



Human Welfare and
Community Action Commission

ACTION CALENDAR
February 19, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Human Welfare and Community Action Commission (HWCAC)
 Submitted by: Samuel Kohn, Temporary Chairperson, HWCAC
 Subject: Assessment of Vacant Properties

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to develop a plan to locate the 3,754 “vacant housing units” noted in the “Employment, Economy, Housing “ data in the “City of Berkeley Fiscal years 2018 & 2019 ADOPTED BIENNIAL BUDGET” and to assess what would be required to bring as many of the properties to market as possible.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Staff time required to locate and assess the condition of the properties. Alternatively, there would be costs associated with outsourcing the project to a third-party.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

At the 11/28/19 HWCAC meeting, the commissioners discussed the submission of an item to City Council recommending that the City Manager work with Council to locate vacant housing units. The commission took action to submit this item to City Council [M/S/C (Sood/Omodele) (Vote: Ayes – Sood, Omodele, Dunner, Kohn; Noes – None; Abstain – None; Absent – Vrankovecki (Excused), Holman, Whitson)].

The City of Berkeley is currently experiencing a severe housing shortage. There are a variety of strategies being discussed to create new housing, which will be beneficial in the future, but, could take several years to come to market. There may be an opportunity to bring a number of units to market in the short term by working with landlords of currently vacant units to make them market ready. This could help increase the housing stock while longer term projects continue to develop. In addition, the information gathered on these units could be used to help manage vacancies on a regular basis.

BACKGROUND

According to the “City of Berkeley Fiscal years 2018 & 2019 ADOPTED BIENNIAL BUDGET” (page 31), there were 3,754 vacant housing units in the City of Berkeley out of a total number of 49,671 housing units. Information on the location and condition of these properties has been difficult to find, neither the Rent Stabilization Board nor the

City Manager's office could provide additional details. Potentially bringing these properties to market will require an initial investment in gathering data to help determine requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental impacts or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Bringing vacant units to market could provide a short term boost to the housing stock while longer term projects continue to develop, but more information is needed to assess if it would be possible to make these properties available.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Several alternative strategies for increasing housing have been discussed. The HWCAC felt the recommendation presented here provides a unique short term opportunity for the city.

CITY MANAGER

See companion report.

CONTACT PERSON

Mary-Claire Katz, Commission Secretary, HHCS (510) 981-5414

Attachments:

1: "Employment, Economy, Housing", City of Berkeley Fiscal Year 2018 & 2019 Adopted Biennial Budget.

Attachment 1: "Employment, Economy, Housing", City of Berkeley Fiscal Year 2018 & 2019 Adopted Biennial Budget.

Employment, Economy, Housing (ACS)

Employment

Median Household income:	\$66,237
Residents 16 and older:	104,594
In labor force	61.3%
Employed:	56.2%
Unemployed:	5.0%
Armed Forces	0.1%
Not in labor force: <small>(e.g. students not looking for work)</small>	38.7%

Occupation (ACS)

Management, business, science, and arts:	66%
Service:	11%
Sales & Office:	17%
Natural Resources, construction, and maintenance:	3%
Production:	4%

Largest Employers*

Alta Bates Medical Center	Lifelong Medical Care
Ansys, Inc.	Meyer Sound
Bayer Healthcare, LLC	MSCI Inc.
Berkeley Bowl Produce	Pacific Steel Casting Company, LLC
Berkeley Cement Inc.	Recreational Equipment Inc.
Berkeley City College	Siemens Corporation
Berkeley Marina Doubletree	Siteworks Landscape, Inc.
Berkeley Repertory Theatre	University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley Unified School District	US Postal Service
City of Berkeley	Weatherford Motors Inc.
Dynavax Technologies Corporation	Whole Foods Market California Inc.
Kaiser Permanete	YMCA of the Central Bay Area
Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory	

* Source: EDD, QCEW Data Q1 2016

Housing (ACS)

Average sale price of new & existing single-family homes:	\$1,181,285
Average sale price of new & existing condos:	\$710,871
Total housing units:	49,671
Vacant housing units:	3,754
Occupied housing units:	45,917
Owner-occupied:	19,583 (43%)
Renter-occupied:	26,334 (57%)
Median Rental Market Rates:*	
Studio	\$1,600
1 Bedroom	\$1,995
2 Bedroom	\$2,750
3 Bedroom	\$3,595

* 2016 data provided by the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board

