

5/3/21

Mayor Libby Schaaf
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
3rd Floor
Oakland, CA 94 612

Dear Mayor Schaaf:

We, the undersigned, are writing to respectfully request that you adopt, in full, the recommendations of the Sugar Sweetened Beverage Community Advisory Board into the budget you will propose to the City Council for fiscal years 2021-22 and 2022-23¹. An overview of the Board's recommendations are below.

The anticipated \$8.5 million in soda tax revenue and the recommendations for how to spend those funds represent an important opportunity to progressively target the revenue from the soda tax to improve the health of populations that are disproportionately impacted by soda consumption and diet-related disease while also responding to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This was the focus of the Community Advisory Board during its deliberations. Many of us attended the Board's meetings and can attest to the robust public comment from members of the community, attention to detail and in-depth discussion of various alternatives by the nine-member advisory Board.

In past budget cycles a large percentage of soda tax revenue, beyond what was recommended by the Community Advisory Board, has gone to the Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development Department (OPYRD). The committee noted in its deliberations that they are supportive of OPYRD and want to see the department fully funded -- but not with SSB funds. Measure Q, the Oakland Parks and Recreation Preservation, Litter Reduction and Homelessness Support Act, which passed in March 2020 earmarks 64% of the anticipated \$21 million in annual revenue for parks, landscape maintenance and recreational services. The passage should pave the way for funding the department without the use of soda tax revenue.

In addition, while the city was facing a notable budget deficit of more than \$218 million due to COVID-19, Oakland is now poised to receive \$192 million in direct Federal aid as a result of the [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#). Both this additional support and the passage of Measure Q place Oakland in a much better financial position than previously expected. With these funds, our coalition is even more staunch in our support of the Community Advisory Board's recommendations.

We strongly support the recommendations of the Board not only because they would provide funding to programs that improve community health with an equity lens, but also because it is important that the soda tax revenue be spent in a way that is guided by the Board established by voters when the tax was passed at the ballot in 2016.

¹ Final Sugar Sweetened Beverage Community Advisory Board Budget Recommendations for FY 21-22 and FY 22-23, Page 4, March 2021: <https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/MINUTES-SSB-03.08.21.pdf>

We respectfully ask that you incorporate 100% of the Board's allocation recommendations into your budget and that you will continue to support the committee as it tracks implementation and expenditure of the tax revenue.

Sincerely,

Soli Alpert, Administrative Coordinator, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club

Molly Devinney, Project Manager, Sugar Freedom Project

Katie Ettman, Food and Agriculture Senior Policy Associate, SPUR

Lina Ghanem, Director & Founder, Saba Grocers Initiative

Asia Hampton, Program Manager, Oakland Food Policy Council

Dr. John Maa, Board Member, American Heart Association Bay Area Division

Sarah Nelson, Executive Director, 18 Reasons

Nakia Woods, Project Director, HOPE Collaborative

MEMO

To: SSB Board
From: Ad Hoc Budget Subcommittee
Re: Budget Recommendations

March 8, 2021

The 2020/2021 revenue from the Oakland Sugar Sweetened Beverage (SSB) tax is projected to be \$8.5M and a project of \$17M over two years. In 2019, the SSB CAB proposed 40% of the budget to be allocated to community grants and 20% to be allocated to city agencies. The final budget [funded city agencies at 70%](#), largely allocated to Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development, and included only 9% for community investment grants. In contrast, in San Francisco, the Board of Supervisors and mayor passed a budget that adopted the vast majority of the San Francisco SSB CAB's recommendations.

The Oakland SSB CAB is recommending that the upcoming FY SSB tax revenue allocations prioritize community investment. Investing funds in trusted community organizations and directly in communities most impacted by the adverse health outcomes associated with sugar sweetened beverage consumption--obesity, diabetes, oral health, and significant chronic diseases, which have been exacerbated by COVID--upholds the expectation of Oakland voters and is the most effective way to reduce the health disparities in neighborhoods impacted by and generating tax revenue from sugar sweetened beverages.

Our recommendations are the following:

- 20% City Agencies
 - 10% HSD
 - 10% OYRPD
- 12% OUSD
- 60% Community Investments (Direct assistance and Community based grants)
- 8% Admin, Evaluation and Communications

Sugar Sweetened Beverage Community Advisory Board Final Recommendation from March 8, 2021 Regular Meeting

7. Discussion and Possible Action on Key Recommendations regarding the FY21-23 Spending Plan

Chair Liou presented the memo from the ad hoc committee that proposes that 60% of the SSB funds be allocated to the very community programs that were discussed in the previous item. The full recommendation is as follows:

- 20% City Agencies
- 10% HSD
- 10% OYRPD
- 12% OUSD
- 60% Community Investments (Direct assistance and Community based grants)
- 8% Admin, Evaluation and Communications

After some discussion about the formula and some clarifying questions, the board voted unanimously to adopt this recommendation. It was noted the importance that the board and the many community groups advocate with the City Council since they ultimately decide how the funds will be expended. Also, the group acknowledged that they do not want to pit the community programs against the Parks Recreation and Youth Development Department but would want to see OPRYD fully funded to serve the community as well, just not with all of the SSB funds.