

# Libby Schaaf's plan for a safer Oakland

*"It's time to reject that crime is an urban tax we must pay for living in Oakland. Oaklanders need to know police will be there when we need them, and that our neighbors and we will get prompt responses to 911 calls. We must expand community policing so that we connect our police with our neighborhoods in a way that prevents crime before it happens. We must address the root causes of crime, starting with better schools, wages and jobs."*

– Libby Schaaf

## What I think

I know most people use the phrase "public safety." I prefer to talk about community safety, because keeping our communities safe is far more complex than just putting more police on the streets. Improving community safety involves:

**Connecting with communities:** We must connect our police to our communities in a way that creates a sense of trust. Many American cities have implemented programs to bring police and the people they serve closer together, which results in dramatic decreases in crime. Oakland should do no less.

**Using scarce resources wisely:** It's time to start using our scarce resources in a way that puts the police in our neighborhoods rather than behind desks pushing paper.

**Better training:** We must invest the money to provide state-of-the-art training for our police officers. Our officers and our citizens deserve far more than the minimum state-mandated training we provide today. We need to follow the recommendations of the highly respected policing specialists who have urged Oakland to integrate the community into our police training process and take the training steps necessary to achieve certification from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Feedback from our officers tells us they have a strong desire for more and better training, and Oakland needs to provide it.

**Higher police staffing numbers:** Ten years ago, Oakland voters sent a loud, clear message that our city needed no fewer than 803 sworn police officers. When we reached that number for a few months, crime went down. Then, through layoffs and failure to hire, our police department shrank by 25% and crime sky-rocketed. The current administration has lagged and fumbled all efforts to rebuild our police force to adequate levels. I have put forth a plan that allows us to recruit, hire and train the officers we need so our city can respond when citizens call for help.

## What I have done

**Recidivism Reduction:** I worked on Mayor Jerry Brown's successful violence prevention programs, including the Project Choice Re-entry Program, which reduced juvenile recidivism by 83%.

**Efficient Staffing:** I led the effort to hire civilians into the Oakland Police Department in order to free up law enforcement officers so they can spend more time in the community, improve investigations and respond to 911 calls.

**More Officers:** When the Oakland Police Department was at its lowest staffing level, I pushed through the plan to immediately put Alameda County Sheriff's officers on our streets to help make up this deficit and keep our community safe.

**Involving the Community:** As a councilwoman, I organized and presented The Safe Oakland Speakers Series, a series of community forums to foster community input on improving public safety featuring the nation's leading experts on crime reduction.

**Speeding Up Officer Recruitment:** I sponsored successful legislation to speed up the recruitment, hiring and training of new police officers.

**Full Police Staffing:** I authored the Full Police Staffing legislation that requires Oakland to hire all the officers promised by the city's budget. Last year, the current administration failed to fill more than 60 officer positions that were fully budgeted and funded.

## What I will do

**Connect with Communities and Restore Community Policing:** Ensure that every police officer is a community policing officer. Work relentlessly with police, faith-based and community groups to collaboratively improve and restore mutual trust and work together toward a common goal: creating an environment where Oaklanders can live and work and play without fear of crime. Transparently collect and use data to identify and address community problems before those problems result in crime. Annually survey police officers and members of the community to track the improvement in police/community relations.

**Strengthen the Police Force:** Reduce attrition of police officers. Some officers will retire every year and some will leave because of health, disability or other unavoidable circumstances. But our excess attrition rate costs us more than \$100,000 to replace every officer, and makes it difficult to restore the department to full strength. Furthermore, I will work to hire more police officers to protect every Oakland neighborhood and bring the Oakland police department up to full strength – a baseline of 800 officers and goal of 925 officers.

**Hire more Civilian Police Employees:** Identify every function currently provided by sworn police officers that could be properly performed by civilians, and implement a plan to civilianize those positions, as well as restore critical positions in 911 dispatch, evidence techs, the crime lab and investigations. This will improve safety and keep police officers out in our neighborhoods.

**Speed up Police and Emergency Response:** Build an improved 911 system to speed up response times so the police come promptly when they are needed.

**Get Maximum Benefit from Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs:** I support Measure Z on this year's ballot, which provides funding for police, emergency response and proven, data-based violence prevention programs without increasing taxes. Measure Z includes enhanced accountability and oversight provisions, and I will make sure Measure Z funds are spent only on strategies and programs proven to reduce community violence. I also support providing sufficient resources to expand the City's successful CeaseFire program.

**Keep Our Youth out of Prison:** The City's policing consultant has recommended that we focus on restorative justice programs to address juvenile crime. We need to expand these programs and work closely with juvenile probation officials to steer troubled young people away from crime and toward school and success.

**Focus on the Root Causes of Crime, Starting with Jobs, Better Wages, and Education:** Please refer to my policy papers on Education, Economic Development and Affordability for my strategies for addressing these vital components of public safety.

## Plan details

The number one obligation of city government is to provide a safe environment for our entire community. The Oakland Police Department states as its mission something that should be the goal for all of us in Oakland: "to provide the people of Oakland an environment where they can live, work, play, and thrive free from crime and the fear of crime."

If Oakland's city government isn't providing this environment, it isn't doing its job. So far, our city government has not done its job.

While nearly all candidates for public office in Oakland say they will make public safety their top priority and rebuild the police department, I am the only candidate for mayor who has met with the experts, studied the literature and studied the experiences of other cities that have reversed their violent crime problems. There is not one secret to make a city like Oakland safe. The experience of other cities and academic research show us that the number one priority to make a city safe must be having a fully staffed and properly managed police department. They also show us that our police department must build relationships with the community through true community policing, problem solving and the use of prevention, intervention and enforcement.

Oakland recently paid \$250,000 to Strategic Policy Partners, ("SPP," Wasserman and Bratton) to study our safety efforts and recommend how to make our community safer. Yet the current mayor, and many candidates for mayor, act as if this study never happened and the recommendations do not exist. Only a small number of SPP's recommendations have been implemented.

My administration will ensure we have a Comprehensive Community Safety Action Plan – including deliverables and people held responsible throughout the organization. My administration will implement all of the SPP recommendations. I will report regularly to our City and its residents on the implementation process and the results we are seeing.

## Oakland will have a Vice-Mayor for community safety and city-wide performance measures for community safety

Strategic Policy Partners recommended that we appoint a Director of Community Improvement. This individual will be responsible for coordinating collaborative action by city agencies, community groups and state and federal partners to address both quality of life issues and crime in a manner that seeks to prevent future occurrences. This individual will include crime reduction and quality of life issues as a regular agenda item in department head meetings, will appoint personnel from every department to coordinate interdepartmental efforts, and will regularly provide information to the community about progress, ongoing challenges and what specifically residents should do to participate in success.

Accordingly, I will appoint a Deputy Mayor for Community Safety, who will report to me and be responsible for coordinating all of Oakland's Community Safety efforts. The cost of this should not be significant – we presently have a Vice-Mayor whose total salary and benefits exceed \$140,000 per year, and I will replace this position with the Deputy Mayor for Community Safety, who will have most of the responsibilities outlined in the SPP report, as well as coordination of fire and emergency services.

I will also create a Community Safety Cabinet consisting of the Police and Fire Chiefs, Head of the Department of Human Services and all City department heads. I will ask other major stake-holders – the District Attorney, Public Defender, Chief Probation Officer, US Attorney, Oakland Police Officers' Association president and community leaders – to join as well. This cabinet will meet regularly to coordinate steps being taken in every department to help make this a safe city.

Department heads will be held accountable for their efforts and results under the Comprehensive Community Safety Action Plan. Measures will be incorporated into the weekly CitiStat accountability process and overseen by my new Office of Strategic Performance.

## Oakland must learn from the successes of other cities and from its own failures

Los Angeles' experience is instructive. From 2000 to 2012, the Los Angeles Police Department increased its number of sworn police by almost 9%. It implemented a "Gang Reduction and Youth Development" program, brought its police department out from under Federal Court supervision, and was lauded by the Federal Court Judge for becoming "the national and international policing standard." At the same time, it saw its violent crime drop from its peak in 1991 by 81% and property crime drop by 68.5%.

Just to our north, the city of Richmond was ranked as one of America's ten most dangerous cities just six years ago. Between 2006 and 2012, it increased its police staffing by 19% and reformed its police department, improved police / community relations and implemented a number of innovative programs. In 2013, Richmond saw its homicide rate drop to half the average of the previous six years, while its total crime rate dropped by 40% over a ten year period.

Tragically, our experience has been just the opposite. For a short period of time, in 2009, Oakland had 830 police officers. The following year, homicides dropped by 13% over the previous three years' average, and total crime dropped by 12%. Though our crime rates were still far too high, they were

trending in the right direction. Then, the department began its precipitous and dangerous loss of officers. First, Oakland stopped recruiting, hiring and training new officers, so those who left for retirement, disability or other reasons could not be replaced. Then, in July 2010, Oakland laid off 80 officers – officers for whom we had paid more than \$100,000 each to recruit and train. And in the first two years of the current administration, Oakland still implemented no hiring or training to replace departing officers. Over the last two years, the administration sought to save money by not hiring officers the City Council had budgeted for. At one point, the total number of sworn police dropped to its lowest in decades: 607.

As the number of police decreased, the amount of crime climbed. While 2014 has seen modest improvements over the past year (as the sworn staffing levels of the police department have slightly increased), there were almost 7,000 more crimes in Oakland in 2013 than there were in 2010. We still have more than 100 fewer sworn police than we had in 2009, and it should not be surprising that our violent crime rate (per 1,000 in the population) is 70% higher than Richmond's, four times that of Long Beach, more than three times New York City's and almost five times higher than Los Angeles.

As will be seen below, the experiences in Los Angeles, Richmond and Oakland all inform and support my strategy for making our Community safe.

## What the academic research tells us

Over the past three years, I have sponsored the "Safe Oakland Speaker Series" and other public presentations that have given me valuable opportunities to meet with some of the leading experts on what it takes to make a city like Oakland safe. Here are some of the things I have learned reviewing the research and speaking with experts:

**Franklin Zimring** is the William J. Simon Professor of Law at UC Berkeley and the author of *The City that Became Safe; New York's Lessons for Urban Crime and Its Control.* His research demonstrates that the unprecedented drop in crime experienced by New York City resulted from improving both the quantity and quality of policing.

**Justin McCrary** is a Professor of Law at UC Berkeley and the co-author of *The Effect of Police on Crime: New Evidence from U.S. Cities, 1960-2010.* He writes that "the cities with the biggest crime drops have done two primary things: invested in police numbers and in new techniques, primarily saturation policing and aggressive use of information technology." His research also shows that there is a police elasticity of crime of "minus ½." This means that a 10% increase in police can be expected to reduce crime by 5%. The most significant decreases are those for murder, robbery and motor vehicle theft. Furthermore, there is a major economic payoff for crime reduction. For every additional dollar Oakland invests in policing, residents will see approximately \$2.90 in improvements to safety. This means, for example, that an additional \$13 million spent on police should yield an economic benefit to the city of almost \$38 million.

**David M. Kennedy** is the director of the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City. He directed the Boston Gun Project, whose "Operation Ceasefire" intervention was responsible for a more than 60% reduction in youth homicide victimization and won the Ford Foundation Innovations in Government award and many other awards and recognitions. I have met with Professor Kennedy, and have a thorough familiarity with his research on implementation of effective Operation Ceasefire measures.

**George Gascon** is the District Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco and was previously the Chief of Police of both San Francisco and Mesa, Arizona. Todd Foglesong is a Senior Research Associate at Harvard University's Kennedy School, Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management. The two of them are co-authors of Making Policing More Affordable, Managing Costs and Measuring Value in Policing, which focuses on how to create safer communities more cost-effectively by maximizing the use of civilianization.

**Todd Foglesong** is also the co-author, with Christopher Stone and Christine M. Cole of the Harvard Kennedy School, of Policing Los Angeles Under a Consent Decree: The Dynamics of Change at the LAPD. This study is highly relevant to Oakland, which has labored unsuccessfully for more than twelve years to achieve a finding of full compliance with the Court-supervised Negotiated Settlement Agreement. The study shows how the City of Los Angeles Police Department brought an end to Federal Court oversight of its Police Department while significantly reducing crime.

**James E. McCabe, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Sacred Heart University. He is also the Chair of the Sacred Heart Criminal Justice Department and a 21-year veteran of the New York City Police Department. His white paper, issued by the International City/County Management Association, Center for Public Safety Management, is An Analysis Of Police Department Staffing: How Many Officers Do You Really Need? The paper shows how sixty-two United States cities have conducted an objective resource allocation study to demonstrate the optimum number of police officers to adequately respond to calls for service and provide problem-solving policing.

I am relying on this research and my discussions with these highly respected experts to support my community safety plan.

## The strategic policy partners' recommendations

SPP made a large number of recommendations over the course of their two years in Oakland. A handful of these have been adopted, including Compstat implementation, district-based policing and related changes. However, there are many more recommendations that have largely been ignored, and that will be implemented under my administration. These include:

- Expand Operation Cease Fire. We will take the steps necessary to increase our data analysis so that we can increase the number of call-ins. We will need one or two more case managers who can make the connections between participants in the call-ins and services, a critical part of Cease Fire success. We will fund this from continued aggressive seeking of grants and appropriate allocations from OFCY, WIA and Measure Z, as well as expanding partnership and support from outside law enforcement agencies.
- Increase our sworn police staffing to an initial floor level of 800. Contract for a resource allocation study to determine the optimum number of police officers to adequately respond to calls for service and provide problem-solving policing.
- Implement a call for service reduction strategy (designed by our police department more than two years ago but never authorized for implementation by the mayor's office) to ensure that police are responding to calls where they are needed, not responding to non-police problems. My administration will implement a 3-1-1 / Citi-Stat program to manage non-police calls for service. This will be implemented at little or no cost by using open source software and current employees. I expect that this by itself will take substantial amount of pressure off of our police and police dispatch.

- Expand investigative capacity in each of Oakland's five policing districts, so that each district has an investigative sergeant, three investigators and three to five police officers.
- Redesign community policing. We need to get beyond the idea that "problem solving officers" are alone responsible for community policing. In my administration, all officers will have community policing responsibility. As recommended by Professor McCabe (and also by our former Chief of Police, Anthony Batts), at least 60% of all officers will be on beats, and at least 40% of their time will be devoted to problem solving. Community intelligence is one of the most valuable crime-fighting tools we have, and problem solving by our beat officers is one of the surest routes to improved police/community relations.
- Because I believe in obtaining and using data to measure performance, and because I believe measurement has a positive impact on the outcomes being measured, we will begin regularly measuring the state of police/community relations. We will survey both the public and the police, publicly report the survey findings and take steps necessary to address problems disclosed by the surveys.
- Move restorative justice practices into the community and schools. We should and will use this highly effective, non-punitive method to address neighborhood disorder, vandalism, blight and minor crimes in a way that brings the community into the process and reverses these problems. We will also expand restorative justice in our schools as a way to reduce truancy, school violence and suspensions.
- As part of my administration's program to maximize the use of civilians for increasing community safety, we will bring security ambassadors into our crime-reduction strategy, providing those who patrol downtown and other commercial areas with advanced training so they can assist in helping with minor disorders that impact public safety.

## How do we pay for enhanced public safety?

The City budget I will release in the Spring of 2015 will set us on course for the changes I have described in this paper. While safety is our number one priority, it is not the only goal. We also have \$2.4 billion in accrued pension liabilities, including pension bond debt, and an enormous amount of deferred capital expense, including nearly half a billion dollars in deferred street and sidewalk maintenance. We also face significantly increased costs for other important services, including more than a million dollars simply to keep library services at the same level.

On the other hand, we can anticipate some significantly increased revenues in the very near future, and improving our practices can effectuate some decreases in expenditures. Here are some examples:

We will work with the City Attorney and OPD to reduce payments of claims resulting from allegations of police misconduct. Payments in 2012-13 were \$7.8 million. Cutting that number by half will free up \$3.9 million.

We will end the supervision of Oakland's police department by the Federal Court, at a savings of \$2 million per year.

We will work with labor to identify means to contain employee medical expenses. Oakland presently spends \$76 million annually for medical expenses. I am happy that our employees' representatives have agreed to work with us on containing these, and if we can reduce medical expenses by 5%, we will have another \$3.2 million.

I will see to it that our police officers know the mayor has their back, intends to increase their numbers so as to eliminate the crushing and demoralizing burden of mandatory overtime, will promptly respond to their expressed concerns and will give them the ongoing training so many of them are asking for. By being a good and responsible employer of police officers, we will reduce police department attrition from 6 officers per month to no more than 3.5 officers. This will reduce recruitment and training costs by \$100,000 per officer, or \$3 million per year.

We can also expect a substantial amount of new and both one-time and ongoing revenues from residential construction projects already in the pipeline or hotel construction which, based on Oakland's very high hotel occupancy rates, are entitled and almost certain to be built soon. It is realistic to expect \$15.53 million per year in new revenues from real estate transfer taxes, property taxes and the transient occupancy tax.

I believe there are additional revenues from leasing city real estate, as well as realizing increased sales tax revenues as new retail comes to Oakland, but it is too speculative to include in this calculation. Also, while I am very opposed to using one-time revenues for on-going expenses, excess real estate transfer tax revenues could be used to fund the one "extra" academy per year needed to actually grow police staffing, while a portion of transfer tax from newly constructed units will be considered on-going revenue.

There are reductions in city bond payments that have not been allocated for the years 2015-18 averaging \$7.75 million per year.

The total annual savings and increased revenues are conservatively \$28 million. When my administration presents its two-year budget for fiscal years 2015-16 and 2016-17, we will also propose financial policies providing that a fixed percentage of these and other new, recurring revenues, will go toward rebuilding sworn and civilian staffing in the police department.

Note that the cost to increase police staffing to 800 officers above the current budgeted strength is \$18.6 million. An estimated increase of 50 civilian positions should cost approximately \$6 million, for a total annual cost of \$24.6 million. Once the 800 officer level is reached and maintained, along with expanded civilian support, I will conduct a staffing allocation study to determine whether 925 should remain as the full staffing goal for OPD.

I believe that public safety will be the major economic driver of the City of Oakland, and that as crime and the perception of crime drop, our economic growth will increase at unprecedented levels. This will result in increased city revenues to the General Purpose Fund, which I refer to as the "public safety dividend."

Let's suppose we reduce our violent crime rate by 25%, which is not unreasonable with the public safety changes I am proposing. It would be reasonable to expect a corresponding city revenue increase of at least 10%, or \$50 million in 2017 - 2018.

## It's as basic as it gets –

Oaklanders should know that a cop will come when you call. Other cities like Richmond and Los Angeles prove that big urban cities can become safe. If they can reduce crime so dramatically, why can't we? Oakland has no more excuses. There is nothing I'm more committed to than delivering the safety this city deserves.