



'It takes time to move'

## Mayor Dellums lays out multitiered city plan

By Kelly Rayburn, STAFF WRITER

Article Last Updated: 01/15/2008 08:30:14 AM PST

OAKLAND — Mayor Ron Dellums, speaking passionately in his first State Of The City address, challenged city leaders Monday to do "whatever it takes" to ensure the Police Department reaches its full strength of 803 officers by the end of the year, as crime weighs heavily on the city.

Speaking for about an hour at the downtown Marriott, the mayor also defended his administration's work in 2007 on economic development, public health and its efforts to increase participation in government, saying key steps were taken toward making his vision of Oakland as a

"model city" a reality.

"Have we achieved it overnight?," Dellums asked. "No. We didn't get here in one year. We didn't get here in one day ... it takes time to move."

Dellums called public safety the "elephant in the room" and said a decrease in homicides from 148 in 2006 to 127 in 2007 is not something in which people should take comfort.

"That's just a number," Dellums said. "We

cannot take solace and comfort in the fact that over 100 people were murdered in our community."

The violence continued just hours before he spoke. A 39-year-old man was shot dead in the parking lot of a West Oakland fast-food restaurant in the city's fourth homicide this year.

The mayor, who trumpeted the city's recent reorganization of the Police Department as a major victory for community policing, said in 2008 increasing policing resources will be a top priority.

The department had 736 officers as of Jan. 4, when 25 officers joined the ranks. Dellums said the city finds itself in its current predicament because past administrations did not adequately plan for the retirement of baby-boomer officers.

"I wasn't here," he said. "It wasn't on my watch."

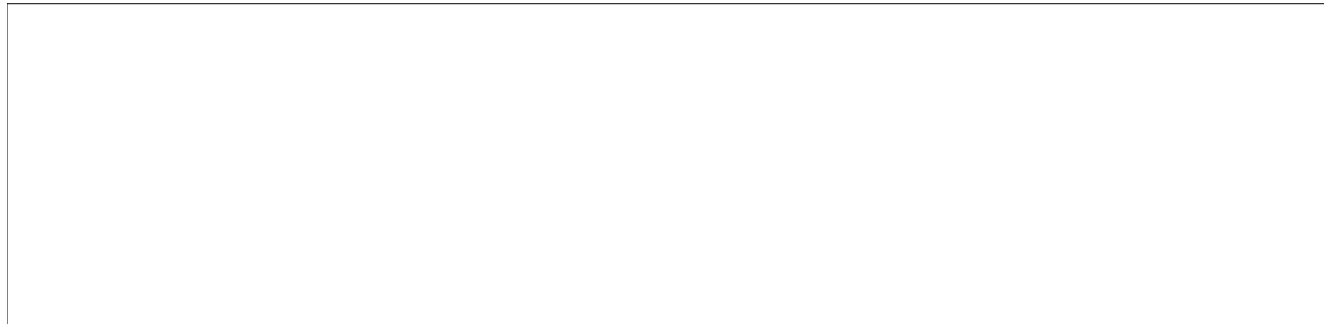
He outlined steps he believes can help get the department to 803. They included: working with the Peralta Colleges to organize a pre-academy boot camp to boost academy graduation rates; conducting concurrent police academies; providing incentives for senior officers looking at retirement to stay on board to help train new officers; having civilians do some of the work uniformed officers do; boosting recruitment both within Oakland and outside of it.

Dellums also said he would convene a public safety summit to help determine whether the city should go above the 803-officer mark after it reaches that goal.

"I don't want the next mayor to be in the position of playing catch-up," he said.

City Councilmember Larry Reid (Elmhurst-East Oakland), the chair of the council's public

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safety committee, which is regularly briefed on police recruitment and training, said reaching 803 by the end of the year is unlikely.

He said the council had already been mulling over a number of Dellums' suggestions and noted that when council members said in 2006 they would be at 803 at the end of that year, he warned it was unrealistic. It was.

"I don't think we're going to have our Police Department at full strength in 2009 or even 2010 — unless some miracle happens," he said.

Lenore Anderson, Dellums' top adviser on public safety, who has been working with the Police Department to come up with new recruiting strategies, disagreed. She said a better success rate in the academy and getting civilians to do desk work were crucial.

"We can do it," she said. "I'm confident it can happen."

Dellums also outlined programs the city is engaged in to tackle crime at its root causes, such as helping ex-offenders find employment, getting guns off the street and placing street-level outreach workers in at-risk communities.

Such efforts are important to Steve Gilbert, 64, of East Oakland, who wore a T-shirt with his son Daniel's picture on it Monday night. Daniel was shot and killed April 9, seven blocks from Gilbert's home. He was 21.

"We're living in a dysfunctional inner city," Gilbert said.

In a perfect world, he said, social programs for youth would increase tenfold. He does not fault Dellums for the state of the city's

neighborhoods. He's giving the mayor a chance.

"Two more years, three more years, if there's no progress, that's another issue," Gilbert said. "He'll have failed."

Dellums spoke passionately, without notes, in front of an overflow crowd of about 1,000. Among those in attendance were U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Oakland, state Assemblymember Loni Hancock, D-Berkeley, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and most of the Oakland City Council.

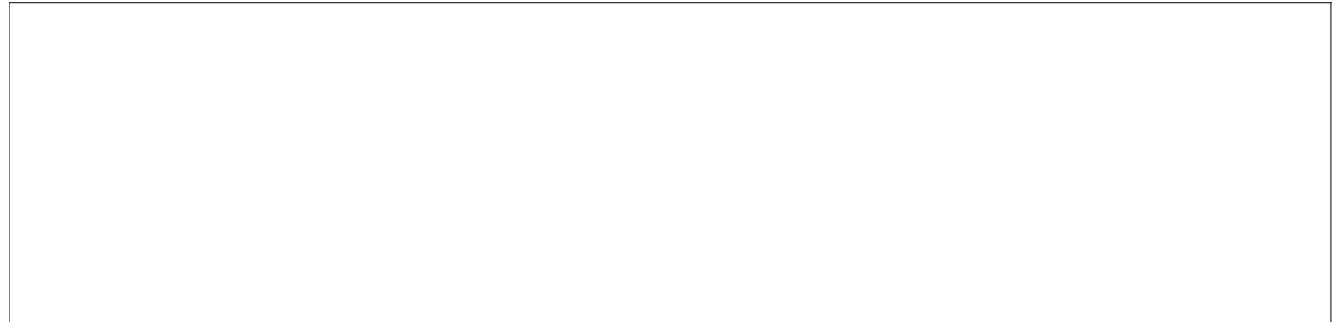
Dellums prefaced his remarks saying they were his chance to communicate directly to Oaklanders, unfiltered by a third party, in what seemed to be a shot at the media.

"This is our night to set the record straight," he said, "our night to separate fact from fiction, myth from reality."

He touched on what he considered some of his accomplishments of his first year in office, including a public-private partnership to bring 10,000 jobs to Oakland; efforts to build a green business community; the development of emergency-response plans among 10 counties in the region; the appointment of 102 people, including 24 youth, to city boards and agencies; a Get Screened Oakland campaign to fight HIV and AIDS; and work toward providing health clinics at city middle and high schools.

Dellums also said his administration would soon be releasing details on a comprehensive housing strategy. The City Council and advocates on both sides of the affordable housing issue have been waiting months for the mayor's office to offer its proposals.

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The mayor did not detail any housing specifics, but did say, "People who live in Oakland have the right to stay in Oakland. We will not sacrifice the diversity or the richness of the community."

Amie Fishman, executive director of East Bay Housing Organizations, which handed out hundreds of fliers on affordable housing to people in attendance, said she was excited by what Dellums said.

"The City Council's been deadlocked," she said. "We're excited in having the mayor's help in breaking the deadlock."

Angela Woodall contributed to this report.

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