



Homeless Services Panel of Experts

ACTION CALENDAR  
October 29, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Peter Radu, Assistant to the City Manager, Neighborhood Services  
David Sprague, Fire Chief

Subject: Companion Report: Measure P Allocations, Fiscal Year 2025-2026

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Homeless Services Panel of Experts recommendations for Fiscal Years 2025-2026, but continue to partially fund 5150 transports from Measure P until alternative sources can be identified.

POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On September 17, 2024, the Budget & Finance Committee adopted the following action: M/S/C (Arreguin/Kesarwani) to refer the item from the Commission and the City Manager Companion Report item to the City Council with a negative recommendation that no further action is required, as the Council has already taken action through the adoption of the 2025-26 Bi-annual Budget. Vote: All Ayes.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Based upon recommendations by the Budget and Finance Policy Committee, staff began to fund the transport contract with both Measure P and other General Fund revenues in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. As part of the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 budget, staff have reduced the overall funding for the contract based upon invoiced calls (to a total budget of \$1,357,170) and increased the percentage of the cost allocated to other General Fund revenues (\$542,868). However, Measure P revenues are considered to be part of the General Fund. Shifting the allocation of the Measure P funded costs of the Section 5150 transports to other General Fund revenues would require reductions in expenditures across various programs and services that are already planned to be funded by General Fund revenues.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On April 10, the Homeless Services Panel of Experts (HSPE) voted to endorse the City Manager's recommendations for Measure P funding in FY25-26, presented to the Budget and Finance Policy Committee on May 13. The one exception to this was that the HSPE voted to shift the 5150 transports line item to another general fund source.

Staff recommend approving the HSPE’s recommendations, except for the 5150 transports piece of their report, and instead continuing to partially fund 5150 transports from Measure P until alternative sources can be identified.

BACKGROUND

History of 5150 transports in Alameda County

Until 2019, the private ambulance provider for the Alameda County exclusive operating area (EOA) provided transport for non-emergency mental and behavioral health patients in Berkeley and the other three cities that have exclusive operating areas (EOA) for ambulance service in Alameda County. The four city EOAs correspond with the fire departments that started providing emergency ALS ambulance response and transport prior to 1980. When the new contract for Alameda County’s EOA ambulance provider went into effect on July 1st, 2019, the City of Berkeley was forced to assume responsibility for the transport of non-emergency mental and behavioral health patients in the City’s EOA without any financial assistance.

Current 5150 Transport Call Volume

The City of Berkeley Fire Department has historically been unable and continues to be unable to absorb the 5150 transport call volume within its system. Thus, in 2019, the City conducted an RFP and selected a vendor that has provided transport for mental health patients through a direct contract with the City. In calendar year 2023 the Department responded to 17,195 incidents, 10,560 of which were medical related. This does not take into account 681 mental health transports that were provided by the vendor contracted by the City.

Mental Health Transports by Month												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	33	42	48	76	62	67	78	84	73	57	69	77
2021	72	69	63	76	75	65	68	74	81	71	62	58
2022	67	67	71	58	50	60	65	55	59	74	53	55
2023	49	58	78	63	63	47	50	55	47	57	59	55

Ambulance System Stretched Beyond Capacity

Berkeley’s ambulance operations are as busy as the largest metro agencies on the West Coast and cannot absorb any additional call volume.

System performance is measured using Unit Hour Utilization (UHU). The UHU percentage is calculated using the number of responses and duration of the responses to show the percentage of time that an ambulance is committed to an active incident during a given hour of the day. **A UHU of 30 percent or higher over multiple consecutive hours becomes the point at which other responsibilities, such as training, do not get completed.**

The following table illustrates a UHU summary for the City’s ambulances. **Three ambulances have several hours of 50 percent utilization and two ambulances each have one hour over 60 percent utilization and at least 13 consecutive hours at or above 30 percent utilization.** This demonstrates that the City must continue to contract with an external provider for 5150 transport services until the City can acquire a new ambulance deployment center and identify funding to hire additional personnel, purchase additional ambulances, equipment, and supplies to provide service to this community.

Hour	MEDIC 5	MEDIC 2	MEDIC 1	MEDIC 3
00:00	22.87%	17.48%	12.56%	9.32%
01:00	22.85%	15.75%	19.46%	9.27%
02:00	17.34%	16.40%	17.53%	7.35%
03:00	13.61%	16.98%	10.92%	4.04%
04:00	8.71%	14.86%	18.86%	6.86%
05:00	13.06%	14.24%	8.26%	3.46%
06:00	8.95%	13.17%	16.14%	2.94%
07:00	25.50%	34.83%	33.70%	12.56%
08:00	48.33%	29.77%	33.16%	15.43%
09:00	44.71%	39.61%	38.97%	27.70%
10:00	48.82%	45.75%	42.94%	33.54%
11:00	51.40%	60.08%	41.92%	34.01%
12:00	49.60%	55.48%	42.34%	27.61%
13:00	51.46%	44.70%	54.43%	42.82%
14:00	65.37%	47.39%	56.38%	36.85%
15:00	45.36%	37.26%	52.01%	28.99%
16:00	52.28%	54.10%	44.79%	36.74%
17:00	41.93%	46.57%	42.89%	27.86%
18:00	48.24%	46.87%	35.45%	25.95%
19:00	31.61%	34.82%	42.09%	19.44%
20:00	30.19%	34.40%	38.01%	15.91%
21:00	22.49%	30.65%	26.78%	17.02%
22:00	26.16%	22.41%	23.65%	11.37%
23:00	21.09%	26.63%	25.70%	6.88%

The Homeless Services Panel of Experts reviewed Measure P recommendations at its April 10, 2024 meeting and made the following recommendations as follows:

**Action:** M/S/C Jones/Meany HSPE does not recommend funding the 5150 transport out of Measure P monies.

**Vote:** *Ayes:* Meany, Marasovic, Kealoha-Blake, Jones, and Palmatier.  
*Noes:* Segal. *Abstain:* None. *Absent:* Bookstein.

**Action:** M/S/C Marasovic/Meany the HSPE align with all of the city manager's recommendations except for the \$1.3 million for 5150 transport.

**Vote:** *Ayes:* Meany, Marasovic, Kealoha-Blake, Jones, and Palmatier.  
*Noes:* None. *Abstain:* Segal. *Absent:* Bookstein.

**Action:** M/S/C Marasovic/Jones HSPE will incorporate in the report that the reasoning behind not recommending the allocation for the \$1.3 million in 5150 transport is that the city should look towards alternative methods for funding and Measure P monies should be used for homeless services. This rationale is due to the diminished revenue needed for homeless services which do not make 5150 transport a priority for this stream of funding.

**Vote:** *Ayes:* Meany, Marasovic, Kealoha-Blake, Jones, and Palmatier.  
*Noes:* Segal. *Abstain:* None. *Absent:* Bookstein.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental impacts associated with this report.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

While Measure P is generally used by the City for homeless programs, it is a general fund tax. Given the projected decline in Measure P revenue in Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026, other General Fund revenues are proposed to support programs that have been historically funded by Measure P. As there are many competing demands on the use of General Fund revenues, staff continued to fund transports from a combination of Measure P and other General Fund revenues. Shifting the approximately \$814,000 annual cost from Measure P to other General Fund revenues will require reductions in other expenditures funded by the General Fund. It is possible to revisit the funding arrangement as part of the Fiscal Year 2026 Mid-Biennial Update.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

#### CONTACT PERSON

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