

November 15, 2021

Dear community members,

We, the undersigned, believe that Oakland is at a critical crossroads.

Oakland is the heart of the East Bay. It is a creative, community-minded, racially and economically diverse city, home to excellent regional rail access, a growing downtown and thriving neighborhoods. And yet, as in many cities across the country, racial and socioeconomic disparities persist across nearly every indicator of livability, from median income to preschool enrollment, from rates of asthma emergency room visits for young children to the percentage of individuals who get food assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic and social justice movements of 2020 exposed persistent challenges in governing the city equitably and delivering services for all residents of Oakland. These events forced the city to try to innovate, respond to community needs and coordinate across systems in unprecedented times. A progressive, forward-looking city, Oakland has the opportunity to flexibly adapt to meet the needs of its residents today and in the future. **As Oakland grows in size and complexity, its system of government needs to evolve.**

Good government processes ensure the rights of people and support their ability to thrive. To realize these goals, leaders and government employees should have clear, effective rules for how to interact, know who is doing what, support each other in achieving shared outcomes, and provide programs and services that effectively meet the needs of the people they serve. Actions should be transparent and responsive to public input.

SPUR's report, [\*Making Government Work: 10 Ways City Governance Can Adapt to Meet the Needs of Oaklanders\*](#), provides a working definition of good government and a set of recommendations to increase the city government's ability to effectively represent all Oaklanders and provide necessary public goods and services. **We see this body of work as a starting point for coordinating our efforts towards the common goal of improving governance structures in Oakland, meet this moment and realize our city's fullest potential.**

Signed,



Ronak Davé Okoye, Oakland Director, SPUR



Viola Gonzales, President, League of Women Voters of Oakland



Barbara Leslie, President, President & CEO, Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce



Carrie Crespo-Dixon, President and Board Chair, Make Oakland Better Now!



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