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AGENDA REPORT

DATE: December 30, 2019
TO: City Council and Members of the Public
FROM: Councilmembers Nikki Fortunato Bas and Noel Gallo
SUBJECT: Informational Report and Recommendations on The Context, Strategies, Goals, Programs, Partnerships, Outcomes and Best Practices to Address Human Trafficking in the City of Oakland

BACKGROUND

Human trafficking is a pernicious issue that deeply impacts Oaklanders. CM Bas and CM Gallo, who share borders of their respective Districts 2 and 5, have partnered to request information from City departments and propose recommendations to improve how the City is addressing human trafficking.

Commercial sexual exploitation, especially of youth and other vulnerable populations is an alarming problem that has persisted in Oakland for decades. According to experts, advocates and direct service providers, Oakland has long been a destination for human trafficking that has devastated our communities and neighborhoods. In 2003, the FBI designated the Bay Area as a “High Intensity Child Prostitution Area.”¹ In Oakland, sex trafficking disproportionately impacts young women of color and African American girls.

The problem has been exacerbated by several factors. The ongoing housing affordability and homelessness crisis, as well as rising economic inequality and lack of adequate job training and job opportunities, mean that vulnerable communities do not have the basic stability of good jobs and affordable housing. Recent legislation at the national level, including the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA), have moved sex trafficking previously occurring online, onto the streets.²

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2010/12/07/131757175/arresting-youth-in-sex-trafficking-raises-debate>

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On November 12th, 2019, the Life Enrichment Committee heard a report on human trafficking from various city departments including, the Oakland Police Department (OPD); Human Services, along with the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) and Oakland Unite (OU); the City Attorney; the City Administration (CAO); the Department of Public Works (OPW); and the Department of Transportation (OakDOT). This report aimed to address the **context, strategies, goals, programs, partnerships, outcomes and best practices** the City employs to address human trafficking and to improve how the City is prioritizing this issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the report and discussion at the November 12th, 2019 Life Enrichment Committee meeting, our recommendations to address human trafficking are categorized into three areas, 1) *Focus on the “Demand” for Human Trafficking*, 2) *Additional Support for Victims, Survivors, and Impacted Communities*, and 3) *Structural and Policy Changes within City Departments*. These recommendations are not meant to be comprehensive or definitive. We recognize that additional stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and research would be needed to develop more comprehensive recommendations.

1) Focus on the “Demand” for Human Trafficking

- a) Human Trafficking is driven by exploiters and buyers who fuel this underground, illicit economy. While OPD undercover operations have successfully led to the “rescuing” of countless minors in recent years, we believe that in addition to trolling operations, OPD should focus and direct resources to operations that prioritize arresting exploiters and buyers driving this illicit, underground activity.
 - i) OPD should explore tactics such as deploying female decoys and others successful models that focus on exploiters and buyers.
 - ii) Due to the close relationship between gangs and human trafficking, OPD should explore partnerships with Ceasefire to address human trafficking.
 - iii) OPD should deploy additional walking Beat officers and Bike officers to hot spot areas, such as E 15th and International from 15th Ave to 23rd Ave and the intersection of E 15th and 19th Ave, among other areas.
- b) The City should implement a CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) analysis in collaboration with OPD, OPW, OakDOT and community members to address environmental factors that contribute to Human Trafficking.

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2) Additional Support for Victims, Survivors, and Impacted Communities

- a) Community members, advocates and other stakeholders have expressed the desire for more education and training focused on prevention. We recommend that the City (1) identify what resources (programs, funding) exist at the County and State levels and what training and education opportunities exist at OUSD and Alameda County Schools around Human Trafficking and CSEC and (2) increase capacity and partnerships for more education and training focused on prevention.
- b) The City through Oakland Unite should explore best practices around proactive engagement and prevention with vulnerable communities for instance, with foster youth, homeless youth, or others who are at high risk of human trafficking. We recommend that Oakland Unite ensure that human trafficking and CSEC are a significant focus of its programs, including proactive engagement and prevention.
- c) The City should work to identify opportunities for community healing, collaboration and discussion where impacted residents can advance neighborhood specific solutions, for instance through the NCPC model or other forums.

3) Structural and Policy Changes within City Departments

- a) The City should work internally to build collaboration among departments, including Human Services, Housing and Community Development, and Economic and Workforce Development, as well as with external partners in the county, such as AC United, other jurisdictions, and the community, to support human trafficking survivors and CSEC through housing, job training, workforce development and other strategies.
- b) The City through Oakland Unite and its partnerships with AC United and the Alameda County Public Health Department should define the scope of the problem, including the number of people exploited, service gaps, etc. and develop a clear problem statement and comprehensive strategy to address Human Trafficking on the streets, massage parlors and other venues.
- c) As a general best practice, OPD should continue to recruit, hire and invest in culturally competent staff who reflect the communities they serve, especially in units which interface with CSEC and trafficking victims. The City and OPD should invest in additional training of all officers about CSEC and human trafficking, using a trauma-informed model.
- d) Research has shown that hiring a critical mass of women within organizations shifts culture, which would benefit OPD's work to address human trafficking as well as their other strategic goals.
- e) The City should expand its policy to not arrest minors engaged in these acts to including all Transitional Aged Youth under the age of 25.

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- f) The City should explore alternative safe locations to transport minors beyond the Alameda County Assessment Center.

ACTION REQUESTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL

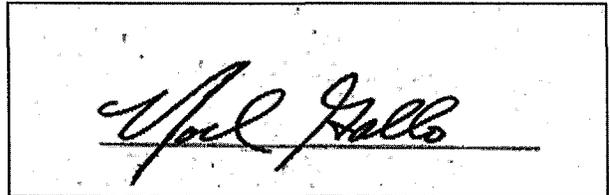
Councilmembers Bas and Gallo recommend that the Public Safety Committee receive and forward this informational report and recommendations to the City Council. The Councilmembers shall schedule a progress report on these recommendations at the Public Safety Committee no later than the last meeting before Summer Recess 2020.

For questions regarding this document, please contact Lia Azul Salaverry, Policy Analyst and Community Liaison, Office of Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas, at 510- 238-7021.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nikki Fortunato Bas Councilmember, District 2



Noel Gallo Councilmember, District 5

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