



CONSENT CALENDAR  
July 29, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Taplin (Author), Councilmember Lunaparra (co-sponsor),  
Councilmember Bartlett (co-sponsor), Councilmember Tregub (co-sponsor)

Subject: Berkeley Green New Deal: Workforce Development

### RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager a feasibility analysis and request for recommendations for possible models to either establish a green workforce development board within the City of Berkeley or strengthen the alignment between City of Berkeley and community partner programs and the Alameda County Workforce development board to create pathways to gainful employment in green industries and accelerate the transition to a fossil-free local economy.

### POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025 the Land Use, Housing, & Economic Development Committee adopted the following action: M/S/C (Tregub/Lunaparra) to send the item to the City Council with a qualified positive recommendation that Council adopt the item and that the item be revised to include a referral to the budget process, clarify and make explicit that the full-time employee ("FTE") is either an in-house City of Berkeley employee or is a privately funded employee not on the City's payroll, and include a privately funded alternative to a full-time City employee when creating the budget referral.

Vote: All Ayes.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time TBD, est. \$125,000 for 1 FTE Senior Planner. Planning staff estimates that capacity for additional Specific Area Plan work to be available in Fiscal Year 2025 at the earliest. Currently, San Pablo Avenue Specific Area Plan work is supported by grant funding from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Priority Development Area (PDA) program. Other grant funding opportunities, such as the Priority Conservation Area (PCA) and Priority Production Area (PPA) programs<sup>1</sup>, or the California Strategic Growth Council's Transformative Climate Communities<sup>2</sup> program, may also be available in future grant cycles.

<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan Transportation Commission: Land Use Programs. <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/land-use>

<sup>2</sup> California Strategic Growth Council: Transformative Climate Communities.  
<https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/>

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Since the passage of SB 1000 (2016), California Government Code Section 65302(h) requires an Environmental Justice Element and/or related Elements in municipal General Plans to:

*(A) Identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by means that include, but are not limited to, the reduction of pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.*

*(B) Identify objectives and policies to promote civic engagement in the public decision making process.*

*(C) Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities. (See Attachment 6)*

The City of Berkeley has incorporated Environmental Justice policies in its plans, most recently in its 2023 Housing Element Update. However, many area plans such as the most recent update to the West Berkeley Plan<sup>3</sup>, adopted in 2011<sup>4</sup>, predate SB1000 requirements.

This contributes to a growing need to update area planning with recent accomplishments including: a renewed Development Agreement with Bayer<sup>5</sup> (formerly Miles Corp) in 2021, which funded a West Berkeley Fund for community infrastructure and resilience; removal of minimum parking requirement; expansion of Research and Development (R&D)<sup>6</sup> uses to Manufacturing zones, including development of a

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<sup>3</sup> City of Berkeley. (1993, Dec. 14.) Resolution 57,301-N.S. Adopting the Certification of Environmental Impact Report for the West Berkeley Plan...The West Berkeley Plan as an Area Plan and as an Amendment to the City of Berkeley Master Plan. [https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/12\\_14\\_1993%3B%20CLK%20-%20Resolution%3B%20City%20Council%3B%2057301%3B%20West%20Berkeley%20Area%20Plan%3B.pdf](https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/12_14_1993%3B%20CLK%20-%20Resolution%3B%20City%20Council%3B%2057301%3B%20West%20Berkeley%20Area%20Plan%3B.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/3\\_22\\_2011%3B%20CLK%20-%20Resolution%3B%20City%20Council%3B%2065210%3B%20%3B%20West%20Berkeley%20Project%20Amending%20the%20West%20Berkeley%20Plan%20and%2C%20by%20Reference%2C%20the%20General%20Plan.pdf](https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/3_22_2011%3B%20CLK%20-%20Resolution%3B%20City%20Council%3B%2065210%3B%20%3B%20West%20Berkeley%20Project%20Amending%20the%20West%20Berkeley%20Plan%20and%2C%20by%20Reference%2C%20the%20General%20Plan.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> City of Berkeley. (2021). Bayer Healthcare LLC – Amended and Restated Development Agreement. <https://newspack-berkeleyside-cityside.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021-11-30-Item-24-Bayer-Healthcare-LLC-%E2%80%93-Amended-and-Restated-Development-Agreement-1.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Robinson, R. & Chen, A. (2022). Referral: Keep Innovation in Berkeley. <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-09-13%20Item%2030%20Referral%20Keep%20Innovation%20in%20Berkeley.pdf>

Manufacturing - Research & Development (M-RD)<sup>7</sup> zone; development of a San Pablo Avenue Specific Area Plan.<sup>8</sup> While no single policy change will be a silver bullet, these and future efforts must inevitably also mitigate the impacts of anthropogenic climate change such as rising groundwater<sup>9</sup>; and the overall increasing risk of flooding, fires, and other natural disasters due to anthropogenic climate change.<sup>10</sup>

The increasing local demand for services and environmental mitigations, in tandem with historic investments in green energy and advanced manufacturing through the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act, present a major opportunity for the local community to reap the rewards of these challenges through workforce development. These targeted investments are intended to reduce consumer price inflation and eliminate lifecycle carbon emissions by rebuilding the material inputs of goods and services in the economy from lower-cost and renewable energy sources.<sup>11</sup> However, advanced manufacturing sectors are also facing acute workforce shortages in strategically significant goods such as semiconductors and lithium-ion batteries, with significant federal initiatives underway to address them.<sup>12</sup>

In partnership with the UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design, UC Chancellor's Office, and McGee Avenue Baptist Church, the District 2 Council Office supported field research and stakeholder outreach in the local community to determine top priorities for a Just Transition, and echoing President Biden's position on tackling climate change ("jobs, jobs, jobs"), most responses focused on the need for gainful employment and income support. These are related but distinct goals: while cash transfer programs such as a basic income may be necessary to address short-term needs, education and career development also can provide a sense of community belonging and self-actualization independent of monetary compensation. Accordingly, workforce development has been central to the City Council's reparative justice efforts, including

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<sup>7</sup> City of Berkeley Planning Commission Presentation (2023, Feb. 1).

[https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/legislative-body-meeting-attachments/2023\\_02\\_01\\_Item%2012\\_Gilman%20Gateway%20Rezone\\_Presentation.pdf](https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/legislative-body-meeting-attachments/2023_02_01_Item%2012_Gilman%20Gateway%20Rezone_Presentation.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> City of Berkeley: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. <https://berkeleyca.gov/construction-development/land-use-development/general-plan-and-area-plans/san-pablo-avenue-specific>

<sup>9</sup> kristina hill, Daniella Hirschfeld, Caroline Stanhope Lindquist, et al. Rising coastal groundwater as a result of sea-level rise will influence contaminated coastal sites and underground infrastructure. ESS Open Archive. May 25, 2023. DOI: [10.22541/essoar.168500245.55690018/v1](https://doi.org/10.22541/essoar.168500245.55690018/v1)

<sup>10</sup> City of Berkeley: January 2023 Disaster Preparedness Notice. <https://berkeleyca.gov/community-recreation/news/rains-and-winds-continue-stay-alert-and-safe-while-still-reporting>

<sup>11</sup> Glass, A. & Walter, K. (2022). How Biden's American-Style Industrial Policy Will Create Quality Jobs. Center for American Progress. Retrieved 16 May, 2024 from <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/how-bidens-american-style-industrial-policy-will-create-quality-jobs/>

<sup>12</sup> Department of Energy. (2022, March 18). Press Release: <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-announces-5-million-launch-lithium-battery-workforce-initiative>

support for Career Technical Education in the Bayer Development Agreement (see footnote 4) and a referral to study municipal support for reentry employment.<sup>13</sup>

While the City of Oakland<sup>14</sup> and the City of Richmond<sup>15</sup> both have municipal Workforce Development Boards that allocate federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grants and offer America's Job Centers of California (AJCC) services, Berkeley residents can only rely on the Alameda County Workforce Development Board for these services. The above Workforce Development Boards, along with the Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board, have jointly adopted a 2021-2024 Regional Plan under East Bay Regional Planning Unit as EastbayWorks.<sup>16</sup> Research in a forthcoming paper from Cuiffo & Sarkodie (2024) finds that this has resulted in a significant gap in workforce development outlays per capita.

Berkeley investing local funds into workforce development to bridge this gap would have significant reparative justice benefits, as the EastbayWorks 2021-2024 Regional Plan identifies low-income communities at risk of displacement concentrated in West Berkeley, and at least 25% of Alameda County's largest employers located in the City of Berkeley.

Research for an Environmental Justice Element would thus naturally overlap with implementation of Just Transition principles vis a vis workforce development.

Establishing an Environmental Justice Element in the General Plan pursuant to California Government Code Section 65302(h) is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goal to: be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment.

## BACKGROUND

### **Just Transition Principles**

On December 14, 2021, the Berkeley City Council adopted Resolution No. 70,171–N.S. “Resolution Committing the City of Berkeley to a Just Transition from Fossil Fuels and the Creation of a West Berkeley and South Berkeley Green New Deal” as revised (see Attachments 1 and 2). A Just Transition framework for West Berkeley Plan

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<sup>13</sup> <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-12-06%20Item%2006%20Office%20of%20Racial%20Equity.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/2021-24-local-plan>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/57308/RWDB-PY-2021-24-Local-Plan-FINAL?bidId=>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.eastbayworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EBRPU-Regional-Plan-03-11-21.pdf>

Amendments should be developed such that civil engagement and centering the needs of disadvantaged communities comprise an interrelated process.

The District 2 Council Office has convened several meetings of a West Berkeley Green New Deal Ad Hoc Working Group, whose work is still ongoing. The Ad Hoc Working Group expressed consensus that heavily impacted and disadvantaged communities that should be centered in a Just Transition include, at a minimum: **seniors; unhoused residents; low-income households; disabled or mobility-impaired residents; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); and LGBTQIA+ residents.**

The transition away from fossil fuels must ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are protected from both the turbulence of restructuring our entire economy and the effects of global warming that the community is already facing. The core premise is: "Transition is inevitable. Justice is not."<sup>17</sup> The environmental justice movement calls this approach to the climate crisis a "Just Transition."

Transition is inevitable. In macroeconomic terms, any government actively working to change the composition of household consumer demand (e.g. rapid industrialization amid World Wars, a green transition, etc.) will face significant distributional problems from shocks to energy and raw material costs, which manifest in price levels and/or rationing. We are already confronting such shocks locally and globally. As recent inflationary episodes and supply shocks following the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine have demonstrated, reliance on the fossil fuel economy increasingly undermines price stability.<sup>18</sup> Just Transition principles are partially intended to proactively mitigate both the threat of wage deflation for households depending on labor income from fossil fuel industries, and the inflationary pressures of unprecedented supply shocks. In a complementary framework, the Green New Deal<sup>19</sup> proposed by Democratic lawmakers<sup>20</sup>, some aspects of which have been passed in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, was designed to increase domestic high-road

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<sup>17</sup> Climate Justice Alliance. (2018). Just Transition Principles. *Climate Justice Alliance*. [https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA\\_JustTransition\\_Principles\\_final\\_hirez.pdf](https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA_JustTransition_Principles_final_hirez.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Weber, Isabella M.; Jauregui, Jesus Lara; Teixeira, Lucas; and Nassif Pires, Luiza, "Inflation in Times of Overlapping Emergencies: Systemically Significant Prices from an Input-output Perspective" (2022). *Economics Department Working Paper Series*. 340. <https://doi.org/10.7275/0c5b-6a92>

<sup>19</sup> Carlock, G. & Mangan, E. (2018). A Green New Deal. *Data for Progress*. [https://www.filesforprogress.org/pdfs/Green\\_New\\_Deal.pdf](https://www.filesforprogress.org/pdfs/Green_New_Deal.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> House Resolution 109. (2019). <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hres109/BILLS-116hres109ih.pdf>

employment<sup>21</sup> and capacity in green energy industries to manage this transition equitably.

A Just Transition is possible. While fossil fuel supply chains must end, other resilient supply chains must replace our community's changing needs. Renewable energy and electricity transmission will have to grow to meet increasing demands for vehicle and building electrification to replace petroleum and natural gas; batteries, solar panels, and wind farms must replace oil rigs and coal mines. Californians will have to shift at least 25% of their automobile trips to other modes of transportation while converting the rest to electric vehicles<sup>22</sup>, aided by more energy-efficient housing, public transit, and e-bike access. All of this will be made possible in part by Berkeley's growing innovation ecosystem of high-wage STEM employment in green energy technology and life sciences. To illustrate, over one third of employees in Alameda County's growing life sciences sector had no college degree<sup>23</sup>. The federal government is also increasing public sector fiscal capacity for clean energy development through direct pay provisions for municipal and nonprofit entities in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.<sup>24</sup>

Just Transition policies are already being enacted globally. For example, in Poland, a 75% decline in coal mining jobs was coupled by a mining social package and special privileges for mining communities. Canada's efforts to phase out coal-powered electricity have been accompanied by a national stakeholder task force that has traveled the country to hear from Canadians on how to justly shepherd the transition. Egypt's fuel price increases were paired with minimum wage boosts, food stipends, and progressive taxation.<sup>25</sup>

The Climate Justice Alliance, a climate organization at the forefront of the fight for a Just Transition, lays out the following Just Transition principles:

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<sup>21</sup> Williams, M., et al. (2022). The Inflation Reduction Act Provides Pathways to High-Quality Jobs. *Center for American Progress*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-inflation-reduction-act-provides-pathways-to-high-quality-jobs/>

<sup>22</sup> [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/Final2018Report\\_SB150\\_112618\\_02\\_Report.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/Final2018Report_SB150_112618_02_Report.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> City of Berkeley Staff Report: Business Support Zoning Amendment Referrals – Research and Development. (2021, June 20). pp. 13-56. <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/legislative-body-meeting-agendas/2021-10-06%20PC%20Agenda%20Packet.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Lala, C. (2023). Direct pay: an uncapped promise of the Inflation Reduction Act. *Center for Public Enterprise*. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/622cca56a2f5926affd807c6/t/64257e7047150f31bf02e7cf/1680178800773/Direct+Pay+101+-+Center+for+Public+Enterprise.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Gass, P. (2019). In Search of Just Transition: Examples From Around the World. *International Institute for Sustainable Development*. <https://www.iisd.org/articles/just-transition-examples>

**A Just Transition moves us toward Buen Vivir**

Buen Vivir means that we can live well without living better at the expense of others. Workers, community residents, women and Indigenous Peoples around the world have a fundamental human right to clean, healthy and adequate air, water, land, food, education and shelter. We must have just relationships with each other and with the natural world, of which we are a part. The rights of peoples, communities and nature must supersede the rights of the individual.

**A Just Transition creates Meaningful Work**

A Just Transition centers on the development of human potential, creating opportunities for people to learn, grow, and develop to their full capacities and interests. We are all born leaders, and a regenerative economy supports and nurtures that leadership. In the process, we are transforming ourselves, each other, our communities, and our society as a whole. Meaningful work is life-affirming.

**A Just Transition upholds Self Determination**

All peoples have the right to participate in decisions that impact their lives. This requires democratic governance in our communities, including our workplaces. Communities must have the power to shape their economies, as producers, as consumers, and in our relationships with each other. Not only do we have the right to self determination, but self determination is one of our greatest tools to realize the world we need. The people who are most affected by the extractive economy — the frontline workers and the fenceline communities — have the resilience and expertise to be in the leadership of crafting solutions.

**A Just Transition equitably redistributes Resources and Power**

We must work to build new systems that are good for all people, and not just a few. Just Transition must actively work against and transform current and historic social inequities based on race, class, gender, immigrant status and other forms of oppression. Just Transition fights to reclaim capital and resources for the regeneration of geographies and sectors of the economy where these inequities are most pervasive.

**A Just Transition requires Regenerative Ecological Economics**

Just Transition must advance ecological resilience, reduce resource consumption, restore biodiversity and traditional ways of life, and undermine

extractive economies, including capitalism, that erode the ecological basis of our collective well-being. This requires a re-localization and democratization of primary production and consumption by building up local food systems, local clean energy, and small scale production that are sustainable economically and ecologically. This also means producing to live well without living better at the expense of others.

### **A Just Transition retains Culture and Tradition**

Capitalism has forced many communities to sacrifice culture and tradition for economic survival. It has also defaced and destroyed land held as sacred. Just Transition must create inclusionary spaces for all traditions and cultures, recognizing them as integral to a healthy and vibrant economy. It should also make reparations for land that has been stolen and/or destroyed by capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, genocide and slavery.

### **A Just Transition embodies Local, Regional, National and International Solidarity**

A Just Transition must be liberatory and transformative. The impacts of the extractive economy knows no borders. We recognize the interconnectedness of our communities as well as our issues. Therefore, our solutions call for local, regional, national and global solidarity that confronts imperialism and militarism.

### **A Just Transition builds What We Need Now**

We must build the world we need now. This may begin at a local small scale, and must expand to begin to displace extractive practices. We must build and flex the muscles needed to meet our communities' needs.<sup>26</sup>

With these frameworks, staff and commissioners can study robust and flexible development standards in the General Plan

## **Transportation Demand Management**

The West Berkeley Plan as originally adopted in 1993 was prescient in calling for a “reduction of single occupant automobile trips.” The Plan envisioned several mitigations for increased traffic congestion, including implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plans “to encourage carpooling and vanpooling, walking and

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<sup>26</sup> Climate Justice Alliance. (2018). Just Transition Principles. *Climate Justice Alliance*. [https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA\\_JustTransition\\_Principles\\_final\\_hi-rez.pdf](https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA_JustTransition_Principles_final_hi-rez.pdf)

bicycle use, the use of transit, flexible scheduling of work hours, and other methods to reduce travel demand[.]”

However, the Transportation impact mitigations in the Plan are still codified under Level Of Service (LOS) standards, i.e. delay in vehicle throughput. As of 2020, state law requires transportation impacts to be assessed under a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) standard for environmental review, measuring the total volume of traffic. Reducing VMT is of critical importance for Berkeley and the state of California’s climate goals, as the California Air Resources Board has illustrated in a 2018 report: “Even if the share of new car sales that are ZEVs [zero-emission vehicles] grows nearly 10-fold from today, California would still need to reduce VMT per capita 25 percent to achieve the necessary reductions for 2030.”<sup>27</sup> Any amendments to the West Berkeley Plan’s Transportation mitigations would have to incorporate the goal of absolute VMT reduction to be consistent with state environmental standards.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

In 2006, Berkeley voters approved Measure G, committing to reduce the entire community’s greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below 2000 levels by 2050. The City Council approved Berkeley’s first Climate Action Plan in 2009.<sup>28</sup>

The California Air Resources Board released an updated Scoping Plan<sup>29</sup> in 2022. Following this plan, the state of California’s goals by 2045 are:

- *Cut greenhouse gas emissions by 85% below 1990 levels*
- *71% reduction in smog-forming air pollution*
- *Reduce fossil fuel consumption (liquid petroleum) to less than one-tenth of what we use today – a 94% reduction in demand.*
- *Create 4 million new jobs.*
- *Save Californians \$200 billion in health costs due to pollution in 2045.*

All planning efforts must achieve and exceed these thresholds in order to advance Environmental Justice.

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<sup>27</sup> California Air Resources Board: 2018 Progress Report. [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/Final2018Report\\_SB150\\_112618\\_02\\_Report.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/Final2018Report_SB150_112618_02_Report.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> City of Berkeley: Climate Action Plan. <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Berkeley-Climate-Action-Plan.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> California Air Resources Board: 2022 Scoping Plan. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/news/california-releases-final-2022-climate-scoping-plan-proposal>

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

- 1: 2021-12-14 Annotated Agenda - Berkeley City Council Meeting
- 2: 2021-12-14 Item 35 Commit the City of Berkeley to a Just Transition (Supp. 2)
- 3: Fact Sheet: The Weight of Cities - United Nations International Resources Panel
- 4: Senate Bill 1000 (2016)
- 5: Workforce Development Recommendations to Advance Berkeley's Green New Deal Policy by Yaa Freemah Sarkodie and Kathryn Cuiff