



CITY OF OAKLAND  
**newsrelease**  
Office of the City Attorney

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Oakland Chief Assistant City Attorney BARBARA PARKER  
Appointed City's Acting City Attorney**

OAKLAND, CA – Chief Assistant City Attorney Barbara J. Parker, a longtime Oakland resident and second in command of the City Attorney's Office, will take over as Acting City Attorney effective 11:30 a.m. today.

In a [letter sent Friday](#) to the Mayor and City Council, outgoing City Attorney John Russo wrote that Parker will serve as Acting City Attorney "to assure a seamless transition with an experienced, eminently qualified attorney in charge of the Office until the Council makes its appointment decision." The City Council passed a resolution declaring the Office of City Attorney vacant as of June 13.

"With the number of complex, difficult legal issues facing the City on a daily basis, now is not the time for training wheels," said Oakland City Council President Larry Reid. "Barbara Parker is exceedingly qualified in providing objective, reasoned legal advice. I am very comfortable with Barbara taking on this responsibility until the City Council takes further action."

The Oakland City Charter provides that the Council shall make an appointment within 60 days of the June 13 vacancy to fill the balance of Russo's term, which runs until the end of 2012. If the Council does not make an appointment, it must fill the seat by special election within 120 days after the expiration of the 60-day period for appointment.

"It is important that a seamless transition occur in the City Attorney's Office," said Sally Elkington, President-Elect of the Alameda County Bar Association. "A city of Oakland's size and complexity requires a clear authority to advocate for the City's and the Oakland community's interests. Barbara Parker is a strong supporter of the values Oakland residents hold dear – racial equality, marriage rights for all, a woman's right to choose, living wages, equal access to city services, and open government and transparency, to mention only a few."

Parker has 20 years of experience at the Oakland City Attorney's Office, including more than 10 years as second in command. She is a 1975 Harvard Law School graduate and previously served for more than five years as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of California. She is a lifelong advocate for civil rights, women's empowerment and children's issues. As the Chief Assistant City Attorney, Parker has represented the City Attorney's Office at virtually all City Council meetings for the past decade. Her responsibilities included overseeing a staff of about 20 attorneys and directing all legal advice provided to the Mayor's Office, City Council, City Administrator and all other City Boards, Commissions and Departments.

"I have the utmost confidence in Barbara Parker's ability to discharge the City Attorney's duties under the Charter," Russo said Friday. "She is principled, innovative and one of the brightest legal

minds I have had the privilege of working with. The City Council, the City of Oakland and the entire community will be well served through her leadership.”

Parker has led and supported efforts on a range of important social justice issues including: conducting sexual harassment investigations and training, Oakland’s groundbreaking anti-predatory lending ordinance, efforts to decriminalize medicinal marijuana, enforcement and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Oakland’s “Bubble Ordinance” ensuring patient access to reproductive health clinics.

“I welcome this opportunity to continue to serve the City and residents of Oakland in this time of transition,” Parker said. “Oakland has been a national trail-blazer in using the law in innovative ways to make our communities safer, to eradicate blight, to provide medicine for people suffering from illness or injury and to fight for equal access and citizens’ rights.”

“During these challenging economic times, I am committed to continuing to work closely with the City Council and to bringing people together to represent the best interests of the Oakland community in a transparent, accessible manner,” Parker said. “Teamwork and effective problem-solving are critically important at this time.”

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