CITY OF OAKLAND

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AGENDA REPORT

TO: JOHN A FLORES
INTERIM CITY ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: KIRAN BAWA

SUBJECT: Budget Priorities Poll

DATE: February 9, 2015

City Administrator Approval

Date 2/10/15

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide

RECOMMENDATION

Receive an informational report presenting the results of the 2015 budget priorities poll of Oakland residents conducted in accordance with the Consolidated Fiscal Policy (Ordinance 13279 C M S) as part of the FY 2015-2017 budget development

OUTCOME

This is an informational report providing analysis to the City Council and the public of the survey conducted to assess budget priorities, concerns and needs of Oakland residents (Attachment A)

BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On December 9, 2014, the City Council approved the Consolidated Fiscal Policy (Ordinance 13279 CMS) which directs staff to conduct a professional and statistically valid poll of Oakland residents as part of the biennial budget development process for assessing the public's needs, concerns, and priorities The Consolidated Fiscal Policy also requires the survey questions to be submitted to the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) for review of bias, relevance, consistency in administration, inclusion of benchmark questions, and ability to assess concerns, needs and priorities.

The FY 2014-15 Amended Midcycle Budget included an appropriation of $45,000 to conduct a professional poll. Through a competitive bid process, the consultant Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) was selected to conduct the survey FM3 has experience conducting a similar budget priority survey for San Jose recently and various community polls for other cities in the bay area Additionally, they have conducted community surveys for Oakland in the past (2002, 2005 and 2008) which serve as comparative benchmark information The questions were developed in accordance with the Consolidated Fiscal Policy FM3 and the staff met with the

BAC prior to release of the poll to solicit their feedback and input The BAC unanimously approved the final survey questions that were submitted for polling

ANALYSIS

FM3 conducted a telephone survey of 701 randomly-selected registered voters to assess their views on the City's budget priorities. The survey was conducted in English, Spanish and Cantonese Please see the accompanying report for the FM3's full analysis A high level summary of the results of the survey are provided below

Overall, the survey results suggest that voters in Oakland are generally satisfied with life in their City, although they are less pleased with how City government delivers services Their top priorities for the budget include public safety – police, fire, and emergency services – as well as education & children, jobs, and affordable housing Addressing crime and violence and provided associated services were clearly the top priority irrespective of the many in which the question was asked

Many expect the City to have a budget shortfall, and if there is a shortfall, the overwhelming preference is to address it with revenue increases rather than cuts in programs both when asking generally and with regard to cuts in specific services A majority of voters favored increasing revenues to maintain or to increase nearly all of the services that were polled Over two-thirds of residents would pay more to maintain or increase the following services.

- Emergency medical response
- Violence prevention and intervention services
- Police protection in your neighborhood
- Fire prevention and response
- Job training and employment programs
- Repair of potholes in city streets and broken sidewalks
- Child care and Head Start programs
- Youth programs at city parks and recreation centers
- Housing programs and affordable housing development
- Clean-up and removal of illegal dumping

Oakland residents draw from a variety of information sources to learn about City government issues and have a range of preferences for how they interact with the City in the future. Television news is the most popular method for learning about City government, followed by newspapers, word of mouth, and social media. Preferences for future interactions with City government are split fairly evenly between interacting in person, by email, via website, or by phone

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

The BAC held three public meeting to discuss the poll and its questions through the fall and winter of 2014 The final polling instrument was approved a public special meeting of the BAC

COORDINATION

The Budget Advisory Committee was instrumental in the development of the poll and its questions The City Administrator's Office also provided helpful input and guidance

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

There are no costs or fiscal impacts associated with the acceptance of this report

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic. No direct economic opportunities have been identified

Environmental No direct environmental opportunities have been identified

Social Equity: No direct social equity opportunities have been identified

For questions regarding this report, please contact Bradley Johnson, Assistant to the City Administrator, at (510) 238-6119

Respectfully submitted,

KIRAN BAWA
Budget Director

Prepared by
Bradley Johnson, Assistant to the City Administrator

Attachments:
A: Professional Polling Analysis by FM3

Item: _____
Finance & Management Committee
February 24, 2015

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Between January 27-31, 2015, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) conducted a telephone survey of 701 randomly-selected registered voters in the City of Oakland to assess their views on issues related to the Oakland City budget The survey questionnaire was translated and administered in Spanish and Cantonese, as well as in English

Survey questions were developed in consultation with City staff and the City's Budget Advisory Committee, and several were repeated from similar surveys conducted in 2005, 2002 and 2000 It is important to note in making comparisons to previous years that the sample for those surveys were drawn by a random digit dialing or RDD methodology from the entire population of Oakland residents, rather than only registered voters Due to the escalating costs associated with conducting RDD surveys – and the practical difficulties with interviewing a representative sample using this methodology – this survey was conducted using a voter sample. Additionally, the sample was weighted slightly to conform to demographic data on the City's electorate.

61 percent of the interviews were conducted with respondents who make "all" or "most" of their phone calls on cell phones Seven percent of the interviews were conducted in Spanish (4%) or Cantonese (3%) 15 percent of respondents reported being born outside the U.S., and their countries of origin are summarized in the table below

Country of origin	Number of respondents
Mexico	18
China	13
Philippines	10
El Salvador	3
England	3
Hong Kong	3
Jamaica	3
Vietnam	3
Argentina	2
Canada	2
Morocco	2
Nigeria	2
Afghanistan	1
Ethiopia	1

Country of origin	Number of respondents
Holland	1
Honduras	1
India	1
Indonesia	1
Iran	1
Japan	1
Kenya	1
Nicaragua	1
Panama	1
Puerto Rico	1
Russia	1
Taiwan	1
United Kingdom	1
Yemen	1

The margin of error for the survey sample as a whole is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level The margin of error for smaller subgroups within the sample is larger Finally, it should be noted that due to rounding, not all combined percentages will sum to their assumed total. For example, 13 4 percent and 12.4 percent are shown as 13 and 12 percent in this report, and instead of their combined total summing to 25 percent, it sums to 26 percent (25 8 percent).

This report discusses and analyzes the survey's principal findings Following a brief summary of findings, the report is divided into four parts·

- **Part 1** examines Oakland voters' views of life in the City and the overall performance of City government in delivering services.
- **Part 2** explores general impressions of the City budget and preference for how to deal with a budget shortfall
- **Part 3** focuses on specific priorities for City spending and preferences for revenue increases or budget cuts in specific programs
- **Part 4** addresses respondents' preferences for how to interact with City government

The topline results of the survey are included at the end of the report in **Appendix A**

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Overall, the survey results suggest that voters in Oakland are generally satisfied with life in their City, although they are less pleased with how City government delivers services Many expect the City to have a budget shortfall, and if there is a shortfall, the overwhelming preference is to address it with revenue increases rather than cuts in programs. Their top priorities for the budget include public safety – police, fire, and emergency services – as well as education, jobs, and affordable housing They learn about City government in a number of different ways (with television news the #1 information source) and express a range of preferences for future interactions with the City (with a plurality favoring in-person interactions).

More specifically·

- Seven in ten respondents (70%) rate Oakland as an excellent (26%) or good (44%) place to live

- Only 32 percent, however, say Oakland city government does an excellent (3%) or good (28%) job providing services for the people who live there, while 44 percent rate the City's performance as fair and 18 percent as poor

- A plurality (47%) expect a budget shortfall for the upcoming year, 2015, including 21 percent who expect a large shortfall. Only 11 percent expect a surplus and 18 percent expect a balanced budget, while 24 percent do not know enough to provide an expectation

- Improving public safety is a clear priority for voters when considering City spending, followed by issues related to education and children, jobs, and affordable housing

    - Assorted issues related to crime, violence, police funding and public safety top the list of concerns raised by respondents, with 38 percent volunteering one of these as the most serious problem in the city and another 24 percent who name it second
    - When asked to consider what qualities make a city a good place to live, low rates or crime and violence is rated as extremely important by 80 percent of respondents, more than any other issue, with a series of issues including promoting literacy, emergency medical services, job availability, and affordable housing making up a second tier, with over six in ten calling them extremely important

- The electorate prefers raising revenue to cutting services as a way to deal with a potential budget shortfall, both in general, and when faced with particular programs.

    - To address a budget shortfall, in concept a majority (54%) preferred raising additional revenue, including taxes or fees, while only 22 percent would choose to cut existing City services.
    - Presented with a series of City programs, majorities would choose to pay more in taxes or fees rather than cut them The programs respondents are least willing to cut are those that reflect their priorities for the budget, including emergency medical

response (80% would pay more to maintain or improve) and police protection in your neighborhood (79% would pay more)

- The only programs a majority would be willing to cut include graffiti removal (52% cut), and attracting and keeping professional sports teams (60% cut)

➢ Voters learn about City government issues in a number of ways and express a range of preferences for how they interact with the City in the future

- Television news is the most popular method for learning about City government (29% say it is their first choice), followed by newspapers (18%), word of mouth (10%) and social media (10%)
- Preferences for future interactions are almost as diverse, with 35 percent saying they prefer interacting in person, 27 percent by email, 26 percent on a website, and 24 percent on the phone (each respondent was allowed to select multiple options).

➢ The general pattern described above holds for most subgroups of the City, with overall satisfaction being high, crime and violence a serious concern, and an interest in raising revenues rather than cutting programs to deal with a budget shortfall. There are some differences of degree by subgroup, however, which are spelled out in the body of the report

The remainder of this report presents these and other results of the survey in more detail

PART 1: IMPRESSIONS OF LIFE IN OAKLAND

Overall, survey respondents generally felt quite positive towards life in Oakland, but offered lower marks to how well the City provides services to its residents

1.1 Perceptions of Oakland as a Place to Live

As a place to live, Oakland receives high marks. Seven in ten survey respondents rated it as "excellent" (26%) or "good" (44%), while only three in ten (30%) rated it as "only fair" (22%) or "poor" (9%) As **Figure 1** illustrates, this is slightly more positive than the surveys between 2000 and 2005 found, with most of the increases coming among those who feel life in Oakland is "excellent "

FIGURE 1:
Current and Historical Perceptions of Life in Oakland

Generally speaking, how would you rate Oakland as a place to live
is it an excellent place to live, a good place, only fair, or a poor place to live?

Rating	%			
	2000	2002	2005	2015
Total positive	**65**	**64**	**61**	**70**
Excellent	18	19	19	26
Good	47	45	42	44
Total negative	**35**	**35**	**38**	**30**
Only fair	28	27	30	22
Poor	7	8	8	9

Results among subgroups

Several subgroups expressed more positive feelings about the quality of life in Oakland These respondents were disproportionately white, well-educated, younger, more recent residents to Oakland, and with somewhat higher levels of income:

- Whites (39% "excellent" compared to 26% overall),
- Those with middle-to-higher levels of income, including $75,000-$100,000 (36%) and $100,000-$150,000 (34%),
- Residents of City Council District 1 (36%) and District 3 (33%),
- Those who have lived in Oakland less than ten years (34%),
- Those with post-graduate degrees (35%) or any four-year college degree (33%);
- Men ages 18-49 (34%),
- Those ages 30-39 (34%),
- Those who are self-employed (33%), and
- Democrats ages 18-49 (32%)

In comparison, the subgroups who disproportionately rated life in Oakland as "poor" were Chinese Americans and Latinos (and immigrants, overall), retirees, those with lower levels of educational attainment and income, and some categories of older respondents

- Those interviewed in Spanish or Chinese (35% "poor" compared to 9% overall),
- Immigrants (24%);
- Chinese Americans (22%) and Latinos (18%),
- Retirees (20%),
- Those with a high school education or less (19%) and women without college degrees (16%),
- Residents of City Council District 7 (18%),
- Women ages 50+ (17%) and those age 75 + overall (15%),
- Independents ages 50+ (17%), and
- Those with household incomes under $30,000 a year (17%)

1.2 Perception of City Government Services

In contrast to the generally positive ratings given to life in Oakland overall, the City's provision of services received more mixed ratings from survey respondents. One-third (32%) rated *the overall job being done by Oakland city government in providing services for the people who live here* as "excellent" (3%) or "good" (28%), while 44 percent rated it as "only fair" and 18 percent rate it as "poor" As shown in **Figure 2**, these ratings are generally comparable to the ratings given by Oakland residents in 2000, 2002, and 2005

FIGURE 2:
Current and Historical Perceptions of Provision of City Services

How would you rate the overall job being done by Oakland city government in providing services to the people who live here excellent, good, only fair or poor?

Rating	%			
	2000	**2002**	**2005**	**2015**
Total positive	**34**	**40**	**30**	**32**
Excellent	4	5	2	3
Good	30	35	28	28
Total negative	**62**	**56**	**67**	**62**
Only fair	49	42	49	44
Poor	13	14	18	18

Results among Subgroups

In general, there were not large variations between different subgroups in how they viewed City government's provision of services While no more than eight percent of any of the subgroups viewed the provision of City services as "excellent," a few subgroups did express disproportionately positive opinions when their "excellent" and "good" ratings were combined This tended to be respondents at the age extremes, upper-middle incomes, very recent Oakland residents, and whites

- Those ages 75+ (44% "excellent" or "good" compared to 32% overall) and ages 18-29 (41%),
- Those with household incomes of $75,000-$100,000 (43%),
- Those who have lived in Oakland less than two years (41%),
- Whites (40%), and
- Residents of City Council District 4 (37%)

The subgroups disproportionately rating the City's provision of services as "poor" included longer-term and generally older City residents, African Americans, higher income residents, and those with children at home.

- Those who have lived in Oakland for more than 40 years (28% "poor" compared to 18% overall);
- Residents of City Council District 7 (28%) and District 5 (23%),
- Those ages 40-49 (24%), 50-64 (25%), and 65-74 (23%),
- African Americans (24%),
- Widowed or divorced residents (24%),
- Those with household incomes greater than $150,000 (24%), and
- Those with school-aged children at home (23%).

Given the disparate responses to the questions about living in Oakland versus the City's provision of services, it can be informative to look at the intersection of those questions More specifically, nearly two in five (38%) survey respondents indicated that Oakland is an "excellent" or "good" place to live, but feel that City government does an "only fair" or "poor" job providing services The subgroups disproportionately falling into this category tended to be white, recent City residents with full-time employment, high incomes and educational levels:

- Those with household incomes greater than $150,000 (59% compared to 38% overall),
- Those living with a partner (50%),
- Those ages 30-39 (48%),
- Those who have lived in Oakland 2-5 year (47%);
- Residents of City Council District 1 (46%),
- Those employed full-time (42%) or don't work in Oakland (46%),
- Those with at least four-year college degrees (43%);
- Whites (43%), and
- Those who were born in the United States (42%).

PART 2: GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE OAKLAND CITY BUDGET

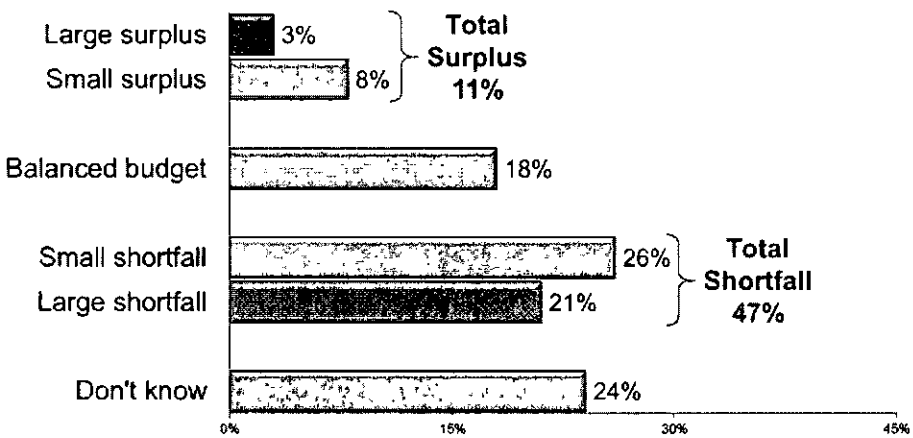
Survey respondents were more inclined to expect a shortfall than a surplus for this year's budget, and they indicated that they would rather address a shortfall with revenue increases than with cuts to services

2.1 Expectations for This Year's Budget

Thinking about the upcoming year, 2015, nearly half of survey respondents (47%) indicated a belief that the City of Oakland will start its budget process with a "budget shortfall " Asked to quantify their expectation as a "small shortfall" or a "large shortfall," this group is fairly evenly divided 26 percent expect a small shortfall and 21 percent expect the shortfall to be large, as shown in **Figure 3** Another 18 percent anticipate a "balanced budget," while 11 percent anticipate a "surplus," and 24 percent do not know enough to offer an opinion

FIGURE 3:
Expectations for the 2015 Budget Process

Thinking about this upcoming year, 2015, do you think that the City of Oakland will start its budget process with a budget surplus, a balanced budget, or a budget shortfall?



Results among Subgroups

In general, the pattern that far more expect a shortfall than a surplus holds consistent across subgroups of the City. However, there was nonetheless some variation in optimism about the budget, while some groups were more likely to acknowledge that they did not know the answer Distinctions of note included the following

- African Americans (19%), Democratic men (17%), and voters over 75 (17%) were a little more likely to expect a "budget surplus" when compared to the population overall (11%)

- More pessimistic groups, those more likely than others to expect a shortfall, included those with household incomes over $100,000 (57%, compared to 47% overall), Democratic women (54%), and women under 50 (53%)

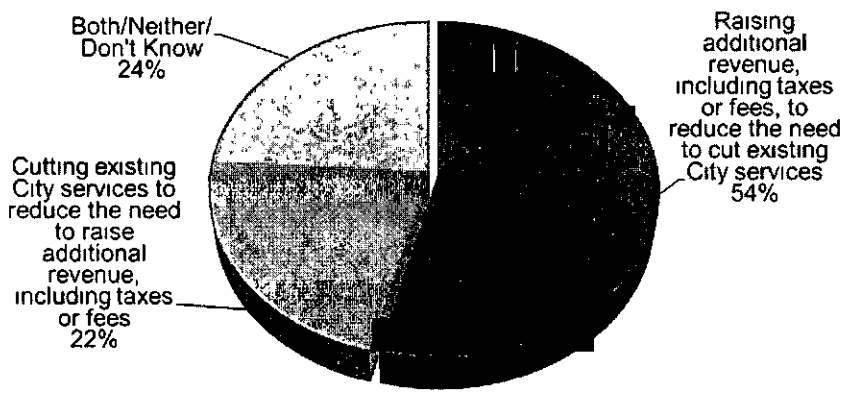
Additionally, perceptions about the City's provision of services also appeared to correlate with expectations for the upcoming budget While even those with positive views of City government were very unlikely to assume there will be budget surplus, respondents more critical of City government were much more likely to assume the City is facing a budget shortfall Notably, 61 percent of those who gave the City "poor" ratings for providing services believe the upcoming budget is facing a shortfall, with 42 percent assuming the shortfall will be "large "

2.2 Preferences for Handling a Budget Shortfall

If there is a shortfall, respondents clearly preferred raising revenue to cutting services After being told that there is a possibility that the City of Oakland may face a significant shortfall in the coming year, a majority (54%) said that in making decisions about the budget, the City of Oakland should place a higher priority on *raising additional revenue, including taxes or fees, to reduce the need to cut existing City services* Fewer than half that number (22%) said the City of Oakland should place higher priority on *cutting existing City services to reduce the need to raise additional revenue, including taxes or fees* The remainder were unable to choose between those two approaches, either indicating that both should be a priority (10%), neither approach was preferred (8%), or don't know (6%) **Figure 4** illustrates attitudes on this question

FIGURE 4:
Preference for Raising Revenue vs. Cutting Services

There is a possibility that the City of Oakland may face a significant budget shortfall in the coming year With that in mind, in making decisions about the budget, should the City of Oakland place a higher priority on



Results among Subgroups

Raising revenue was preferred over cutting services among all major subgroups (Only those who took the interview in Spanish or Cantonese actually preferred cutting services to raising taxes 46 to 23 percent, but they represented only seven percent of the sample.) This preference is especially strong among those who rate life in Oakland as "excellent," as well as the following groups.

- Those who are living with a partner (77%, compared to 54% overall) or single (60%),
- Those with household incomes over $100,000 a year (66%);
- Those with post-graduate education (64%), and college-educated men (60%),
- Those who are newer to Oakland (60% among those who have lived in the city under 10 years),
- Whites (61%),
- Men under 50 (60%), and
- Democratic men (60%)

Those more ambivalent about the two approaches – but still inclined to support raising revenue over cutting services – included

- Those over age 65 (43% raising revenue, versus 37% cutting services),
- Those with only high school degrees (33% to 42%);
- Those with household incomes less than $30,000 a year (45% to 34%),
- Chinese Americans (46% to 37%),
- Republicans[1] (46% to 32%),
- Those who feel Oakland is a "poor" place to live (42% to 32%)

[1] Small sample size

PART 3: SPECIFIC BUDGET PRIORITIES

When asked to come up with their own priorities for the City budget, respondents were most likely to name reducing crime and improving education, followed by housing, street maintenance, and jobs. The same areas – with the addition of emergency medical services – were reflected in their responses to a list of potential goals for the city, and in the areas where respondents indicated they were most willing to pay more to maintain or improve services

3.1 Volunteered Priorities for the City Budget

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about the two most important issues facing Oakland residents that they would like to see prioritized in the City government budget As shown in **Figure 5**, Their most frequent answers related to crime and public safety, which over six in ten mentioned as either their first or second choice· crime/violence (20% first choice, 13% second), more police/funding/police issues (10% first choice, 6% second), and public safety (8% first choice, 5% second) The next most commonly mentioned problem was education/public schools, which was mentioned by over one in three (17% first choice, 19% second) Other frequently-mentioned topics included housing costs/affordability (10% first, 6% second), street and sidewalk maintenance (8% first, 8% second), and jobs/keeping businesses (7% first, 11% second)

FIGURE 5:
Current Priorities for the City Budget
(Categories with 2% or More as First Choice)

In the upcoming two-year budget, what are the two most important issues facing Oakland residents that you would like to see prioritized in the City government budget?

Budget Priority	% first choice	% second choice
Crime and safety	38	24
Crime/Violence	20	13
More police funding/Police issues	10	6
Public safety	8	5
Education/Public schools	17	19
Housing costs/Affordability	10	6
Street and sidewalk maintenance	8	8
Jobs/Keeping businesses	7	11
Youth activities	3	3
Homelessness	2	4
Public transportation/buses	2	2

Results among Subgroups

Crime or public safety was the top mentioned problem across nearly all survey subgroups. The subgroups that were particular likely to highlight public safety as the top problem for the City included

- Those with household incomes of $100,000 a year or more (53%, compared to 38% overall),
- Men over 50 (47%),
- Those in City Council Districts 4 (47%) and District 7 (45%),
- Homeowners (46%);
- Those with post-graduate education (46%),
- College-educated men (45%);
- Immigrants (44%); and
- Those who are married (43%)

The exceptions to the above pattern were that those who are living with a partner were more likely to cite education (33%) as a top concern for the city than public safety (28%), as were part-time workers (36% education, 27% public safety)

These priorities were generally similar to the goals enumerated by residents of Oakland over the last 15 years, with crime, education, and housing at the top of the list, though education has at times been a higher priority than crime (**Figure 6**) In 2000, when respondents were asked about the most serious issue they would like to see City government do something about, their top answers were education/public schools (33%) and crime (19%), followed by the need for affordable housing (8%) In 2002, again asked about a single most serious issue, the list was topped by crime (26%), education (14%), housing affordability (12%), and drugs (11%) In 2005, residents were asked to name three most serious issues, and their list was again topped by education (35% first choice), crime (22%), housing costs/affordability (5%), and jobs (4%)

FIGURE 6:
Comparing Open-Ended Priorities over Time

Top Budget Priority	%			
	2000	**2002**	**2005**	**2015**
Crime/Violence*	19%	26%	22%	20%
Education/Public schools	33%	14%	35%	17%
Housing costs/affordability	8%	12%	5%	10%
More police funding/Police issues*	NA	2%	2%	10%
Street and sidewalk maintenance*	3%	4%	4%	8%
Public safety*	NA	1%	0%	8%
Jobs/Keeping businesses	5%	3%	4%	7%
Youth activities*	NA	1%	1%	3%
Homelessness	3%	4%	2%	2%
Public transportation/buses	1%	0%	1%	2%
Revitalizing neighborhoods	2%	1%	1%	0%
Traffic congestion/Traffic flow	1%	2%	1%	0%
Drug abuse*	8%	11%	4%	0%
Gangs/Violence*	3%	4%	3%	NA

**Category label worded slightly different in each year*

3.2 Importance of Possible Goals for the City Budget

Similar issues came out on top when respondents were asked to imagine that they were in charge of the Oakland budget and to evaluate a list of goals in terms of their importance in making a city a good place to live, with public safety most important, and education, jobs, and affordable housing in a second tier Emergency medical services and disaster preparedness also rose to this second tier of importance for respondents, even though they did not earlier identify them as problems

By far the highest rated of the goals presented was making sure *crime and violence are low* (80% rate it "extremely important"). This was followed by goals related to jobs, emergency medical services, and education and children's services, affordable housing, and emergency preparedness, which are all rated at approximately the same level, with over six in ten who called them "extremely important" *good job availability in the local area* (69%), *speedy access to quality emergency medical services* (69%), *the City promotes literacy and educational opportunities* (67%), and *there are activities and safe spaces for youth and children* (66%), *access to affordable housing* (63%) and *the City is prepared for fires, earthquakes, and other disasters* (61%)

As shown in **Figure 7**, the condition of roads and parks, financial stability, activities for seniors, serving the homeless, and good pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit accessibility are all somewhat lower priorities, while the bottom of the list includes having artistic and cultural activities, a variety of businesses across city neighborhoods, and making the City a travel destination However, despite the comparatively lower prioritization, it should be noted that *none* of the potential budget priorities were rated "not important" by even one in five residents polled.

FIGURE 7
Importance of Various Goals to Making a City a Good Place to Live

I am going to ask you to imagine you are in charge of Oakland's City budget I am going to read you a list of goals that some people think make a city a good place to live For each one I read, please tell me how important it is that the City budget prioritizes these goals Please think of a scale from "1" to "5" where "1" means it is "not at all important" and "5" means it is "extremely important " A rating of "3" is neutral, neither "important" or "unimportant "

Top Budget Priority	Mean	%					
		5	4	3	2	1	DK
Crime and violence are low	4 7	80	12	6	1	1	0
There is good job availability in the local area	4 5	69	19	8	2	2	1
There is speedy access to quality emergency medical services	4 5	69	18	9	2	1	0
The City promotes literacy and educational opportunities	4 5	67	19	10	3	1	0
There are activities and safe spaces for youth and children	4 5	66	20	10	1	2	1
Residents have access to affordable housing	4 4	63	20	12	3	2	0
The City is prepared for fires, earthquakes, and other disasters	4.4	61	23	11	3	1	0
City government is open and transparent	4 3	57	22	14	3	2	2
City infrastructure and roads are well maintained	4.3	53	28	15	3	1	0

Top Budget Priority	Mean	%					
		5	4	3	2	1	DK
City government is financially stable and doesn't pass debt to future residents	4 2	51	25	17	2	3	1
Parks, streets, and public spaces are clean and visually appealing	4 2	50	29	16	3	2	0
There are activities and safe spaces for seniors	4 2	49	27	19	3	1	0
The City serves the homeless	4 1	48	25	18	4	4	1
The City has good pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit accessibility	4 1	46	28	19	5	3	0
The City has a variety of artistic and cultural activities and events	3 9	36	33	23	6	2	0
There are a wide variety of retail shops and businesses in each city neighborhood	3 9	33	30	26	6	3	1
The City is a travel destination	3 5	26	21	33	12	7	1

Results among Subgroups

Having the city be safe from crime and violence was the highest-rated goal across nearly all segments of respondents, and the general order of importance changes little based on demographic factors. Low crime was rated particularly important by those interviewed in Spanish or Cantonese (97% "extremely important"), Asian/Pacific Islanders (93%), immigrants (92%), those in City Council District 3 (90%), and those who are unemployed (87%) or retired(86%)

On the other hand, there are a few exceptions who prioritize other issues over public safety

- Those who are living with a partner rated affordable housing highest, followed by activities for youth, emergency services, job availability, and literacy, and only then low rates of crime and violence
- Those who work part-time and those who are self-employed both rate promoting literacy most highly, above low rates of crime and violence

Two other interesting subgroups to consider are those at the extremes of their impressions of life in Oakland – those who rated Oakland as either an "excellent" or "poor" place to live In general, those who expressed negative opinions about life in Oakland were much more likely to assign each of the potential budget priorities in this question a "5 " In other words, those who thought Oakland was a "poor" place to live were more likely to see view these budget priorities as "extremely important" than those who feel that Oakland is an "excellent" place to live

Figure 8 shows what percentage of each of these subgroups rated each budget priority as "extremely important" and the difference in the ratings between these two subgroups. Four of the budget priorities – senior services, keeping parks/streets/public spaces clean, financial stability, and homeless services – were seen as "extremely important" by at most half of those who see Oakland as an "excellent" place to live, but were seen as "extremely important" by more than two-thirds of those who rated Oakland as a "poor" place to live Additionally, while both

subgroups rated keeping crime and violence low as their top priority, those holding more negative opinions of life in Oakland were nearly unanimous in their views of this priority, with 95 percent saying it is an "extremely important" budget goal Interestingly, there was only one budget priority that those viewing life in Oakland more positively felt was more important than their more pessimistic counterparts – artistic and cultural activities 46 percent of those viewing life in Oakland as "excellent" thought this was an "extremely important" budget priority, compared to 40 percent of those viewing life in Oakland as "poor."

FIGURE 8:
Difference in Budget Priorities between those Most and Least Happy with Life in Oakland

Budget Priority	% Viewing Each Budget Priority as "Extremely Important"		
	Oakland "Excellent" Place to Live	**Oakland "Poor" Place to Live**	**Δ**
There are activities and safe spaces for seniors	44	72	-28
Parks, streets, and public spaces are clean and visually appealing	45	71	-26
City government is financially stable and doesn't pass debt to future residents	45	67	-22
Crime and violence are low	74	95	-21
The City serves the homeless	50	69	-19
There is speedy access to quality emergency medical services	63	79	-16
The City is prepared for fires, earthquakes, and other disasters	58	73	-15
Residents have access to affordable housing	61	74	-13
The City is a travel destination	26	39	-13
City infrastructure and roads are well maintained	53	65	-12
There are a wide variety of retail shops and businesses in each city neighborhood	32	43	-11
The City promotes literacy and educational opportunities	65	74	-9
There is good job availability in the local area	68	76	-8
The City has good pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit accessibility	48	54	-6
There are activities and safe spaces for youth and children	69	72	-3
City government is open and transparent	59	59	0
The City has a variety of artistic and cultural activities and events	46	40	6

3.3 Preferences for Revenue Increases or Cuts for Specific Programs

In keeping with their overall preference for revenue increases over cuts to services, respondents indicated they would prefer paying additional taxes or fees over budget cuts for a broad range of

services the City provides, though in general they were willing to pay "a little" more to maintain the service rather than "significantly" more to improve it The services they were most willing to pay for reflect the priorities listed in the previous sections public safety, street repair, job training, child care, and affordable housing

As shown in **Figure 9**, there are a number of services for which over two-thirds of respondents said they would be willing to pay additional taxes or fees, including· *emergency medical response* (80% would be "willing to pay additional taxes or fees to maintain or improve that service"), *police protection in your neighborhood* (79%), *repair of potholes in city streets and broken sidewalks* (77%), *job training and employment programs* (77%), *child care and Head Start programs* (76%), *housing programs and affordable housing development* (75%), and *clean-up and removal of illegal dumping* (67%)

In addition to these, majorities, but fewer than two-thirds, reported being willing to pay more for *programs at senior centers* (66%), *maintenance of public parks, street medians and other open space* (66%); *timely response to resident requests for services* (65%), *library services and hours* (64%), *street lighting in your neighborhood* (62%), *improvements to bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit services/infrastructure* (61%); *flood prevention and storm drain maintenance* (59%), *programs to retain, expand, and attract businesses to Oakland* (57%), and *addressing abandoned homes and businesses* (53%).

Respondents were divided on whether they are willing to pay more for *artistic and cultural activities and events* (51% are "willing to pay additional taxes or fees" while 45% "think cuts should be made"); *maintenance of public buildings* (49%, 44%), and *neighborhood traffic congestion improvements* (48%, 45%) Majorities would prefer cuts to *keeping existing and attracting new professional sports teams* (60% cuts), and *removal of graffiti* (52% cuts)

FIGURE 9:
Preference for Cuts vs. Paying More for Specific Programs

I am going to mention some of the services the City provides its residents that may need to be changed in order to address a potential budget shortfall Please tell me whether you think cuts should be made to that service in order to balance the budget, or whether you would be willing to pay additional taxes or fees to maintain or improve that service (IF CUTS, ASK "Would you be willing to make large cuts or just some cuts?") (IF PAY MORE, ASK "Would you be willing to pay a little more to maintain this service, or pay significantly more to improve it?")

Service	%					
	Total willing to pay	A sig. more to improve	A little more to maintain	Total make cuts	Large cuts	Just some cuts
Emergency medical response	**80**	26	55	**14**	3	11
Violence prevention and intervention services	**80**	32	48	**15**	4	11
Police protection in your neighborhood	**79**	36	43	**17**	5	12
Fire prevention and response	**79**	22	57	**17**	3	14
Job training and employment programs	**77**	29	48	**20**	5	15
Repair of potholes in city streets and broken	**77**	22	55	**20**	4	16

Service	%					
	Total willing to pay	A sig more to improve	A little more to maintain	Total make cuts	Large cuts	Just some cuts
sidewalks						
Child care and Head Start programs	**76**	27	49	**20**	4	16
Youth programs at city parks and recreation centers	**76**	24	52	**21**	3	18
Housing programs and affordable housing development	**75**	27	48	**22**	6	16
Clean-up and removal of illegal dumping	**67**	16	51	**29**	6	22
Programs at senior centers	**66**	14	52	**28**	5	24
Maintenance of public parks, street medians and other open space	**66**	11	56	**30**	4	27
Timely response to resident requests for services	**65**	16	49	**25**	5	20
Library services and hours	**64**	15	49	**33**	7	26
Street lighting in your neighborhood	**62**	12	51	**31**	5	26
Improvements to bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit services/infrastructure	**61**	14	47	**35**	7	27
Flood prevention and storm drain maintenance	**59**	12	48	**34**	5	29
Programs to retain, expand, and attract businesses to Oakland	**57**	14	43	**37**	7	30
Addressing abandoned homes and businesses	**53**	13	40	**39**	9	29
Artistic and cultural activities and events	**51**	10	41	**45**	8	37
Maintenance of public buildings	**49**	8	41	**44**	5	39
Neighborhood traffic congestion improvements	**48**	11	37	**45**	9	36
Removal of graffiti	**43**	10	33	**52**	14	38
Keeping existing and attracting new professional sports teams	**34**	7	27	**60**	30	30

Results among Subgroups

The results were very similar across subgroups in the study, with public safety and emergency services at the top and funding for sports teams at the bottom

PART 4: INTERACTIONS WITH CITY GOVERNMENT

Respondents get their information about Oakland in a number of different ways and expressed a broad range of preferences for how they would like to interact with their City government

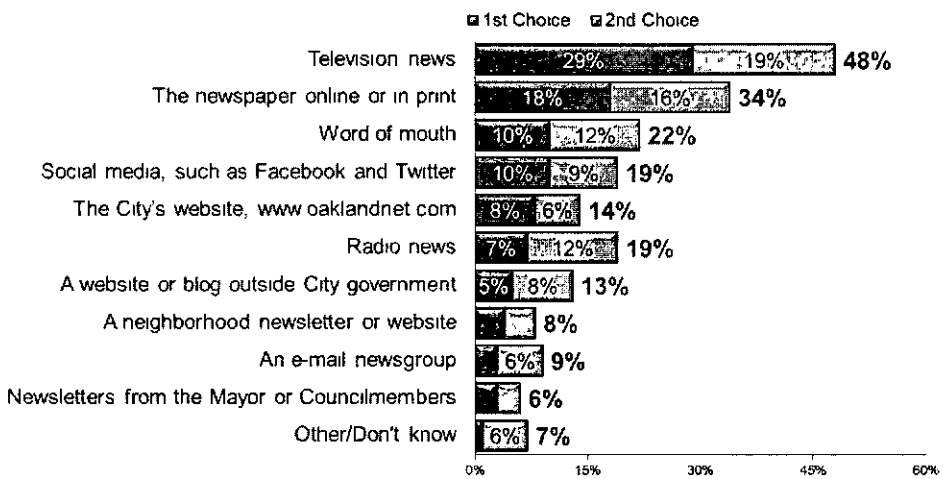
4.1 Sources of Information about City Government

Respondents were most likely to find out about what Oakland City government is doing through television news, but they also get information from a wide variety of other sources As shown in **Figure 10**, 29 percent say *television news* is the source of information they use most often, followed by 18 percent for *the newspaper online or in print Word of mouth* (10%), *social media such as Facebook and Twitter* (10%), and *the City's website www oaklandnet com* (8%) are also top sources of information for smaller groups of voters

Among those who use newspapers as a first or second choice, a majority (54%) reported most often using *The Oakland Tribune* to get information about city government, followed by *The San Francisco Chronicle* (29%), while *The East Bay Express* (9%) and *The Oakland Post* (3%) were less common sources of information

FIGURE 10:
Sources of Information about City Government

Which of the following sources of information do you use most often to find out what Oakland City government is doing?



Results among Subgroups

Although television news is the top source of information across most subgroups of the population, there are a number of distinctions among groups that are worth noting

- Some groups expressed even more reliance on television for information about City government than others, including those interviewed in Spanish or Cantonese (51% make

it their first choice) with a high school education or less (45%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (45%), immigrants (44%), African Americans (41%), and women over 50 years old (45%)

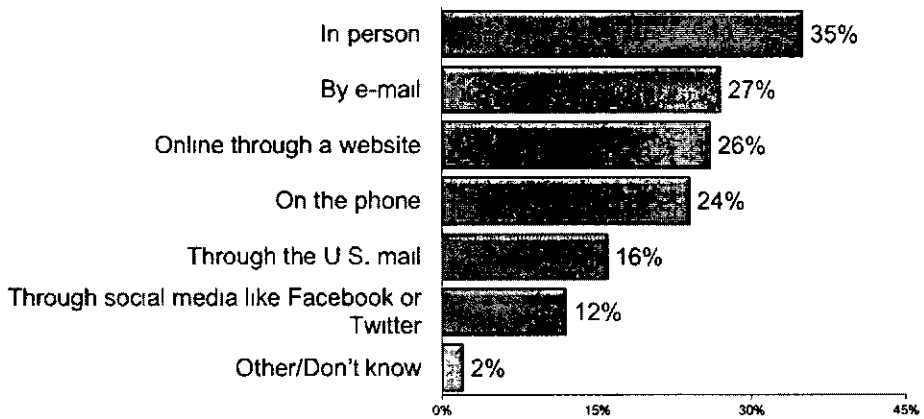
- Those who have lived in Oakland less than five years were more likely to use social media (17%) or the newspaper (17%) as a first choice than television (13%)
- Whites (25%), and those with household incomes over $100,000 a year (24%), were more likely to read a newspaper than watch television as a first choice.

4.2 Preferred Ways to Interact with City Government

Respondents were interested in communicating with the City in a number of ways, from in-person to through social media Asked how they would like to have contact with the City in the future (and allowed to select more than one category), 35 percent indicated they would like to interact *in-person*, 27 percent *by email*, 26 percent *online through a website*, 24 percent *on the phone*, 16 percent *through the U S mail*, and 12 percent *through social media like Facebook or Twitter* This is illustrated in **Figure 11**.

Figure 11:
Preferred Ways to Interact with City

If you were to interact with the City in the future, in which of the following ways would you most like to have contact with them?



Results among Subgroups

Although overall, in-person is the preferred method of contact, there were some exceptions where online or email interactions are preferred equally or more over in-person, including

- White voters,
- Those who live with a partner,
- Those who have lived in Oakland less than ten years,
- Those who are self-employed or work at home,
- Those with post-graduate education, and
- Those with household incomes over $100,000 a year

CONCLUSIONS

The survey results suggest there continues to be a disconnect between how Oaklanders think about life in the City and their impressions of City government's effectiveness The vast majority of Oaklanders see the City as a good place to live and fewer than one in ten hold negative impressions about living here (Those more likely to view life in Oakland negatively are likely immigrants, Latinos and Chinese residents, retirees, and residents with lower levels of income and education.) In contrast, a plurality feels the City is only doing a "fair" job providing services These findings suggest that residents see many other aspects of life in Oakland beyond the City's control as important to the City's high quality of life

Public safety is clearly a top concern and thus the top budget priority More than three-quarters of respondents to this survey indicated they would rather pay a little more to maintain or improve police, fire and emergency response services than to see those services cut Furthermore, many would even be willing to pay "significantly more" to improve neighborhood police protection.

However, public safety does not appear to be the sole budgetary focus of residents Large majorities would rather pay more to protect other services – such as job training, street/sidewalk repair, youth program, housing programs, senior programs, park maintenance, library services, and others – rather than see them cut

These results suggest that a challenge for City officials is that while a slim majority (54%) support the general approach of raising revenue to reduce the need to cut services, much larger majorities are willing to pay more for specific services they deem as higher priorities Thus, were the City to ask residents to pay more to maintain or improve existing services, the specific mix of services would be critically important to garnering broad support Regardless, these findings do provide guidance for City officials as to which services residents are more or less likely to accept cutting or reducing