



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **OAKLAND TOURISM SKYROCKETS; VISIT OAKLAND WELCOMED 3.7M TRAVELERS & \$627M VISITOR SPEND IN 2016**

*Visit Oakland Reports on Economic Impact Numbers, Unveils New Strategies for 2017/18 Including Oakland Art Month and Efforts to Promote Oakland Internationally*

**Oakland, CA** — **Visit Oakland**, the city's official destination marketing organization, is showing strong tourism growth and interest from international travelers, in new economic impact numbers released this morning. In 2016, 3.7 million visitors traveled to Oakland and spent \$627 million, up 3.4% from 2015.

Visit Oakland announced their results and new marketing initiatives at their 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Tourism Breakfast at the Oakland Museum of California. Visit Oakland stakeholders including hoteliers, local business leaders, and members of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and City of Oakland were in attendance.

Visitor spend has been increasing year after year and has grown by 27% in the last 4 years. Tourism supports 7.1K jobs in Oakland, generating \$271 million in total income last year.

Much of Oakland's international tourism growth is in correlation with European flights coming through Oakland International Airport. Within the last 18 months, OAK has announced nonstop flights to and from London, Barcelona, Paris and Rome, in addition to the existing Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen routes.

As OAK's passenger volume has consistently increased over the past four years," says **Bryant Francis, Port of Oakland Director of Aviation**. "Our rapidly expanding portfolio of international nonstops has helped OAK and the East Bay to be increasingly top-of-mind for European visitors to the Bay Area."

To continue its growth in leisure and business travel sectors, Visit Oakland introduced two new marketing programs to solidify Oakland's place nationally and internationally as a leading art and cultural destination.

In continuing to support Oakland's diverse creative community, Visit Oakland announced the inaugural **Oakland Art Month** in May 2018. Preliminary partners include OMCA, Oakland First Fridays, Oakland Art Murmur, Oakland International Film Festival, East Bay Mural Festival, and the Oakland Symphony.

"The goal of the program is to showcase a wealth of incredible arts offerings in Oakland that be enjoyed by the local community and visitors from afar," says **Mark Everton, President & CEO of Visit Oakland**. "By promoting May as Oakland Art Month, Visit Oakland aims to encourage overnight stays to attend several art events during their stay. Furthermore, the profile of smaller events can be raised in part of the larger city promotion."

Additionally, the **Oakland Mural Grant** program will continue Visit Oakland's efforts to increase the number of public murals for display on the outward walls of buildings within city limits as a way to further enhance the aesthetics of the city, while supporting the incredibly talented artist community within Oakland.

Oakland's art talent was showcased this morning in a live art demonstration by legendary local artist Vogue. His piece will be donated to "heART is Oakland," a benefit exhibit that has been showing at Classic Cars West during



the month of July. The exhibition is a fundraiser to help keep art and artists in Oakland. Proceeds benefit “Safer DIY Spaces” which is an Oakland-based coalition of activists, architects, contractors, and artists that offer guidance, financial assistance, and labor to the members of the Bay Area’s communities who live and work in non-traditional “DIY” spaces.

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#### **ABOUT VISIT OAKLAND**

Visit Oakland is a private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) organization, with a 21-member board of directors and full time staff whose goal is to increase tourism’s economic impact to Oakland through destination development and brand management. For more information, visit [visitoakland.com](http://visitoakland.com)

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