Hi Cristy! Sorry for the late one. Hope you felt better over the weekend!

I've been working with DQ and our SafeCities partner AVS on the final bits of the story. After speaking with Joe DeVries and Ana Martinez in Neighborhoods, we all developed the attached storyline. It goes directly to your point cameras alone don't work. We are so behind on this grant but this is exactly the story everyone wants to tell and it's really great!

Would you be ok to check me on the project plan? I want to show you this sheet in the RFP if it's ok? It's the Goals and Objectives bit and it would be so useful to say it out loud?
Section 1 Project Need

Ask

Oakland Police Department proposes to rebuild its retail theft prevention system from the bottom up. We will embed the latest technology and security into our already strong community networks. We will add agency coordination to shared community knowledge and resources to maximize a new CCTV system of cameras and surveillance.

Describe the need(s) to be addressed, the process used to determine the need(s), and how the need is related to the intent of the grant program.

Oakland hosts an estimated 1,000 retail shops of all sizes across 55 retail areas each with a unique character or market focus. From majority Black, Latin and Asian neighborhoods where local shops and franchises are still community owned to Oakland’s own brands, protecting our retail areas is a primary priority for equitable economic growth. The businesses who bring the biggest economic impacts to the city can afford break-ins and theft the least. Theft usually includes costs to the building, increases or loss of insurance coverage and lost staff time. Evidence continues to show the capital disadvantage Black and Brown businesses are subject to. Oakland needs to help them defend their products, their property and their legacies so we can remain one of the most diverse economies in the country.

The loss of investment and revenue due to theft is exhausting our business owners, both large and small in Downtown and in our corridors. Downtown is transforming from an office reliant 9am-5pm M-F regime to a 24-hour mixed use economy. After several years of the highest rent in the country and the turbulence of the Pandemic, Oakland’s ground floor Downtown retail locations are reducing the safety of entire buildings and blocks with repeated break-ins and theft.

We need to focus our community on smart prevention as we seek to be as organized as the thieves. OPD will create a grant program to deploy cameras to every retail center and link them into a citywide CCTV network. The system of cameras would depend on the size of the retail site and the number of businesses in the area. Systematic deployment of security cameras to all our retail areas will expand Oakland’s new SafeCity network. OPD, the Uptown/Downtown community benefit district and the City of Oakland have piloted a CCTV network which concentrates 300 cameras in an area of Downtown. This network is already showing its value.

OPD requests funding to expand camera deployment across the city and build out the technical assistance program, interagency coordination and community information network that makes the cameras effective. Oakland has so far had an open approach to security cameras with little guidance for businesses or commercial areas on type, installation, use or maintenance. Funding for the SafeCity network expansion would embed License Plate Reader enabled security cameras into a broad synchronized framework where footage from each camera is safely stored and called upon when necessary. Forensic grade video that is organized and usable in investigations makes an immediate impact. Staffing for the SafeCity program includes would technical assistance advisors that can regularly coach business associations and merchants through optimal operations.

The reach of the SafeCity network is an open platform that multiplies with each additional camera. The network offers the next level of coordination and information that Oakland is desperately lacking. Merchants can accept the specified camera or they can opt to use a connector device to their own
technology. A broader camera footprint moves areas from individual camera views to comprehensive video surveillance. SmartCity is a modern system with data protection at the core. Footage is stored according to the most current privacy regulations and available only through a rigorous request process. The important role of this technology is to enable a citywide view of Oakland’s retail areas and ensure the merchants are supported through active regular monitoring, even when an OPD officer cannot be present.

The impact of this network and the information it generates can only go so far without agency and community collaboration. Oakland’s merchants have said the best defense against organized theft is preventative offense. OPD will partner with the City of Oakland’s Neighborhoods Services Division (NSD) to oversee a citywide scale up of safety upgrades for retail areas.

In addition to security cameras, OPD requests funding for building security upgrades determined through a program of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design evaluations. Retail areas in Downtown and commercial corridors will be able to schedule a full safety review to create an individual business and retail area wide plan. Current CPTED assessments often do not get implemented by businesses. Lack of funding is the primary reason businesses state for why they will not purchase the recommended security equipment.

The City’s Neighborhoods Division has two Police Services Technicians conducting CPTEDS but two staff is not enough to help every business that has been broken into in Oakland. A citywide approach to CPTED will enable a full view of Oakland’s security needs informing the strategy for OPD, City and County security teams. It will also empower each merchant to defend their shop with lights, fences, bolted safes and similar upgrades. In the decade of organized theft, Oakland has never had the resources to focus on prevention. The analytics provided through an area by area CPTED analysis will create a clear baseline of need to further inform community safety strategy.

Oakland has a severe service gap between OPD and the Neighborhoods team. OPD holds daily, weekly, monthly information and intelligence briefings for burglary, theft and robbery. The 2023-2035 City Budget has increased funding for investigative staff. These initiatives plus new security cameras linked into a citywide CCTV system will create substantial actionable information. Oakland needs a communications bridge between intelligence officers and analysts, merchants, business associations and relevant public services. OPD has begun to partner with the Neighborhoods Division to develop Neighborhood Enhanced Service Teams and Merchant Watch programs. The effort is understaffed and cannot reach as far into the business community as we need. With this funding we will hire five new Neighborhood Service Coordinators, five new Police Service Technicians to cover every retail area to further build a commercial safety ecosystem. This staffing structure will build on the new City investments in community ambassadors to work alongside OPD and NSD in commercial corridors.

These interagency, cross sector teams will maximize the contribution of CCTV network through active management of information. This system of community focused staff will work directly with OPD officers to create pathways for merchants to learn about new theft data, repeat offenders and receive technical assistance for safety equipment including cameras.

Data
Use relevant local qualitative and/or quantitative data with citations to demonstrate the nature and scale of the specific theft problem (organized retail, motor vehicle, motor vehicle accessory, and/or cargo) and provide a compelling justification for grant funds.

The City of Oakland is the third largest city in the Bay Area and the eighth most populated in California. Oakland is home to the fifth busiest port in the nation and to Oakland International Airport. Oakland’s downtown continues to flourish with new merchants, a regional Night Time Economy and newly built residential and commercial buildings.

During the recent economic boom, news headlines have been detailing Oakland’s organized retail theft since the 71% spike in incidents in 2012. Oakland hit a new peak and has remained at an average of 14,000 incidents every year Citywide. Major increases in theft occurred before the Pandemic. The 5-year average for Larceny in 2019 was the highest since the 1980s. By 2019, Oakland was 2nd in the nation, first in California in property crime for cities of a similar size. The first years of the Pandemic actually saw reductions in theft. Incidents of theft in 2021 increased back up to 2012 levels at 13,000 per year.

In 2023, over the course of 72 hours, a group of five (5) subjects targeted Chinatown and a Vietnamese community and stole over $100,000 in cash and items during an organized theft operation. The community toll of the above statistics has been well chronicled as these local frontline business owners, both Downtown and neighborhood commercial corridors, have weathered multiple thefts, break-ins and constant vandalism. Large corporate stores like Whole Foods and Home Depot have locked up their products in cases and purchased industrial size solar powered cameras. Small retailers have lost their insurance coverage all together after repeated break-ins and thefts. The Cannabis industry has been particularly vulnerable due to the high volumes of cash firms retain on site. Through March 24 of this year, 85 break-ins had been reported. Sophisticated tactics include security gates pulled from their frames by vehicles and gangs of hooded thieves.

Organized Retail Theft in the Bay Area tends to run through Oakland as perpetrators live here, store stolen items here and practice new, extreme tactics here—like breaking into a dispensary with a forklift. Headlines from 2016-2023 include:

- Police arrested five Oakland men who allegedly stole $70000 in cell phones from two different stores
- Over $1 million worth of merchandise was recovered connected to a retail theft operation in Oakland. The search warrant was for a fence operation in Oakland.
- Three Oakland sisters have been charged with running a $300,000 retail theft ring that recruited groups of thieves to steal specific merchandise from at least 18 stores that was later sold at the suspects’ homes or online.

Reduction of police officers at the same time as spike in demand

We will build out the CRO function into our NSD