the responsiveness of the City Administrator on those recommendations, the Commission began a broader evaluation of Oakland government transparency and hosted a public hearing in June 2013 to learn from innovators and to facilitate a dialogue around what kind of transparency Oakland residents want from their City government. The Commission's final report and recommendations derive from what was heard at the hearing and during interviews in the months following.

"In sum, we applaud the City for recent strides to open up City government, we commend the public for continuing to push the City toward more openness, and we challenge all of us to set the bar higher and reach for greater transparency in the years to come," said the Commission in a joint-letter to Oaklanders.

The Oakland Public Ethics Commission is a seven-member board of Oakland citizens working toward more ethical and transparent City government and campaigns in Oakland. The Commission fosters transparency, promotes open government, and ensures compliance with campaign finance and Sunshine laws through a comprehensive approach that emphasizes prevention, enforcement, and collaboration. For more information, visit the Commission's webpage at www.oaklandnet.com/pec, or the Transparency Project page at <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/CityAdministration/d/PublicEthics/OAK041329>.

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