



Environment & Climate Commission

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE COMMISSION

**Wednesday, July 19, 2023
6:00 PM**

**North Berkeley Senior Center
1901 Hearst Avenue**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley’s residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley’s incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Tregub, Igor | Mayor | Mayor |
| Ranney, Sarah | Kesarwani | District 1 |
| Hedlund, Marc | Taplin | District 2 |
| McGuire, Brianna | Bartlett | District 3 |
| Tahara, Daniel | Harrison | District 4 |
| Allen, Shannon | Hahn | District 5 |
| Guliasi, Les | Wengraf | District 6 |
| Lunaparra, Cecilia | Robinson | District 7 |
| Gould, Ben | Humbert | District 8 |

2. Public Comment: Comments on subjects not included on the agenda (3-minute limit per individual)

3. Approval of Minutes: [Approval of Minutes from last meeting \(June 21, 2023\)](#)

4. Agenda Check: Commissioners may rearrange items on the agenda

5. Update from Chair (Chair Gould)

6. Update from Staff (Billi Romain & Rebecca Milliken)

- a. [Solar + Storage](#)

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

7. Presentation & Discussion: [Principles of Equitable Community Engagement \(Valerie Nguyen\)](#)

8. Discussion and Action: [Letter to Council regarding Transportation Division staffing](#)

9. Reports from Commission Liaisons

- a. Planning Commission (Ben Gould)
- b. Transportation and Infrastructure Commission (Brianna McGuire)
- c. Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission (Cecilia Lunaparra)
- d. Zero Waste Commission (Sarah Ranney)
- e. Disaster and Fire Safety Commission (Les Guliasi)
- f. Housing Advisory Commission (Marc Hedlund)

10. Workplan Subcommittee Updates

- a. Transportation Public Space Reallocation Subcommittee (Hedlund, McGuire, Lunaparra, Gould)
- b. Native Plants and Pest Reduction Subcommittee (Ranney, McGuire, Allen)
- c. Electrification Subcommittee (Tregub, Hedlund, Guliasi, Tahara)

11. Items for Future Agenda

- BESO development of upgrade requirement (September)
- Municipal buildings (October)
- Fleet Electrification and EV Infrastructure (November)
- Community Resilience Centers

INFORMATION ITEMS

12. Communications

13. Announcements from Commissioners

ADJOURNMENT

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*This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953. Any member of the public may attend this meeting. Questions regarding this matter may be addressed to Billi Romain, 510-981-7432, [bromain@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:bromain@berkeleyca.gov).*

*Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: E-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required but, if included in any communication to a City board, commission, or committee, will become part of the public record. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission, or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission, or committee for further information.*

*Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the Planning Department located at 1947 Center Street.*



**COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION:**

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair-accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

~~~~~  
 I hereby certify that the agenda for this regular/special meeting of the Berkeley City Commission on Commissions was posted at the display case located near the walkway in front of the Maudelle Shirek Building, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, as well as on the City's website.
 Billi Romain, Commission Secretary



Environment & Climate Commission

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES
Wednesday, June 21, 2023

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Tregub, Igor | Mayor | Mayor |
| Ranney, Sarah | Kesarwani | District 1 |
| Hedlund, Marc | Taplin | District 2 |
| McGuire, Brianna | Bartlett | District 3 |
| Tahara, Daniel | Harrison | District 4 |
| Allen, Shannon | Hahn | District 5 |
| Guliasi, Les | Wengraf | District 6 |
| Lunaparra, Cecilia | Robinson | District 7 |
| Gould, Ben | Humbert | District 8 |

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Billi Romain at 6:02 pm.

Commissioners Present: Tregub, Ranney, Hedlund, McGuire, Tahara, Allen, Guliasi, Lunaparra, Gould

Commissioner Leave of Absence: None

Commissioner Absent: None

Staff: Billi Romain, Rebecca Milliken, Ammon Reagan

2. Public Comments and Announcements:

3 member(s) of the Public

3 comment(s)

3. Approval of Minutes:

Motion/second to approve the May 24, 2023 Minutes (Hedlund, Ranney). The motion carried: 6-0-0-3; Ayes: Tregub, Ranney, Hedlund, McGuire, Allen, Gould. Noes: None. Abstain: Tahara, Guliasi, Lunaparra. None. Absent: None

4. Agenda Check

5. Update from Chair

6. Update from Staff

a. DC Fast Chargers

b. Native Street Trees

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

7. Presentation & Discussion: BESO Development of Upgrade Requirements (Ammon Reagan)

8. Presentation & Discussion: Loading Zones and Parking (Brianna McGuire)
9. Reports from Commission Liaisons
 - a. Planning Commission (Gould)
 - b. Transportation and Infrastructure (McGuire)
 - c. Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission (Lunaparra)
 - d. Zero Waste Commission (Ranney)
 - e. Disaster and Fire Safety Commission (Guliasi)
 - f. Housing Advisory Commission (Hedlund)
10. Workplan Subcommittee Updates
 - a. Transportation Public Space Reallocation Subcommittee (Hedlund, McGuire, Lunaparra, Gould)
 - b. Native Plants and Pesticide Reduction Subcommittee (Ranney, McGuire, Allen)
 - c. Electrification Subcommittee (Tregub, Hedlund, Tahara, Guliasi)
11. Items for Future Agenda
 - a. Principles of Equitable Community Engagement (July)
 - b. BESO development of upgrade requirement (September)
 - c. Municipal buildings (October)
 - d. Fleet Electrification and EV Infrastructure (November)
 - e. Community Resilience Centers

INFORMATION ITEMS

12. Communications

13. Announcements from Commissioners

ADJOURNMENT

Motion/second to adjourn at 8:00 pm (Tregub, Tahara)

Minutes Approved:

/S/ Billi Romain, Berkeley Energy Commission Secretary



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
March 23, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager
Submitted by: Jordan Klein, Interim Director, Planning and Development Department
Subject: Partnership with East Bay Community Energy to Pursue Solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems on Municipal Facilities

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to continue pursuing widespread deployment of solar and battery energy storage systems (battery systems) at critical municipal facilities in partnership with the City's public power provider, East Bay Community Energy (EBCE), and commit to installing these systems through a standard Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with EBCE should the City determine that the project results in benefits to the City budget and the community.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

This resolution does not have any fiscal impacts at this time. It commits the City to continue to pursue procurement for solar and battery systems through a PPA with EBCE but does not make any financial commitment on the part of the City of Berkeley. In this model, EBCE will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for solar and battery systems and enter into a PPA on behalf of the City. The PPA provider will own the systems and cover the costs of installation, operations and maintenance. The City will contract with EBCE to pay the PPA provider for the power that is generated and used by the installed systems. All the terms of the PPA will be agreed upon by the City and EBCE prior to EBCE issuing the RFP.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

EBCE is collaborating with its Joint Power Authority (JPA) members in Alameda County, including the City of Berkeley, to identify a cost-effective portfolio of solar and battery systems for municipal buildings for an upcoming RFP. EBCE is piloting a new procurement model in which they contract directly with a PPA provider and execute standardized contracts with each JPA member. The advantage of EBCE acting as the intermediary is that it will create a larger portfolio of sites, streamline the procurement process, reduce risk to the PPA provider, and bring down overall project costs, compared to a traditional PPA where the City would conduct its own procurement and contract directly with a PPA provider.

EBCE analyzed more than 300 critical municipal facilities throughout Alameda County, including a list of potential sites submitted by the City of Berkeley (Attachment 2), to establish which sites are best suited for solar and battery systems. From that list, EBCE is conducting an initial feasibility analysis to determine which subset of the potential facilities will be eligible for a more complete independent engineering analysis and ultimately which facilities can be included in the first procurement portfolio (Phase I). If this procurement model is successful, additional facilities may be considered in subsequent phases. Other Berkeley municipal buildings are also being evaluated for solar-only installations, to increase the cost-effectiveness of Berkeley's overall project portfolio.

EBCE will hire an independent engineer to complete a structural, roof condition and electrical capacity assessment of critical facilities under consideration for the Phase I procurement list. EBCE will cover the upfront cost of the independent engineering analyses, which will be paid back as part of the agreed-upon PPA rate on utility bills. These analyses, alongside staff input, will identify which sites are the most technically viable and cost-effective portfolio of facilities for inclusion in Phase I. Sites which require upgrades could potentially be included in future procurement phases. EBCE will also conduct a financial analysis to determine the cost-effectiveness of the proposed sites, based on actual electricity load, current and projected electricity costs, solar potential, and site conditions, including the cost of any required facility upgrades. EBCE and the City will review the results of both the engineering and financial analyses to confirm that the Phase I sites deliver benefits to the City budget and the community. Once all of the analyses are complete and the Phase I facility list is finalized, the selected facilities will be included in the RFP.

The City facilities that are selected for the RFP will be able to utilize the electricity generated from the installed solar and battery systems on a daily basis and in the case of a grid outage. The equipment will be owned, operated and maintained by the third-party PPA provider under its contract with EBCE. The terms of the PPA will be agreed upon by the City and EBCE prior to EBCE issuing an RFP for vendor services.

EBCE plans to release the RFP for a PPA on behalf of its municipal partners in mid-to-late 2021. EBCE would be the signatory partner with the PPA, holding a contract with the third-party vendor and with each individual participating local government. The goal is to deploy the systems in 2022.

The benefits of this project include:

- Local, renewable energy and enhanced community resilience at municipal facilities with no capital costs for installation.
- A feasibility analysis of solar and battery systems at critical municipal facilities.

- An independent engineering analysis and cost estimate of potential structural, roof condition and electrical capacity upgrades necessary to advance deployment of solar and battery systems.
- A streamlined procurement process, where EBCE would contract with the PPA on behalf of its municipal JPA members, including the City of Berkeley and reduced participation costs.
- Solar-only systems at some non-critical municipal facilities with no capital cost for installation.
- Operation and maintenance contracts for the solar and battery equipment and systems wrapped into the PPA contract.
- Daily load management from solar and batteries will shift energy use away from peak usage times, when electricity has higher costs and carbon content.
- Renewable back-up power when the electrical grid is down as an alternative to diesel-powered generators.

This project is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing the City of Berkeley's goals to: 1. Provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities; 2. Create a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared city; and 3. Be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment.

BACKGROUND

Solar and battery systems provide clean, renewable electricity to buildings on a daily basis and can reduce time-of-use charges during peak pricing periods, generally from 4 pm to 9 pm. The systems provide enhanced resilience benefits, allowing municipal critical facilities to continue to operate on a limited basis during a power outage using the electricity stored and generated onsite.

In 2016, staff researched the feasibility of developing a clean energy microgrid community in downtown Berkeley that could island from the main grid and provide clean back-up power in the case of a power outage. It was determined that under current conditions, solar and battery energy storage at individual critical facilities rather than a full microgrid would be a more cost-effective solution¹.

In 2019, EBCE kicked-off a 12-month project, funded through a \$300,000 Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) grant, to identify critical facilities in Alameda County and conduct preliminary assessments for back-up power from solar and battery systems at these sites. EBCE hired a technical consultant to compete a facility screening process. Berkeley submitted a list of critical facility sites for analysis. Each facility was scored according to four screening criteria:

¹ <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/microgrid/>

- Hazard score (accounts for the range and severity of hazards faced by each site according to its location)
- Service score (ranks facilities based on number of people served in the immediate area)
- Priority zone score (additional recognition for sites located within either Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) zones, Low Income zones, or both); and
- Solar feasibility (high-level analysis of solar photovoltaic (PV) feasibility based on roof area and shading)

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Increasing solar and battery systems is a key strategy of the Climate Action Plan, Fossil Fuel Free Berkeley resolution, and the Resilience Strategy. On a day-to-day basis, on-site solar production and consumption will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the battery systems will shift energy usage from peak times, thereby reducing the need for natural gas-fired power plants to come online to meet demand. During power outages, the solar and battery systems will increase community resilience and lessen the need for dirty diesel generators for back-up power.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

EBCE is offering this first-of-its-kind collaborative procurement model to all of its JPA members across Alameda County as a public benefit to increase community resilience at critical facilities. EBCE is reducing risks to all parties by hiring an independent engineer to complete an analysis for buildings currently in the Phase I portfolio and contracting with the PPA on behalf of its municipal JPA members which will bring down costs, streamline procurement, and reduce the City staff time required. Participation increases the potential for on-site solar generation, advances Berkeley towards its goal of building electrification, and ensures that more of Berkeley's critical facilities are prepared for PG&E Public Safety Power Shut-off events, rolling blackouts, and other power outages including those caused by a major disaster.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

City of Berkeley could choose to not continue to pursue this joint procurement with EBCE and not install solar and battery energy storage systems at critical facilities. Alternatively, another funding source could be identified and the City could install, operate and maintain proprietary systems as funding is secured.

CONTACT PERSON

Billi Romain, Sustainability Manager, Planning and Development Department, 510-981-7432.

Attachments:

- 1: Resolution
- 2: List of Potential Critical Municipal Facilities Submitted to East Bay Community Energy

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

PARTNERSHIP WITH EAST BAY COMMUNITY ENERGY TO PURSUE SOLAR AND
BATTERY STORAGE SYSTEMS ON MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

WHEREAS, the Berkeley City Council has demonstrated its commitment to an environmentally sustainable and resilient future through its policy goals and actions, including energy reduction, clean energy programs, and the expansion of local renewable power supply; and

WHEREAS, on June 2, 2009, the Berkeley City Council adopted the Berkeley Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% of Berkeley's 2000 emissions level by 2050; and

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2016, the City of Berkeley released its Resilience Strategy with the goal of "Accelerating Access to Reliable and Clean Energy"; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2018, the Berkeley City Council declared a Climate Emergency and resolved to become a "Fossil Fuel-Free City"; and

WHEREAS Berkeley's Strategic Plan sets the goals of providing state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities, creating a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared city and being a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley conducted a feasibility analysis for a clean energy microgrid community to provide back-up power to critical municipal facilities and determined that solar and battery energy storage was the most cost-effective solution; and

WHEREAS, Community Choice Aggregation is a mechanism by which local governments assume responsibility for providing electrical power for residential and commercial customers in their jurisdiction in partnership with local commercial energy purveyors and owners of transmission facilities, which in the case of Alameda County is Pacific Gas & Electric Co.; and

WHEREAS, on November 1, 2016, the City of Berkeley City Council adopted Resolution No. 67,730-N.S. authorizing Berkeley's participation in East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) and authorized implementation of EBCE in Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, on April 24, 2018, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 68,404-N.S., selecting the Brilliant 100 (100% GHG-free) electric service plan for all municipal accounts; and

WHEREAS, on October 27, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 69,601–N.S., selecting Renewable 100 (100% Renewable) as the electric service plan for the City of Berkeley’s municipal accounts.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley authorizes the City Manager to continue pursuing widespread deployment of solar and battery energy storage systems at critical municipal facilities in partnership with the City’s public power provider, EBCE, and commit to installing these systems through a standard Power Purchase Agreement with EBCE, should the City determine that the project results in benefits to the City budget and to the community.

ATTACHMENT 2

List of Potential Critical Municipal Facilities Submitted to East Bay Community Energy

Below is the original list of potential critical municipal facilities submitted by the City of Berkeley to East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) for consideration to participate in EBCE’s Power Purchase Agreement for solar and battery energy storage systems.

Please Note: EBCE is conducting an initial feasibility analysis to determine which subset of these facilities will be eligible for a more complete independent engineering analysis and ultimately which facilities can be included in the Phase I procurement portfolio.

| Number | Site Name |
|--------|--|
| 1. | Civic Center |
| 2. | Corporation Yard |
| 3. | Emergency Storage Warehouse |
| 4. | Fire House #1 |
| 5. | Fire House #2 |
| 6. | Fire House #3 |
| 7. | Fire House #4, Gas Pump House |
| 8. | Fire House #5 |
| 9. | Fire House #6 |
| 10. | Fire Station #7 |
| 11. | Francis Albrier Recreation Center & San Pablo Park |
| 12. | James Kenny Recreation Center |
| 13. | Live Oak Recreation Center |
| 14. | Main Library |
| 15. | Mental Health Facility |
| 16. | MLK Recreation Center |
| 17. | North Berkeley Library |
| 18. | North Berkeley Senior Center |
| 19. | Public Safety Building and Accessory Building |
| 20. | South Berkeley Senior Center |
| 21. | Spring Animal Shelter |
| 22. | Tarea Hall Pittman South Branch Library |
| 23. | West Berkeley Library |
| 24. | West Berkeley Senior Center |



Principles of Equitable Engagement

May 31, 2023

This document was developed by the Ecology Center in collaboration with the City of Berkeley and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN). The principles below articulate an equitable process for the City of Berkeley and other local governments to use in climate policy and program development and implementation, elevating the voices of frontline communities and shifting power to BIPOC people and organizations. These principles have emerged from lessons from community engagement conducted by the Ecology Center thus during a 10-month USDN grant project (August 2022 – May 2023). The Principles are a living document that will continue to evolve with learnings from future engagement.

Equitable engagement should strive to accomplish the following goals:

- 1. To Build Authentic Community Relationships**
- 2. To Increase Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity**
- 3. To Build Community Power**

1. To Build Authentic Community Relationships

- a. Develop authentic relationships with community members based on mutual respect, trust, and understanding. This requires listening deeply to community concerns and being transparent about government actions and decision-making processes.
- b. Address past harm directly and early on, calling out historical harmful government-led policies, engagement, etc. and their impacts, especially on BIPOC and marginalized communities.
 - i. Prepare in advance for potential triggering of past trauma in community members, especially elders. Have a plan/strategy to address triggers and to move forward to healing.
 - ii. Explore trauma-informed community engagement and outreach strategies.¹
- c. Be responsive and accountable.
 - i. Respond to community concerns and feedback in a timely and respectful manner. Be transparent about the decision-making process and hold government officials accountable for their actions and decisions.

¹ Oly Aloziem, "[Trauma-Informed Community Engagement](#)"

- d. Commit to continuous learning and improvement.
 - i. Engage in ongoing learning and reflection to improve engagement strategies and practices, and seek feedback from the community on how engagement efforts can be improved.
- e. Be transparent about the decision-making process and hold government officials accountable for their actions and decisions.
 - i. Government decision-makers (i.e. policymakers and other government officials with the authority to institute change) should attend community forums to hear community feedback directly. If this is not possible, government staff should clearly communicate to the community who the decision-makers are and how feedback will be collected and relayed to decision-makers. Government staff should then follow through with collecting and relaying this feedback.
- f. Be aware of potentially harmful language when soliciting community feedback, as insensitive language can shut down community dialogue.
 - i. The naming of projects, places, or communities can cause unintentional harm through the erasure of a community's identity or history. Where possible, defer to the language to describe places or communities used by the communities themselves.
 - 1. For example, a Berkeley community member at Healthy Black Families' People's Assembly expressed disappointment in the project being titled "Adeline *Corridor* Project" instead of "Adeline *Community* Project" as the term corridor doesn't seem to acknowledge the people who live there.
- g. Data collection should be guided by the concept of data equity, a framework that JLI Consulting defines as "the consideration, through an equity lens, of the ways in which data is collected, analyzed, interpreted, and distributed."²
 - i. Recognize that data can and, in many cases, has been used to justify decisions that have been harmful to marginalized communities. Also recognize that the practice of collecting personal data about community members (income, race, etc.) can be invasive and inappropriate for projects for which this data is not necessary.
 - ii. Consult with community members to determine what data to collect and how to collect it in order to fully and accurately demonstrate the impact of a project, while respecting community members' privacy and dignity.

² JLI Consulting Hawaii, ["Data Equity: What Is It, and Why Does It Matter?"](#)

- h. Protect the privacy and data security of community members.
 - i. Employ a proxy for direct income data collection such as participation in an income-qualified program (e.g. SNAP, Medicaid, etc.) or services from an organization that serves income-qualified households.
 - ii. Share individuals' quotes, anecdotes, photos, meeting recordings, etc. only with written or verbal permission.

2. To Increase Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity

- a. Provide accommodations such as language interpretation, transportation, and childcare.
- b. Involve community members in the planning and design of engagement events to ensure that they are accessible and welcoming.
- c. Ensure that presentations and discussions are accessible.³
 - i. Send presentation slides to those who use screen readers ahead of time when possible. Presenters should read slide information out loud. Ensure that online platforms are compatible with screen readers.⁴
- d. Be flexible and adaptable.
 - i. Recognize that community needs and priorities can change over time. Be willing to adapt engagement strategies and approaches to meet evolving community needs.
- e. Provide clear and accessible information about government actions, policies, and programs. Seek input and feedback from the community before making decisions that will impact them.
- f. Use clear and plain language.
 - i. Use language that is easy to understand and free from jargon, acronyms, and technical terms. This is particularly important when engaging with non-English speakers and those with limited formal education.
- g. Facilitate group discussions to interactively define terms that may be broad or abstract (e.g. "climate justice") to anchor all members of the group in a collective understanding of terms. For example, a facilitator may present a working definition for a term and invite meeting participants to ask questions and add to the definition.

³ Sins Invalid, "[Access Suggestions for Public Events](#)".

⁴ WebAIM, [Web Accessibility in Mind](#)

- h. Recognize that different community members have different preferences and comfort levels with different engagement methods. Use a variety of methods, including in-person and virtual meetings, surveys, focus groups, and community forums to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

3. To Build Community Power

- a. Work toward shifting power to community members, especially those of marginalized communities who have historically been excluded from government decision-making processes.
- b. Recognize and address power imbalances.
 - i. Recognize that power imbalances exist between government officials and community members, and take steps to address these imbalances by sharing power and decision-making authority with the community.
 - ii. Recognize that community-based organizations facilitating or leading government-funded projects hold an extension of government power. Facilitating organizations should address this power dynamic with other community-based organizations and community members through engagement to ownership-based programming.



Environment and Climate Commission

INFORMATION CALENDAR

[Meeting Date (Month Day, yyyy)]

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Environment and Climate Commission (ECC)
Submitted by: Ben Gould, Chairperson, ECC
Subject: Letter regarding Transportation Division Staffing Issues

To the Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

We are writing to express concern about the vacancy rate in the Transportation Division within the Public Works department and echo the priorities of the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission in their recent letter.

As the Environment and Climate Commission, our responsibility is to “advise the City Council on matters relating to emerging issues, policies, projects, programs, planning efforts, activities, and funding of environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience” (BMC 3.82.040). Transportation has been consistently identified as the single largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Berkeley since our very first climate action plan, in 2009¹. That plan recommended strategies to “accelerate implementation of the City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian plans,” “manage parking to effectively minimize driving demand,” and “encourage and support alternatives to driving.” We believe the same recommendations hold true today: the completion of the Vision Zero Action Plan, the Berkeley Bicycle Plan, and the Pedestrian Plan are critical measures needed to reduce GHG emissions in Berkeley and meet our climate action targets.

However, the current 45% vacancy rate within the Transportation Division threatens these goals and jeopardizes our ability to meet the climate emergency with the urgency it demands. As noted in the City Auditor’s recent report, *Staff Shortages: City Services Constrained by Staff Retention Challenges and Delayed Hiring*, Berkeley’s staff vacancies reduce city services, delay major transportation projects, and increase mandatory overtime². The report indicates that current staff vacancy rates are higher

¹ City of Berkeley, “Climate Action Plan”. <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Berkeley-Climate-Action-Plan.pdf>

² Berkeley City Auditor, “Staff Shortages: City Services Constrained by Staff Retention Challenges and Delayed Hiring” <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Staff%20Shortages%20-->

Letter regarding Transportation Division Staffing Issues INFORMATION CALENDAR

than that of most other Bay Area cities, and that low employee satisfaction levels, unmanageable workloads, poor communication from City leadership, and ineffective hiring procedures results in employee turnover and prolonged vacancies. City of Berkeley employees reported lower job satisfaction than federal government employees (55% to 73%). As a result of a high vacancy rate, City employees remaining in City Hall face greater responsibility with insufficient compensation. Only 44% of City employees reported that their workload was “manageable.”

These vacancies prevent the implementation of climate-critical plans like Vision Zero. The following plans, which have a significant impact on our city’s ability to reduce single occupancy automobile usage and therefore respond to climate change, have been adversely impacted due to staffing issues:

- Bicycle Plan
- Transit First Policy Implementation Plan
- Vision Zero Action Plan Implementation
- Pedestrian Plan
- E-bikes for City Staff initiative
- Telegraph Ave Multimodal Corridor Project
- Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project

Berkeley is not on track to meet its climate action goals, and with these staffing challenges it is in danger of falling even further behind. Berkeley’s original climate goals for 2020, set in 2009, included a target of reducing citywide emissions by 33%. This target was not met: Berkeley reduced city wide emissions by 26% by 2020. Transportation stubbornly remains the highest source of emissions. As regional transit networks are likely to continue to struggle due to changing ridership patterns post-pandemic, Berkeley cannot rely on transit to reduce automobile usage and meet our climate goals – we must implement bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and this requires adequate staffing to deliver projects.

The city must follow the recommendations of the City Auditor and the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission to address this staffing crisis, stemming the loss of expertise and institutional knowledge and rebuilding our capacity to deliver and implement transportation improvements. ECC urges the City Council to:

[%20City%20Services%20Constrained%20by%20Staff%20Retention%20Challenges%20and%20Delayed%20Hiring_0.pdf](#)

Letter regarding Transportation Division Staffing Issues INFORMATION CALENDAR

- Support the professional staff in the Transportation Division as they work to carry out Council-approved policies, by considering staff capacity when introducing new legislation, and limiting or prioritizing new legislation during periods of short staffing.
- Support the City Manager in improving the hiring process and ensuring a fully staffed HR department to accelerate the recruitment of new Transportation Division staff.
- Support the City Manager in improving retention among existing Transportation Division staff by improving performance evaluation processes, promotional opportunities, and compensation where needed.
- Support the City Manager in recruiting strong transportation leadership knowledge within the City Manager's office and creating a work environment that both supports and encourages staff leadership and innovation and promotes internal employees to fill the current Transportation Division leadership vacuum.

The stakes for this work could not be higher - the derailment of Vision Zero, the failure to complete the Hopkins Corridor and Placemaking Study, and impediments to other critical projects shines a bright light on Berkeley. Our adopted plans are commendable, but our inability to act accordingly only furthers traffic violence and continued reliance on polluting fossil fuels. Addressing the climate crisis demands that Berkeley fully staff its Transportation Division to effectively tackle our greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions head-on. We urge you to rectify this staffing shortfall with haste.

Sincerely,

Environment and Climate Commission