



Office of the Mayor

ACTION CALENDAR

March 26, 2019

To: Honorable Members of the City Council
From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín and Councilmembers Sophie Hahn and Susan Wengraf
Subject: Referral to City Manager to Scope Process and Estimate Cost of New General Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Referral to the City Manager to return to City Council with an outline of the process for creating a new City of Berkeley General Plan. The cost for the first two years of work will be included in the report for consideration during the upcoming 2020-2021 Budget Process.

BACKGROUND

The Berkeley General Plan is a comprehensive and long-range statement of community priorities and values developed to guide public decision-making in future years. The Plan's goals, objectives and policies serve as a guide for day-to-day decisions that are essential for responsive government. Decisions made by the Berkeley City Council and its advisory boards and commissions about the physical development of the City should be consistent with the goals, objective and policies of the Plan. The City Council and Planning Commission use the General Plan when evaluating land use changes and making funding and budget decisions. It is also used by the Zoning Adjustments Board and City staff to help regulate development proposals and make decisions on projects. The policies of the Plan apply to all property, both public and private within the Berkeley city limits. It should be noted that the University of California and other State/County agencies are not legally obligated to comply with the Plan, but will reference the document.

Berkeley's General Plan was adopted by the City Council on December 18, 2001 following a process that started in the mid-1990's resulting in a first draft completed by staff dated May 1999. A second draft was sent to the Planning Commission, following several community meetings in October 1999. In October 2000, the Planning Commission published a Planning Commission Draft General Plan. On July 11, 2001 the Planning Commission concluded its work on the update of the Berkeley General Plan and forwarded its recommended General Plan to the City Council for consideration and adoption.

It is customary, and in some communities required, for General Plans to be updated every

15 – 20 years. There have been significant changes within the City of Berkeley since the last General Plan update in 2001.

CURRENT SITUATION

Berkeley's General plan was designed to work with the City's more detailed Area Plans which were amendments to the 1977 Master Plan. The Area Plan goals and policies must be consistent with the General Plan goals and policies and both must be considered when making decisions. In order to achieve this consistency some amendments were made and those amendments were specifically identified in the General Plan.

Since the adoption of the General Plan in 2001, several new specific plans have been approved by the Berkeley City Council. These include the adoption of the Downtown Area Plan and the Southside Plan. There are other significant area plans currently in process: the Adeline Corridor Plan and planning for the North Berkeley BART station that was initialized by AB2923 that sets new rules for development on BART property -- mostly on parking lots that surround many of the agency's stations. Additionally, a planning process is being considered for the San Pablo Corridor.

Other plans that have impacted the City of Berkeley are the current University of California 2020 LRDP. This agreement between the City of Berkeley and the University will expire in 2020 and the University is beginning the process for a new Long Range Development Plan.

In January 2018, the City of Berkeley had a population of 121,874 based on the California Department of Finance 2018. This exceeds the General Plan EIR's population that forecasted 116,359 by the year 2020. Current estimates provided by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission project a 1% annual growth throughout the Bay Area through 2040.

Due to the significant growth in population, there is currently a housing deficit. This especially impacts those residents that cannot afford new market rate housing and has contributed directly to the spike in homelessness. Additionally, the University has not created housing to (1) support the student population anticipated in the 2020 LRDP, plus (2) house the additional 11,000 students the University has absorbed over the plan projections.

Climate Change is rapidly progressing and, if not checked, will severely impact the future of our planet. Consideration for the impending impacts on sustainability, human and non-human subsistence and infrastructure demands must be addressed by the community at large.

Finally, the question of consistency and clarity between the General Plan and Zoning Code should be resolved. Specific deficiencies and lack of definition such as design and detriment standards, inclusionary housing requirements and open space allocation (Quimby Act Fees) should be determined. In order to ensure that the City of Berkeley can plan for its future, a new community process should begin for the development of a new General Plan with a goal of adopting an update plan by the end of 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

City Manager to provide a cost estimate for City Council to consider funding through the 2020 - 2021 Budget Process that will support a new General Plan process.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Berkeley's Climate Action Plan and sustainability goals will be incorporated into a new General Plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Supports long-term goals #1 through #7

CONTACT PERSON

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