



Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition

May 21, 2019

Dear members of the City Council, and Mayor Schaaf,

This is to report that those in attendance at the May 20, 2019 meeting of the Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition adopted the following position statement:

The Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition urges full funding and immediate filling of all Public Works parks maintenance positions. We strongly oppose the freezing of 8.5 FTE. As one of the previously most-drastically-cut, yet smallest sectors of the general budget, and at the same time a sector which serves a huge number of residents, maintenance should be funded fully. (Although park acreage has increased, "*park maintenance staffing is only 60% of what it was in 1970*"—2018 Report on the State of Maintenance of Oakland Parks.)

Citizens and organizations participating in the Measure DD Coalition, together with others, advocated for, passed, and are monitoring \$198,000,000 of capital improvements and additional leveraged funding that DD has made possible. For years we have worried that this investment is at risk due to inadequate maintenance. As new facilities are completed, cutbacks have threatened their usability. At the same time that parks usage has gone up, maintenance has been reduced. For the last 3 years, the City Council appropriated a \$400,000 supplement for enhanced lake area maintenance. That supplement is needed now more than ever.

Any reductions in staffing will decrease the operational effectiveness and efficiency of OPW park maintenance staff and cause further decline of city parks with reduced mowing, weeding, planting, minor irrigation repair, litter pickup, and general landscape maintenance. Blight, illegal dumping, vandalism, and homeless encampments make park areas unusable.

Unmaintained parks are havens for crime. Alternatively, park maintenance is an integral part of enhancing health and public safety. Our parks provide some of the few free activities that everyone can enjoy. They provide outdoor space, exercise, light, air, and social activities, and create green oases and water access amid increasingly-paved surroundings. Furthermore, penny-wise is pound foolish: In maintaining our parks, money is saved by avoiding more costly repairs. As Oakland grows denser, its people use the parks more intensively, requiring further improvements, and even more maintenance to keep up with the current state of our public lands.

For the continued health, beauty, and utility of the City's parks, we urge fully funding and promptly filling all parks maintenance positions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Transmitted on behalf of the Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition,
William Threlfall , Coalition Administrator