



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Sofia Navarro
Interim Director, Economic
& Workforce Development
Department

SUBJECT: Activate Oakland Event Sponsorship
Program and Public Safety Education
Campaign

DATE: June 20, 2023

City Administrator Approval

Date:

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution:

- 1) Awarding A Grant To Oakland Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Oakland) In An Amount Not To Exceed \$434,000 To Administer An Event Sponsorship Program Providing Marketing Technical Assistance and Funding of Up To \$10,000 Per Event To Support Oakland's Small Businesses, Arts And Culture, And Commercial Districts, And To Lead A Public Safety Campaign That Will Educate Visitors And Businesses About, And Facilitate Implementation Of, Effective Crime Prevention Strategies Focused on Reducing Theft, Vandalism, And Auto And Commercial Burglary in Oakland's Commercial Districts; And
- 2) Authorizing The Carryover Of Unspent Fiscal Year 2022-2023 General Purpose Fund In An Amount Not To Exceed \$434,000 To Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Activate Oakland is a new initiative (the Activate Oakland Initiative) aimed at revitalizing Oakland's downtown and neighborhood commercial districts by activating public spaces, incubating events, and promoting public safety awareness to further Oakland's economic recovery following the socio-economic disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic and its disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable communities in the City of Oakland (City).

The Oakland Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Oakland), a not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) organization focused on Oakland tourism and marketing efforts, would partner with the City to administer two separate, but complementary programs focused on Oakland's downtown and commercial districts: (1) event sponsorship program offering financial sponsorships of up to \$10,000 each for local events and activations and (2) public safety education campaign. Visit Oakland would receive a onetime grant of \$434,000 to implement the Activate Oakland Initiative, of which \$400,000 will be used for the event and activation sponsorship program and \$34,000 will be committed to the public safety education campaign.

City Council
June 28, 2023

The Initiative would be funded using remaining Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 general purpose funds from the Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) budget for both city-wide marketing (\$182,000) and downtown activations (\$252,000) and will be implemented within FY 23-24.

The Activate Oakland Initiative is intended as the beginning of an ongoing program that may receive other funds as they become available. In addition to supporting small businesses and fostering arts and culture, Activate Oakland is also intended increase public safety in its business corridors. It follows the Shop Safe Initiative (Shop Safe), a \$750,000 pilot program from last year that focused on more traditional security measures, including safety ambassadors and physical safety improvements.

REASON FOR URGENCY

The need to take immediate action is because the funds to support this Initiative are General Purpose Funds allocated in the FY 2022-2023 budget and will not be available after June 30, 2023. Additionally, the last budget council meeting is scheduled for June 28, 2023, and this action needs to be taken before the end of the fiscal year or the funds will be lost.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On October 10, 2000, City Council approved Resolution No. 75176 C.M.S. authorizing City funding to Visit Oakland to provide visitor marketing services. In subsequent years, City funding for Visit Oakland was significantly reduced due to inflation and declines in the economy and the City's general fund, and not a reflection of Visit Oakland's services. The City concluded that effective marketing of Oakland was not possible at this reduced level, and staff identified the need to establish a secure funding source.

Measure C (which passed in July 2009 and became effective in January 2010) provided for one half of a three percent (3%) increment to the local Transient Occupancy Tax, which generated approximately \$1.5 to \$1.9 million per year for Visit Oakland operations, still significantly less funding than comparable marketing initiatives in neighboring Bay Area jurisdictions.

On July 21, 2015, City Council approved [Resolution No. 85725 C.M.S.](#) establishing the Oakland Tourism Business Improvement District (Oakland Tourism BID) and approving its formation for a three-year term. On June 19, 2018, City Council approved [Resolution No. 87242 C.M.S.](#) to renew the Oakland Tourism BID for a seven-year term, which expires in 2025.

On December 12, 2022, City Council approved [Resolution No. 89484 C.M.S.](#), which authorized agreements funding one-time, short-term grants for traditional security measures including safety ambassadors and physical safety improvements like cameras in Oakland's neighborhood shopping districts and Downtown during the holiday season. Also known as Shop Safe, this \$750,000 pilot program also funded security in Downtown Oakland with additional ambassadors, traffic management street closures and installation of cameras from December 2022 through March 2023.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Event and Activation Sponsorship Program

The event and activation sponsorship program would provide funding for events and activations that help activate commercial districts, support small businesses, and showcase Oakland's arts and culture community. The goal of the program is to build social cohesion, reignite the public's confidence in our public spaces, and bring vibrancy and economic activity throughout the City.

Under the program, Visit Oakland would provide funding of up to \$10,000 per event or activation as well as marketing technical assistance in support of the event. Projects could include but are not limited to: free exercise/dance classes, fashion shows, paint parties, movie nights, kids' story time, games, or activities, outdoor karaoke, pickleball lessons and tournaments, block parties, music, art, spoken word performances, yoga, cooking classes, art-making activities, district walking tours, poetry readings, food and wine tastings, and so much more.

Any Oakland resident, business, or community group can apply to receive the sponsorship dollars and marketing support to realize their idea for an event or activation.

The program will support both new events and expansion of existing small events in Oakland's business corridors. The program will prioritize funding for events that provide economic opportunities for Oakland-based businesses, and especially commercial districts in high priority neighborhoods that have been historically marginalized or under invested, as defined by the Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) Equity Toolbox.

Visit Oakland will be charged with sending out a call for funding applications, reviewing the applications with support from the City's Department of Race and Equity (DRE) and EWDD, administering the funds, and providing marketing assistance to the selected awardees. Marketing assistance will include listing activations on Visit Oakland's online events calendar, writing/distributing press releases, creating a social media strategy and social media content, pitching stories to journalists/influencers, and general marketing consulting. Visit Oakland may also provide technical assistance for the events/activations.

Visit Oakland will review applications based on equity criteria described generally below, and will engage stakeholders to further refine the criteria, including engaging with the DRE, EWDD, business support organizations, arts and culture community, City Council offices, and other stakeholders. Visit Oakland will also conduct extensive outreach about the sponsorship funding opportunity and application process, working with City staff and partnering with the City Council offices to amplify the opportunity.

Sponsorship Program Details

- Funding of \$1,000-\$10,000 per event or activation, depending on the size and frequency of the event(s)
- Funding of events and activations in a variety of commercial districts, with a focus on funding new and small events/activations
- Online application window of at least four weeks
- Funding prioritized to support the creation and expansion of free community events in Oakland's commercial corridors

- Priority given to events that are new within the last 3-5 years
- City will be provided a free space for outreach at all events that receive funding through this program
- Visit Oakland will receive a 20 percent administrative fee to cover the marketing and technical assistance services it will provide each funded event or activation
- Funding is open to any Oakland resident, business, or community group
- Funding recipients must provide a final report describing how funds were used and the impacts of the event or activation

Criteria to determine which events receive funding, as well as the funding amount, may include:

- Event located in a priority neighborhood as defined by the OakDOT Equity Toolbox.
- A majority of the event vendors/programming producers/performers live/work in a priority neighborhood as defined by the OakDOT Equity Toolbox.
- Applicant readiness to implement the event/activation, with thought-out budget, programming identified, and detailed plans to successfully execute the proposed activation. Event is within the applicant's capacity and ability (either by themselves or with confirmed collaborators) upon receipt of funding.
- The potential for the project to provide economic opportunities for Oakland-based businesses, and especially commercial districts in priority neighborhoods.
- Whether City funding is a determining factor for event success
- Applicant is a current Oakland resident, Oakland-based business or organization
- Whether applicant has received previous City funding, and past performance if so
- The degree to which the event/activation builds social cohesion and contributes to a community's shared positive experience in Oakland.

Public Safety Education Campaign

To complement the events and activation sponsorships, Visit Oakland will also lead a public safety education campaign. The campaign will educate visitors and businesses about how to reduce their risks and protect themselves from crime through increased environmental awareness, transportation, and parking choices, and using available safety ambassador services. The campaign will also educate businesses about Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies, such as improved lighting, clear sightlines, and the use of cameras. Such an education campaign has been recommended by local businesses, the Oakland Police Department, the City's business improvement districts and other business service organizations as an effective crime prevention strategy. Visit Oakland will employ various tools to create an effective public education campaign, such as media, billboards, website, and social media.

If the proposed Activate Oakland Initiative is not approved, Oakland's small businesses and commercial corridors, especially in Downtown Oakland, will continue to suffer from decreased foot traffic and revenues that have not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, increased property crime for businesses and visitors in commercial corridors, and the continued perception that Oakland's commercial districts especially Downtown are not safe.

The Activate Oakland Initiative advances the Citywide Priority of **housing, economic and cultural security**. Activate Oakland will help revitalize Oakland's downtown and neighborhood commercial districts by activating public spaces, incubating events, and promoting public safety awareness to further Oakland's economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

About Visit Oakland

Visit Oakland is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) organization. Its mission is to attract visitors to Oakland, drive traffic to local businesses, and uplift the Oakland community. Visit Oakland produces large-scale, city-wide promotional campaigns publicizing the experiences and events that are unique to Oakland. The organization continues to develop new campaigns driven by evolving trends in visitor priorities, leisure activities and Oakland's ever-growing cultural economic and community resources. Visit Oakland has a proven track record in creating and growing partnerships with local organizations and community leaders to produce and promote local events that draw over 150,000 people to Oakland annually. They effectively tell the positive story of Oakland to the media, residents, and prospective visitors across the US and the world.

Visit Oakland's expert marketing, adept public relations and strategic media outreach, and strong community partnerships make them uniquely qualified to implement the proposed initiative. They have a proven track record in producing events and promotional campaigns that achieve significant positive media attention, drive increased attendance, recognition and participation by Bay Area residents and Oakland-based businesses, and grow the reach of promotions and events within the Oakland and Bay Area communities. Visit Oakland is a long-term city partner that administers the City's Measure C Transit Occupancy Tax dollars, as well as assessments generated from the Oakland Tourism BID. They provide enhanced marketing, advertising, and special events to market Oakland as a travel destination. In addition, Visit Oakland partners with the City, local Chambers of Commerce, Business Improvement Districts, and arts and culture organizations, leveraging the Transit Occupancy Tax and BID funding to successfully promote the City's neighborhoods, businesses, and events, telling a story of Oakland as a great place to live, work, and visit. The Visit Oakland team consistently publishes fresh content and powerful visuals via their online communication platforms – their website landing pages, blog content, Oakland community event calendar, social media platforms, and email newsletter. These platforms add a deeper local layer to their outreach and helps expand the audience for Visit Oakland's storytelling, increasing engagement within Oakland and the wider Bay Area.

Visit Oakland has a history of supporting community events that celebrate the best of Oakland, including the Black Joy Parade, Black Vines, Dia de Los Muertos, Lunar New Year, The Black Food and Wine Experience, First Fridays, Hiero Day, Oakland Art Murrum's Art Walk, Pridefest, and the Black Panther: Wakanda Forever premier with The Town Experience.

Visit Oakland employs a full-time team of eight staff with an annual budget of almost \$3.5 million, with over 60% dedicated to advertising, marketing and special events.

FISCAL IMPACT

The grant agreement with Visit Oakland for the administration of the Activate Oakland Initiative is a one-time cost of using \$434,000 in General Purpose Fund 1010 from the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Midcycle budget, of which \$400,000 will be used for the event and activation sponsorship program and \$34,000 will be committed to the public safety education campaign.

Funding for the grant agreement is available from the FY 2022-23 Midcycle budget, from a combination of the following funding sources in the approximate amounts shown in **Table 1** below. Council authorization is requested to carryover these funds from FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24 to award to Visit Oakland for administration of this initiative in FY 2023-24.

Table 1

Fund Source No.	Coding Block	Amount
1) City General Fund (Plaza Activation)	General Purpose Fund (1010)/Special Activities Organization (85611)/City Promotion Account (53311)/DP850 Administrative Project (1000019)/Administration Program (IP03)	\$ 252,000.00
2) City General Fund (Marketing)	General Purpose Fund (1010)/Economic Development Organization (85411)/Advertising and Promotion Account (53314)/Administrative Project (1000019)/Marketing & Special Events Program (IP03)	\$ 182,000.00

Beyond the above one-time costs of \$434,000 from the FY 2022-23 budget, there is no further direct fiscal impact or cost anticipated with adoption of the proposed resolution. There are limited staff costs to support Visit Oakland in launching and administering the events/activations sponsorship program and public safety campaign, designing and reviewing reporting on use of the funds, and providing an update to Council on the activities of Activate Oakland.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The Activate Oakland Initiative was informed directly by input provided recently and over the years from Oakland’s BIDs, Chambers, individual small businesses, business support organizations, merchant associations, and arts and culture community seeking additional funding for events and marketing. Businesses especially in the Downtown have communicated their need for increased foot traffic in order to survive, and business leaders and organizations have made specific requests to the City for support for new events and activations. The City’s BIDs, businesses as well as the Oakland Police Department, have also been requesting a city-wide public relations campaign to better educate visitors and businesses about public safety strategies and effective crime prevention strategies. Visit Oakland will conduct extensive outreach to Oakland’s arts and culture organizations and commercial corridor stakeholders, including Chambers of Commerce and BIDs during the four-week application period. Outreach

will include a joint press release from Visit Oakland and the City, posting on the City and Visit Oakland websites, social media sites and email lists.

Visit Oakland, in partnership with City staff will outreach to and coordinate with City Council Offices to amplify outreach to potential applicants. Email notices will be sent to interested groups including past Cultural Funding grant applicants and all parties that contacted City staff and City Council offices regarding funding for events. Visit Oakland will conduct one in-person public workshop during the application window to provide detailed information about the application process and will provide one-on-one support to prospective applicants as needed.

COORDINATION

The Activate Oakland Initiative was developed by EWDD's Business Development unit with input from its Cultural Affairs unit, as well as with input from the Department of Race of Equity, the Office of the City Attorney and the Department of Finance.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The combination of public safety education and creation of new events and expansion of existing small events in Oakland's business corridors will provide increased foot traffic in Oakland's commercial corridors, which will support Oakland's businesses and increase sales tax. The program will also showcase Oakland's arts and culture community resulting in direct economic benefit, as well as increasing positive perceptions of Oakland as a whole that supports ongoing economic development and growth of Oakland's businesses and commercial districts.

Environmental: The public safety education campaign will increase crime prevention awareness and actions by visitors and businesses that will improve both real and perceived safety of Oakland commercial corridors. The events sponsorship program will increase foot traffic during events, which in turn will contribute to increased safety in the commercial districts where events are held.

Race & Equity: The events sponsorship program will provide an open, competitive process for applicants, resulting in awards to residents, businesses, and organizations across the City. The application scoring criteria will focus on prioritizing funding to applicants from priority neighborhoods, events located in underinvested commercial corridors, and events/applicants that have been previously ineligible for or unable to secure City funding. The program does not require the grant recipient to be a nonprofit organization, making Oakland residents and businesses eligible to apply, removing barriers for small groups and organizations that have been historically excluded from applying for City funding for events. A comprehensive initiative outreach plan will be implemented in partnership with the City, Councilmembers, and community partners that have proven and established relationships with business owners, the arts and culture community and residents in areas across the city, in order to expand knowledge of the funding opportunity as well as the applicant pool, with a focus on underinvested commercial neighborhoods. Visit Oakland will gather demographic data on the applicants, grantees and local businesses to ensure that the Initiative benefits those who most need it. In addition, the public safety education campaign will serve a broad swath of Oakland, including those most impacted by property crime in commercial corridors.


ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution:

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- 2) Authorizing The Carryover Of Unspent Fiscal Year 2022-2023 General Purpose Fund In An Amount Not To Exceed \$434,000 To Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Shifra de Benedictis-Kessner, Urban Economic Analyst III, at 510-238-6230.

Respectfully submitted,

 for

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