

Oakland Records Lowest Homicide Count in Decades, Major Drops Across Violent Crime in 2025

City officials outline strategy behind the reductions, acknowledge work ahead

OAKLAND, CA - Mayor **Barbara Lee** and City leaders today announced historic reductions in crime across Oakland in 2025, including the lowest number of homicides the city has seen in decades. The announcement came during a press conference at Oakland City Hall featuring public safety officials and community partners.

Oakland recorded 67 homicides in 2025, a 22 percent decrease from the prior year. The City also achieved reductions across all major crime categories, including a 43 percent drop in robberies, a 49 percent decline in carjackings, and a 39 percent reduction in motor vehicle thefts. Overall violent crime fell 25 percent.

"This isn't the work of any one department or any one person," said Mayor **Barbara Lee**. "It's OPD officers on patrol, violence interrupters on the street, MACRO responders answering crisis calls, and community members stepping up for their neighbors. But I want to be clear: 67 families lost loved ones to homicide this year, and that is 67 too many. We will not stop until Oakland is the safest city in America."

"This progress did not happen by accident," **Lee** added. "It reflects an all-hands-on-deck approach to public safety that focuses on prevention, accountability, and partnership."

The reductions reflect a comprehensive strategy combining law enforcement, violence prevention, crisis response, and community partnership.

Interim Police Chief **James Beere** reflected on the significance of the milestone while honoring those lost to violence.

"Public safety in Oakland reached a milestone in 2025, as the City saw a historic low in homicides, with 67 lives lost. That is 67 lives too many. Those lives lost affect not just the immediate family but the entire community with impacts lasting generations. But that is a significant reduction and a decline we haven't seen for decades. We remain committed to reducing violence and crime as we enter 2026. We are proud of our community and grateful to all our partners for making Oakland safer," **Beere** said.

Beere noted that OPD recovered more than 1,200 firearms in 2025, with more than 200 turned in voluntarily by community members through buyback programs. The department also seized 291 vehicles connected to sideshows, including 195 through follow-up investigations using license plate reader technology.

Beere also emphasized accountability, pointing to the department's 95 percent homicide clearance rate in 2025: "The message is clear: if you engage in violent crime, we will catch you and bring you to justice."

The City's Department of Violence Prevention and Ceasefire program conducted intensive intervention work with individuals most at risk of gun violence.

"Our approach recognizes gun violence as a public health issue," said Dr. **Holly Joshi**, Chief of the Department of Violence Prevention. "We believe most people caught in cycles of violence want a way out, and with the right supports and opportunities, can reinvent themselves. Our violence interrupters work day and night

to mediate conflicts before they become violent and prevent retaliation during highly vulnerable moments."

Joshi noted this marks the second consecutive year of significant reductions in violence.

"We are not here to wave a victory flag, but to remain accountable to effective strategies," said **Joshi**. "It is our responsibility to make Oakland a safe and thriving city."

City Administrator **Jestin Johnson** highlighted the strategic investments that made the progress possible despite significant budget constraints.

"Our highest responsibility as a local government is the safety of our community," said **Johnson**. "In 2025 we faced a projected \$265 million budget shortfall - and our priority was clear: close that gap while investing in public safety. These results show that investment is paying off."

The 2025-2027 City budget included funding for five police academies over two years with authorization for 678 officers, \$1.4 million for sideshow prevention, and \$700,000 for human trafficking operations.

The City also assigned Assistant City Administrator **Michelle Phillips** as the new Constitutional Policing Administrator to improve accountability structures and help achieve sustained compliance with the federal negotiated settlement agreement.

Fire Chief **Damon Covington** noted that the Oakland Fire Department's MACRO program surpassed 10,000 responses in 2025, establishing itself as one of the most active mobile crisis response programs in the nation.

"MACRO continues to grow and expand its model, and it's a key resource for the city of Oakland," said **Covington**. "It really is at the cutting edge, leading the nation in showing what alternative response models can do. The program connects residents to care while allowing police to focus on violent crime and fire crews to respond to medical emergencies."

Covington noted that through Mayor **Lee**'s partnership with Assemblymember **Bonta** and Senator **Arreguín**, the program secured \$1 million in state funding to continue operations.

Covington also noted that in 2025, OFD was able to open all 24 Oakland fire stations for the first time in two decades.

Members of the City Council emphasized the collaboration and strategic investments behind the progress.

Council President **Kevin Jenkins** said: "This progress reflects what's possible when we work together with a shared commitment. We will continue that partnership to build on these results."

At-Large Councilmember **Rowena Brown** said: "Leadership and investment matter. The progress we're seeing in Oakland is the result of deliberate choices to fund what works - violence prevention, mental health response, police staffing, and community partners. These results show why we must continue investing across the full public safety ecosystem."

Councilmember **Charlene Wang** said: "Oakland is making real progress on public safety, but we can't take our foot off the gas. We're building on this momentum with

a citywide push to hire more police officers, a countywide partnership to combat human trafficking, and new technology to modernize and fight crime smarter."

Councilmember **Janani Ramachandran** said: "Last year, the City made historic investments in addressing public safety in a comprehensive way, and dynamically advocated for State and Federal resources that Oakland needs. I'm especially proud of the work the City has done to improve emergency response times, including through investments in better technology and more dispatch personnel. I am also hopeful that the investments we have made in recruitment and retention efforts will boost our sworn personnel count, and that we will have a 2026 with further reductions in violence across the board."

Councilmember **Zac Unger** said: "I'm proud of the back-to-basics approach that our mayor and this council have taken. Public safety is the core, indispensable mission of city government, and we're doing what it takes to keep Oaklanders safe by fully staffing the fire department, budgeting for five police academies, and extending our funding commitment to CeaseFire and MACRO."

Community partners, including faith leaders and organizations like Faith in Action East Bay, played a central role in violence intervention and prevention efforts throughout the year.

Mayor **Lee** acknowledged the shootings that occurred last week and emphasized that the work continues.

"Even with this progress, gun violence remains a challenge," said **Lee**. "For families who have lost loved ones, statistics offer no comfort. Our focus is on what comes next - building on what works and pushing forward with urgency."

2025 CRIME STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

Violent Crime Index: Down 25%

Homicides: 67 (Down 22%)

Robberies: Down 42%

Carjackings: Down 49%

Burglaries: Down 15%

Motor Vehicle Thefts: Down 40%

KEY INVESTMENTS

Five police academies funded over two years; \$1.4 million for sideshow prevention;
\$700,000 for human trafficking operations

OPD

1,200+ firearms recovered by OPD; 291 sideshow-related vehicles seized

MACRO PROGRAM

10,000+ responses, \$1 million in new state funding

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