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January 14, 2013

Via E-Mail

Oakland City Council  
Public Safety Committee  
President Noel Gallo  
Council Members Dan Kalb,  
Lynette Gibson-McElhaney,  
Libby Schaaf

Re: Strategic Policy Partnership Contract Amendment  
Special Meeting of the Public Safety Committee,  
January 15, 2013, Agenda Item 4

Dear Public Safety Committee Members:

Make Oakland Better Now! is a citizens advocacy group focused on improving public safety, transparency, accountability and budget reform in the City of Oakland. We write today in strong support of the proposed amendment to the City's contract with Strategic Policy Partnership.

The carnage in our streets – murders and all violent crime – is far beyond the crisis level. The attached table shows an intolerable increase in both murders and violent crime from 2004 to the present. Worse than the numbers, of course, is the human tragedy. While that tragedy continues, Oakland has no comprehensive public safety plan and no meaningful plan to rebuild its inadequately staffed police department.

In the fall of last year, police command staff acknowledged that it lacked the resources to provide a comprehensive public safety plan. The primary purpose of the proposed contract amendment is to bring our city the real plan it desperately needs, designed by two of the most successful and experienced policing consultants in the United States. The chief of police again acknowledges he cannot do this with existing resources. Our choice is change or the status quo. With violent crime up 24%, it is unconscionable for Oakland to select the status quo.

We have heard several arguments against this proposal that deserve comment:

First, we have heard it said that Oakland spends too much on consultants, it pays large amounts for a monitor, that it will be spending even more once the Federal Court appoints compliance director and that the money should go to more officers, overtime or other public safety purposes. However, it is essential not to conflate the court-ordered NSA-related costs

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with steps that must be taken to design and implement an overall plan to end the City's safety crisis. Oakland already budgets more police overtime than its exhausted officers can work. And while Oakland must re-build the police department rapidly, money spent with no comprehensive plan will largely be money wasted.

Second, there are some in the community who are opposed to the involvement of former New York and Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton because of his supposed history with "stop and frisk" policies that they equate with racial profiling. We urge the Committee not to allow this discussion to become a debate on "stop and frisk," which is not being proposed. And we remind that Committee that after Chief Bratton served Los Angeles first as a Federal Court-appointed monitor and then as chief, he was credited by the Southern California civil rights bar with a dramatic decrease in misconduct cases against the LAPD. The Federal Judge overseeing LAPD's Consent Judgment (the equivalent of Oakland's NSA) lauded that department:

LAPD has become the national and international policing standard for activities that range from audits to handling of the mentally ill to many aspects of training to risk assessment of police officers and more.

We are in desperate need of bold measures to end the warfare occurring in our streets. We will only succeed if we stop drawing the traditional polarizing lines that have historically characterized all of our discussions about public safety, whether the subject was gang injunctions, curfew, or police in general. We urge the Committee not to allow this discussion to devolve into a surrogate debate over "stop and frisk" policies that have not been proposed by anyone.

The other consistent strain in our public safety debate for years has been the complete absence of leadership. There is no doubt that the lack of a comprehensive plan, the absence of City leadership and Council's past participation in the community polarization have contributed to the chaos that presently victimizes so much of our community. Your Committee and the council have the chance now to effect real change and show real leadership. The best things the Oakland City Council Public Safety Committee could do to make our streets safer is to unanimously vote to support the proposed contract amendment, and then ensure that the plan is fully implemented.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Bruce Nye  
Board Chair  
Make Oakland Better Now!

**Oakland Homicides and Violent Crime  
2004 – 2012**

Source of 2004 - 2011 data: FBI Uniform Crime Reports Data

Average annual homicides 2005 – 2012: 112.75

Average annual violent crimes 2005 – 2012: 6,933.875

<b>Year</b>	<b>Homicides</b>	<b>Violent Crime</b>
2004	83	5,151
2005	93	5,692
2006	145	7,593
2007	120	7,608
2008	115	7,905
2009	104	6,793
2010	90	6,296
2011	104	6,652
2012	131 <sup>1</sup>	6,932 <sup>2</sup>
	Fn 1: Based on media reports, includes 4 "Non-UCR" homicides	Fn 2: From OPD Weekly Crime Report 12/10 12/16/12