



Board Members: Liz Brisson \ Grey Gardner \ Emily Heard \ Ben Kaufman \
Christopher Kintner \ Erin McMillan \ Benjamin Ulrey \ Liat Zavodivker
transportoakland.org

June 4th 2019

Re: Opposition to Kaplan's proposal to dismantle OakDOT

Oakland City Council:

Transport Oakland strongly objects to Council President Kaplan's reckless [proposal](#) to dismantle the Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) and jeopardize the delivery of the paving plan and derail the momentum that the department has built in incorporating equity and safety into the everyday decisions that impact our streets and the lives of everybody using them. This proposal, if passed, has the potential to lower morale at OakDOT and distract city staff from fixing our streets.

In OakDOT's first years as an agency, it has distinguished itself as a national leader on progressive transportation policies:

- OakDOT's [recently approved 3 Year Paving Plan leads the nation](#) for using an equity formula that places equal importance on serving areas with higher underserved populations and fixing the worst local streets. This plan smartly incorporates new curb ramps, sidewalk repairs, and high visibility crosswalk markings alongside other improvements identified by the pedestrian plan and the bicycle plan.
- OakDOT's [Let's Bike Oakland plan](#) is a national model for equity-focused planning. OakDOT contracted with five community based organizations to host and facilitate community discussions that led the development of this plan that aims to remove barriers that prevent the most vulnerable populations from biking.
- After asking for public feedback on how to infuse art and play into Oakland streets, [OakDOT established the Paint the Town program](#) that helped artists and residents beautify neighborhoods with street murals. This program delivered 27 projects in disadvantaged neighborhoods and three in areas of low disadvantage and exceeded OakDOT's equity goals for the program.
- OakDOT is developing [rapid response capability to quickly deliver street safety](#) measures after somebody is killed on our streets. A rapid response project was recently delivered in under two weeks after a child and mother were tragically killed at 26th Ave and Foothill Blvd. With over 30 traffic deaths a year that disproportionately impact our most vulnerable residents, this capability is desperately needed.

Transportation infrastructure and policy that brings livability, vitality, sustainability, and equity to Oakland.



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- OakDOT has established safety standards for new complete street projects that for the first time prioritize everybody--not just speeding drivers. All projects going forward receive high-visibility crosswalks, daylighted intersections, tight turning radii, ADA improvements, transit upgrades and bike lanes.

Transport Oakland is disappointed that Council President Kaplan is proposing this significant change to Oakland's transportation policy without first seeking input from all stakeholders including organizations working to improve transportation in Oakland and the community. OakDOT's greatest strength in implementing council policy is its strong independence from the council on day-to-day execution.

There will always be "squeaky wheel" constituents that invest substantial time in having their pet issues resolved, but a well-functioning OakDOT needs independence to prioritize these issues relative to other high-priority work and needs some level of independence from the legislative branch to do so effectively. By isolating OakDOT from political interference from those with the loudest voice, we seek to minimize inequity on our streets to those whose voices aren't nearly as loud.

Transport Oakland urges the Oakland City Council to preserve OakDOT and OakDOT's independence in Oakland's 2019-2021 fiscal year budget.

Please vote NO on Kaplan's OakDOT proposal.

Sincerely,
Christopher Kintner
Board President, Transport Oakland