

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OAKLAND LEADERS ANNOUNCE PLAN TO INVEST \$100 MILLION IN EAST OAKLAND

New philanthropic partnership will focus on a 40x40 block area in East Oakland

Oakland, CA – East Oakland community leaders are announcing a new \$100 million initiative to make lasting improvements in their neighborhood.

Rise East is a collective impact initiative that grew out of a community-led vision to develop a Black Cultural Zone in East Oakland almost 10 years ago. Community members born and raised in East Oakland are leading this effort and hope it will keep Black families in the area and lead to the return of families who were displaced due to economic barriers and systemic disinvestment.

This privately funded initiative will focus on an East Oakland community known as the 40x40, which runs from Seminary Avenue to the Oakland-San Leandro border and from MacArthur Boulevard to the Bay. This area is home to the largest concentration of Black residents (over 30,000) who remain across Oakland flatlands today.

“As young people raised in the area and now serving as leaders, our vision is for a robust and vibrant renaissance in legacy Black communities; vibrant, thriving Black Arts, Cultural, and Commercial areas in a thriving economy and ecosystem powered by collective efforts that assures our inalienable human right to love, health, wellness, belonging, power, safety, and self-determination” said Carolyn (CJ) Johnson, CEO of the Black Cultural Zone and member of the 40x40 Council.

Rise East is a joint effort between the 40x40 Council and Oakland Thrives. Oakland Thrives is a collective impact organization created to coordinate large-scale strategies that involve the public and private sectors working together to improve wellbeing for Oakland families. The network is made up of resident leaders, major employers, and representatives of large public agencies, including the City of Oakland and Oakland Unified School District.

“Kaiser Permanente is a proud co-founding member of Oakland Thrives, whose goal is to make Oakland the healthiest city in the nation. We are honored to support the transformational work of Rise East, which will help us realize this shared vision,” said Colin Lacon, East Bay Public Affairs Director, Kaiser Permanente Northern California.

Oakland Thrives is working to raise \$50M in local funding, which will be matched by national philanthropic organization Blue Meridian Partners for a total of \$100M in new investment for East Oakland. Rise East strategies will be implemented over 10 years, beginning in 2024, and fundraising will continue as the work unfolds. More information can be found at www.riseeast.org.

“I applaud the East Oakland community leaders and everyone that has been working tirelessly toward the Rise East initiative and securing this investment in East Oakland,” says Mayor Sheng Thao. “My Administration is committed to working in partnership with this coalition to ensure the resources needed for the health and vitality of our East Oakland residents are provided to address historic inequities and ensure current residents continue to call this community their home.”

Rise East is guided by a 10-Year Plan, which includes a 5-part strategy to improve schools, boost economic opportunity, and improve health and wellbeing at the individual, household, neighborhood, and systemic level. “More than 400 residents contributed their ideas to the plan,” said Oakland Thrives CEO Melanie Moore. “Data on the particular challenges facing East Oakland’s Black community ultimately led participants to make the decision to focus on Black children and families in the 40x40 area as the starting place for this effort.”

Half of Black families in poverty and 41% of Black residents in poverty citywide live in the Rise East focus area. Within this area, household income and life expectancy are lowest among Black residents compared to other racial/ethnic groups. There is a 15-year gap in life expectancy between Black residents in East Oakland (70 years) and white residents of the Oakland Hills (85 years).

While Rise East strategies are designed to address these systemic inequities in the Black community, programs and services offered through this initiative will be open to everyone in the neighborhood. This partnership will follow an approach known as targeted universalism - focusing on those most marginalized in order to create systemic changes that will benefit everyone. By prioritizing the well-being and success of Black children and families, Rise East will create ripple effects that uplift and empower all members of the city.

Rise East is supported by prominent Oakland leaders who will join forces to announce the partnership during a press conference at 10 a.m. on Thursday, August 24th at East Oakland Youth Development Center. Speakers will include East Oakland residents, members of the 40x40 Council, Mayor Sheng Thao, OUSD Superintendent Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell, and representatives from Oakland Thrives and Kaiser Permanente.

What: Rise East Press Conference Announcing \$100M Investment in Community

When: 10:00 a.m., Thursday, August 24

Where: East Oakland Youth Development Center, 8200 International Blvd, Oakland, CA 94621

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The 40x40 Council is a network of community-based organizations in the 40x40 area of East Oakland working together to improve health and quality of life in the neighborhood. Launched in 2021, the 40x40 Council includes four longstanding, Black-led nonprofits: [Black Cultural Zone](#), [Brotherhood of Elders Network](#), [East Oakland Youth Development Center](#), and [Roots Community Health Center](#). The initiative includes a People's Advisory Council made up of Black community leaders and residents from the 40x40 who have knowledge of the issues impacting the community and a vested interest in improving the neighborhood without displacing the residents. The 40x40 Council will take the lead on operationalizing and implementing the 10 Year Plan.

Oakland Thrives is a collective impact backbone organization that convenes decision-makers and community leaders to collaborate on policies that ensure long-term gains in health, wealth, education, housing, and safety for Oakland families. Oakland Thrives is governed by an executive team of leaders in government, philanthropy, business, and the nonprofit ecosystem, including the Mayor of Oakland, the Superintendent of OUSD, the Alameda County Administrator, and senior leadership at Kaiser Permanente. The Oakland Thrives Executive team and a community Steering Committee made up of East Oakland residents will share decision-making authority over Rise East, setting the course of the initiative and monitoring progress toward its goals. www.oaklandthrives.org