



Planning and Development Department  
Land Use Planning Division

STAFF REPORT  
September 17, 2025

TO: Members of the Planning Commission  
FROM: Justin Horner, Principal Planner  
SUBJECT: Planning Commission 2025 – 2026 Policy Work Plan

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### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review and accept the informational report on the Land Use Planning Division Policy Work Plan for 2025 and 2026.

### BACKGROUND AND WORKPLAN

In 2016 the City Council took formal action directing all boards and commissions to submit a work plan to the City Council in the form of an informational report. A Commission's work plan should contain the Commission's mission statement, goals, and resources.

#### *Mission*

The mission of the PC, as outlined in the City Charter, reads:

*“The Commission recommends modifications to the City of Berkeley General Plan and related policy documents. All Zoning Ordinance amendments are developed through this Commission and recommended to the City Council. Other purviews include subdivision map consideration and review and comments on substantial projects from surrounding jurisdictions.”*

#### *2024-2025 Workplan Update*

The following projects included in the 2024-2025 workplan have been completed:

- Zoning Amendments for Berkeley Business (Planning Commission: October 10, 2023; City Council: February 2, 2024)
- Demolition Ordinance revisions (Planning Commission: January 1, 2024; City Council: June 25, 2024)

- Middle Housing (Planning Commission: February 7, 2024; City Council: June 26, 2025)
- Keep Innovation in Berkeley (R&D zoning) (Planning Commission: May 1, 2024; City Council: December 3, 2024)
- Development Agreement procedures revisions (Planning Commission: September 4, 2024; City Council: November 19, 2024)
- Gilman Gateway Rezoning (M-RD) (Planning Commission: November 6, 2024; City Council: March 25, 2025)
- Affordable Housing Fee amendments (Planning Commission: December 4, 2024; City Council: February 25, 2025)
- Adoption of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (Planning Commission: February 2, 2025; City Council: March 18, 2025)
- ADU State Law Compliance (Planning Commission: March 3, 2025; City Council: July 27, 2025)
- ADU Condominiums—AB 1033 Implementation Ordinance (Planning Commission: May 7, 2025; City Council: September 16, 2025)

### *Goals*

The 2025-2026 workplan period are shown on **Attachment 1**. The Attachment includes information each project, including when a project begins or ends, whether it is underway or to be started, and the source of the project (City Council referral, or Housing Element, for example). The projects can be grouped under the following themes:

1. **On-Going Annual Reporting Requirements and Updates:** Staff have ongoing administrative responsibilities, including staffing the zoning counter, staffing the Planning Commission, and conducting internal administration, including staff meetings, time-card submission, professional development, and other assorted activities.

There are also staff-initiated zoning changes that are periodically brought before the Planning Commission (e.g. State Law and technical Edits, or SLTE). Additionally, the city has an ongoing obligation to produce a General Plan Annual Progress Report for the California Department of Housing Community Development (HCD).

2. **Active Projects:**

- **Housing Element Implementation:** Projects included in this category include the San Pablo Specific Plan, Ashby BART station area planning, and the Corridors Rezoning project. Additionally, there are ongoing administrative tasks related to implementation of the Housing Element, including monitoring sites identified to meet our RHNA goals, and a written

assessment of the city's efforts to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing pursuant to the Housing Element. In addition, the Planning Department occasionally receives technical assistance requests from HCD, which require detailed policy analysis, the preparation of formal responses, and oftentimes consultation with the City Attorney, the City Council, and other staff.

- **City Council Referred Projects:** Projects in this category include ordinance amendment to implement SB 684 and encourage small-low subdivisions, reviewing the regulation of commercial uses in residential areas, and proposing a Southside local density bonus program. In addition, this category includes the update to the Safety Element of the General Plan, as well as the preparation of its first Environmental Justice Element, as well as updates to our Land Use, Noise and Open Space elements.
3. **Projects to Be Started: Attachment 1** includes a list of outstanding City Council referrals that have not yet started, pending the freeing-up of staff capacity from the completion of current projects, and the on-boarding and training of newly-hired policy team staff. These projects include consolidating the Cannabis Commission and the Planning Commission, the creation of an artist affordable housing certification program, and exploring codifying conditions of approval related to air quality and toxics.
  4. **Projects to Be Started, Pending Additional Funding:** This category includes projects that have not yet started, due to the need for further funding from the City Council. These include a rezoning of Gilman Avenue to encourage more commercial uses, exploring zoning modifications for added density to offset the cost of the new HARDHATS ordinance, and the adoption of voluntary design guidelines.

The ongoing projects and referrals outlined above, and detailed in **Attachment 1**, constitute the policy team's current workload for the remainder of 2025 and calendar year 2026. This workload matches the policy team's current staff capacity. Staff does anticipate receiving additional referrals from the City Council over the 2025-2026 workplan period. The Housing Element, City Council referrals, and state requirements provide clear direction and timelines for the policy team's work during this workplan period, and there are still more outstanding City Council referrals that are pending additional funding from the Council.

#### *Resources*

The policy team currently consists of six full time equivalent employees: two Principal Planners, two Senior Planners, two Associate Planners and an Assistant Planner. One Associate Planner position is currently vacant. One of the Senior Planner position is a

Temporary position, funding for which ends in April 2026. The policy team is funded primarily through the City's General Fund. The team receives some funding from the Permit Service Center Fund (primarily via the Community Planning Fee), and may receive additional funding from outside grants.

CONTACT PERSON

Justin Horner, Co-Secretary to the Planning Commission, Planning and Development Department, 510-981-7476.

Attachments:

1. 2024-2025 Workplan Summary



Planning and Development Department  
 Land Use Division - Policy Group

Internal

September 2025

Source	Not Yet Started - Additional Funding Needed	Start	End (Est.)	Rank RRV 2024*	2024	2025
Council	Referral to City Manager to encourage long-term tenant stability by reducing the Affordable Housing Mitigation Fee rate in particular circumstances related to conversion to tenant ownership					
Council	Referral to City Manager and Planning Commission to rezone Gilman for commercial uses from San Pablo Ave to I-80			9		
Council	Refer to City Manager and Planning Commission to develop regs to require windows in all bedrooms and habitable spaces, and analyze effects on housing feasibility			11		
Council	Explore zoning modifications for added density as way to help offset costs added to projects by new HARDHATS ordinance		TBD	12		n/a
Council	Refer to City Manager including environmental mitigations within enhanced Use Permit review process in Manufacturing Zone, e.g. Air Quality monitoring			26		
Council	Voluntary Design guidelines			n/a		

\*Note: 2024 RRV Referrals are shown for projects that were not "started" prior to previous year Council ranking process.