

MAYOR SHENG THAO

Mayor Thao is one of the Bay Area's strongest and most effective progressive leaders. Her family story - escaping genocide, poverty, and abuse - has made her into a determined, empathetic leader. Her commitment to racial justice, building affordable housing, advocating for low-wage workers, and protecting tenants can be seen in her many accomplishments as a City Council member and will drive her work to improve the lives of Oakland residents as Oakland's 51st Mayor.



Mayor Thao's first term key priorities are:

- Recruit, hire and retain key roles within city government, with a particular emphasis on public facing departments, to lower the city employee vacancy rate and improve basic service delivery for residents.
- Develop new affordable housing funding mechanisms and implement permit process reform to dramatically increase the number of new housing units built across the City of Oakland.
- Maintain clean and safe streets for all by advancing pragmatic solutions that balance community health and the dignity of our unhoused neighbors.
- Finalize negotiations for the Howard Terminal development project with the Port of Oakland and the Oakland Athletics MLB team that safeguard the financial interests of taxpayers and facilitate growth and vitality in the Jack London Square district.
- Launch a gun-buy-back program in partnership with regional law enforcement agencies to get illegal guns off our streets and dramatically reduce the number of lives lost to gun violence in Oakland.
- Lead wildfire prevention and climate mitigation efforts across multiple jurisdictions to negotiate an inclusive and sustainable regional approach to emergency management.



Born and raised in Stockton, CA, Mayor Thao grew up in poverty as the daughter of Hmong refugees. Her family used social services and lived in public housing. She left home at 17, and in her early 20s found herself in an abusive relationship, isolated from her family, and pregnant. She escaped this domestic violence, but soon had a baby and no permanent housing. For months, she and her son Ben slept on couches or in her car. When Ben was 10 months old, she got a job at a local community college and started taking classes. With the help of welfare and a Head Start program for her son, she put herself through school. She became class valedictorian, then transferred to UC Berkeley, where she co-founded a food access program for low-income students and graduated with a degree in legal studies.

Shortly after graduating, she got a job as a legislative aide for an Oakland City Councilmember and worked her way up to Chief of Staff. In 2018, she ran for City Council District 4 and won, becoming the first Hmong-American Councilmember in California history. As a Councilmember, she bridged political divides to make progress on many key issues. In the last budget, she brought the Council together to make historic investments in violence prevention programs while also ensuring funding for three new police academies. Last year, Mayor Thao negotiated a historic agreement between organized labor and the Oakland business community to modernize the city's business tax structure and secure millions in new revenue for public services.

