



News from: Mayor Libby Schaaf & City Administrator's Office

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2016

City Administration Acknowledges Findings of 2015-16 Grand Jury Report

Oakland, CA – Mayor Libby Schaaf's Administration today acknowledged receipt of the 2015-16 Alameda County Grand Jury report into three matters: 1) political interference with Oakland Townhouse Project, 2) City of Oakland's costly pursuit of Zero Waste franchise contracts; and 3) management issues within the City of Oakland's Revenue Division.

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In accordance with the Grand Jury's requirements, the City of Oakland has 90 days to formally respond to the recommendations made by the Grand Jury in this annual report, and the Administration is committed to issuing a formal and detailed response to the findings and recommendations no later than September 8, 2016.

The Administration provides the following initial comments on the three areas of Grand Jury investigation.

Oakland Townhouse Project

The City's Administrative Instructions (AI 596) are clear and unequivocal: City Councilmembers may not direct the work of City staff. City Charter Section 218 (Interference in Administrative Affairs) states: "The City Charter provides that members of legislative bodies (City Council, Redevelopment Agency) shall not give direction to, or attempt to coerce or influence, employees under the jurisdiction of the City Administrator, Mayor, City Attorney or City Auditor regarding any contract, project, personnel matter or any other administrative action. In accordance with the City Charter, employees shall not take direction from members of the legislative body."

The Administration acknowledges that past instability of leadership in the City Administrator's Office created challenges for City staff when managing the complex network of issues surrounding the work of the City, especially development projects such as the one reviewed by the Grand Jury. The City Administrator's Office will work closely with the Public Ethics Commission staff to reinforce for City employees all rules and policies regarding chain of command, ethical conduct, conflicts of interest and appropriate interaction with elected officials.

Zero Waste Contracts

Concluding the City's Zero Waste franchise agreements was a lengthy and challenging process. We continue to evaluate aspects of the program that can be improved to better serve the public and will work closely with both our contracting partners to achieve those improvements.

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Revenue Division

The Administration appreciates the Grand Jury's acknowledgement of all the good work that is being done by the current staff and new management in the Revenue Division to improve communications and business practices and processes. Revenue collection is a key priority and we are pleased to confirm that work is solidly underway in all three of the areas recommended for further action in the report: 1) identifying goals and objects; 2) a new policy for waiving tax penalties; and 3) implementation of a new tax collection software system.

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