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Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Councilmembers Charlene Wang, Rowena Brown, Carroll Fife, and Ken Houston
City of Oakland
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

Subject: Support the Oakland Police Department Camera Surveillance Use Policy

Dear Councilmembers Wang, Brown, Fife, and Houston -

On behalf of the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce (OCCC), we respectfully urge the Public Safety Committee to support the Oakland Police Department's Camera Surveillance Use Policy.

Public safety remains the top concern for Chinatown's small businesses, residents, and visitors. In partnership with the BID Alliance, the Oakland Chinatown Chamber oversees a network of more than 50 community cameras throughout Chinatown. These systems were established to deter crime, support investigations, and rebuild public confidence in safety.

The proposed OPD Camera Use Policy establishes the **clear procedures, accountability, and privacy safeguards** necessary to ensure these systems are used responsibly and transparently. In Chinatown and other commercial districts, cameras have proven to be a safe, cost-effective deterrent—helping to prevent theft, vandalism, and violence, while providing critical evidence that supports investigations and reduces the burden on victims and witnesses.

The proposed policy includes important **privacy protections**, such as:

- A **30-day data retention limit** unless footage is part of an active investigation;
- A prohibition on facial recognition and audio recording;
- Tiered access controls and comprehensive activity logs;
- Explicit protections against targeting individuals based on race, gender, religion, political affiliation, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected characteristics

These safeguards strike the right balance in protecting civil liberties while giving our city the tools it needs to improve safety and restore community confidence.

We respectfully urge the Public Safety Committee to approve the OPD Camera Use Policy and move it forward for adoption by City Council. A clear, transparent framework will allow technology to serve its purpose: protecting lives, livelihoods, and the cultural heart of Oakland.

Thank you for your leadership in keeping our communities safe.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Tran
President, Board of Directors
Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce