



BERKELEY CITY COUNCILMEMBER
TERRY TAPLÍN
DISTRICT 2

11

CONSENT CALENDAR
September 30, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Terry Taplin, Councilmember Bartlett (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Igor Tregub (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Brent Blackaby (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Recreation and Community Facility Improvement Measures

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the city manager the assessment of potential revenue measures to finance capital improvements for certain recreational and community-serving city facilities that have completed the conceptual or design phase and return to the city council with recommendations for placing such measures on the November 2026 midterm election ballot.

POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On September 3, 2025, the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Committee adopted the following action: M/S/C (Lunaparra/Humbert) to send item to Council with a positive recommendation. Vote: All Ayes.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Should the revenue measures under consideration be approved by Berkeley voters in November 2026, the city would establish new dedicated funding streams for the construction of high-priority, design-complete recreational and community-serving projects. These revenues would directly address the city's most pressing unfunded capital needs, allowing shovel-ready projects to proceed without diverting limited General Fund resources or delaying other essential maintenance and operations.

The city currently faces over \$1,000,000,000 in unfunded infrastructure needs along with significant deferred maintenance liabilities across all infrastructure categories. Establishing a voter-approved revenue source would not only close funding gaps for these shovel-ready projects but also free up existing maintenance and operating funds for other critical priorities and reduce long-term fiscal strain.

Proactively funding these projects will:

- Prevent cost escalation from inflation and further facility deterioration
- Reduce emergency repair costs and operational disruptions



- Increase equitable access to modern, safe, and sustainable public facilities
- Demonstrate fiscal stewardship by aligning new revenues with clear, voter-endorsed capital priorities

By securing a dedicated, reliable revenue stream, the city can shift from a reactive approach to infrastructure investment to a proactive, strategic model that delivers tangible community benefits while measurably reducing the backlog of unfunded capital projects.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City of Berkeley is confronting a stark disconnect between critical capital infrastructure needs and the funding available to address them. The city has over \$1,000,000,000 in unfunded infrastructure needs, which include streets, stormwater systems, municipal facilities and buildings, parks, and the waterfront.

To address some of these infrastructure needs, voters approved Measure FF in 2024, a \$267,000,000 special tax to fund street, sidewalk, and pedestrian path repair, repaving, and reconstruction, safety improvements, and environmental infrastructure.

Previously, voters approved Measure T1 in 2016, a \$100,000,000 bond measure to repair, renovate, replace, or reconstruct the city's aging infrastructure and facilities. This very successful bond program has funded 72 improvement projects to city facilities and parks. These projects include the North Berkeley Senior Center, the South Berkeley Senior Center, the Corporation Yard, the Adult Mental Health Building, the Live Oak Community Center, the Willard Clubhouse, the MLK Jr. Youth Services Center, the African American Holistic Resource Center, University Avenue in the Waterfront, the Berkeley Rose Garden, San Pablo Park, Grove Park, and numerous street improvement projects. The city has diligently reported on T1-funded facility improvements, which can be seen in more detail on the city's website:

<https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/bond-revenue-measures/measure-t1>.

Outside of bond measures and grants, the funding for city buildings, parks, infrastructure in the waterfront, and the Transfer Station is limited to the following annual Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) allocations:

- **Parks Tax Fund** - \$2,750,000
- **General Fund** - \$1,500,000
 - \$1,100,000 for Public Works
 - \$400,000 for Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront



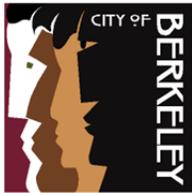
- **Zero Waste Fund** - \$1,160,000
- **Marina Fund** - \$350,000

These funding sources are typically used for smaller CIP or major maintenance projects associated with each fund. However, with the imminent completion of the Measure T1 bond program, there is no funding for a list of large critical city projects, including city buildings, parks, infrastructure in the waterfront, and the Transfer Station as shown below.

These projects should be prioritized for a 2026 revenue measure(s):

Key City Facilities in Need of Improvements

- **Frances Albrier Community Center**
 - Conceptual design completed.
 - Built in the 1970s, it suffers from failing Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and electrical systems, inadequate seismic resilience, outdated programming layouts, and serious accessibility deficiencies that limit its current and future use.
- **Maudelle Shirek Building (Old City Hall)**
 - Completed in 1909, the building has significant seismic issues that prevent it from being used except for short term uses. This historic structure urgently needs full seismic, systems, and accessibility upgrades and restoration of architectural features.
- **Veterans Building**
 - This historic structure urgently needs full seismic, systems, and accessibility upgrades and restoration of architectural features.
- **King and West Campus Pools**
 - Conceptual design completed.
 - These aging aquatic facilities suffer from chronic mechanical failures, leaks, crumbling decks, noncompliant locker rooms, and outdated filtration systems. They do not meet modern accessibility or safety standards and constant temporary repairs fail to address core infrastructure failures.
- **Transfer Station**
 - Long functionally outdated, the facility struggles with inefficient waste flow, deteriorated structural elements, poor stormwater handling, and operational



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constraints. Without action, risk of regulatory noncompliance and operational failure continues to grow.

- 1947 Center Street Improvements
 - While Measure T1 will fund the window replacement project, numerous other building elements related to safety issues such as HVAC and elevator replacements are still needed in this crucial city facility.

Parks and Recreation Capital Projects

- Dreamland Play Structure Replacement at Aquatic Park
 - Conceptual design completed.
- Sea Level Rise / Bike Park at University Avenue at the Berkeley Waterfront
 - Conceptual design completed.
- John Hinkel Park Scout Hut Reconstruction
 - Conceptual design completed.
- Glendale–La Loma Park 2-5 and 5-12 Play Area and ADA Pathway Upgrade
 - Design in progress.
- Cedar Rose Park 2-5 Play Structure Replacement
 - Design completed.
- San Pablo Park Drainage and Irrigation Improvement
- Shorebird Park Play Structure Replacement

Waterfront Capital Projects

- J-Dock Replacement
- South Cove Seawall Replacement
 - Design in progress.

Adeline Corridor Improvements

- Open Space and Street Improvements from Ashby Avenue to the Berkeley Border with Oakland
 - Conceptual design in progress.



Sidewalk 50/50 Program Upgrades

- There is an existing 2-3 year list of 50/50 sidewalk replacements from home owners.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Upgrades

- The citywide ADA Assessment is complete and needs funding to complete a portion of the work identified.

Stormwater System Capital Improvements

- Potter Watershed Smaller Pressure Pipe and Storage in Aquatic Park Main Lagoon
 - Watershed Master Plan Recommended Tidal Resolution Option.

Many of the projects listed above have been conceptually designed using Measure T1, the General Fund, or the Parks Tax. Without a dedicated revenue source, these projects will remain stalled and physical and programmatic degradation will continue. This delays service delivery, increases long-term costs due to inflation and further deterioration, and erodes equity goals by depriving communities of safe and modern public infrastructure. The longer construction is deferred, the more expensive it becomes, increasing both the fiscal and social burden.

BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, the City of Berkeley has undertaken significant planning and design work for several high-priority recreational and community-serving facilities. These projects have advanced into the design phase through a combination of local ballot measures, state and regional grants, and General Fund allocations - yet remain unfunded for construction.

Key City Facilities in Need of Improvements

- **Frances Albrier Community Center**
 - The Frances Albrier Community Center in San Pablo Park is a key cultural and recreational anchor serving South Berkeley. Originally constructed in the early 1970s, the building suffers from aging mechanical systems, accessibility deficiencies, and layout limitations that no longer meet community program needs. Design funding was provided through a combination of Measure T1 Phase 1 and Phase 2 allocations and smaller contributions from the General Fund and Parks Tax (Measure F). The project has completed schematic design for two options: a renovation-only plan at approximately \$29,000,000 and a more extensive renovation with a new aquatics facility at approximately \$42,000,000.



Proposed capital improvements include full HVAC replacement, ADA upgrades, reconfigured community spaces, seismic strengthening, and integration with an adjacent pool facility.

- **Maudelle Shirek Building (Old City Hall)**

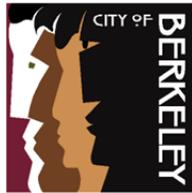
- Constructed in 1909, this designated historic landmark requires full seismic retrofitting, complete building systems replacement, ADA accessibility upgrades, and restoration of historic interior and exterior features. Preliminary assessments indicate the likely presence of lead-based paint, asbestos-containing materials, and potential Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), necessitating comprehensive abatement in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) regulations. This will require specialized contractors and environmental controls, extended construction timelines, and increased direct costs. Each year of delay will add significant escalation costs and risk further deterioration, increasing the scale of required intervention. The total investment is expected to exceed \$100,000,000 depending on the final scope, preservation requirements, and remediation needs.

- **Veterans Building**

- Constructed in 1928, this designated historic landmark requires full seismic retrofitting, complete building systems replacement, ADA accessibility upgrades, and restoration of historic interior and exterior features. This will require specialized contractors and environmental controls, extended construction timelines, and increased direct costs. Each year of delay will add significant escalation costs and risk further deterioration, increasing the scale of required intervention. The total investment is expected to exceed \$100,000,000, depending on the final scope, preservation requirements, and remediation needs.

- **King Pool and West Campus Pools**

- Both King Pool and West Campus Pool are over 60 years old and have reached the end of their useful life. They face chronic mechanical failures, water loss, outdated locker room facilities, and noncompliance with current ADA and aquatic safety standards. King Pool's replacement project (\$16,000,000) has completed the design phase funded largely by Measure T1 Phase 1 and 2 and supplemented by Parks Tax revenues for preliminary studies. West Campus Pool was the subject of earlier feasibility and conceptual planning efforts, but construction funding in the amount of \$16,500,000 has never been secured. Necessary capital improvements for both sites include full pool tank and deck replacement, new



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filtration and heating systems, modern locker rooms, seismic upgrades, and improved spectator and team facilities.

- **Transfer Station**

- Berkeley's Solid Waste Transfer Station, located in West Berkeley, is decades old and in need of full modernization to meet operational, environmental, and regulatory standards. Preliminary studies have examined replacement or major rehabilitation scenarios, including integration of modern waste diversion facilities. Needed capital improvements include new tipping floor infrastructure, improved traffic circulation, stormwater management upgrades, and modern materials recovery equipment. Similar facilities in the region suggest costs could be between \$115,000,000 and \$120,000,000.

- **City Offices at 1947 Center Street**

- The building is in need of numerous upgrades to structural and seismic elements, HVAC, electrical, and plumbing systems, carpet and flooring, elevators, lighting, and hazardous materials mitigations.

Parks and Recreation Capital Projects

- **Dreamland Play Structure Replacement at Aquatic Park (\$7,500,000)**

- This would replace the play structure, restroom, open space area, and amenities.

- **Sea Level Rise / Bike Park at University Avenue at the Berkeley Waterfront (\$6,250,000)**

- This would create a dedicated, professionally designed dirt, jump and skills course facility serving youth and adults; capital needs include grading, surfacing, drainage, and new amenities, as well as nature-based solutions for Sea Level Rise.

- **John Hinkel Park Scout Hut Project (\$3,150,000)**

- This would renovate the historic structure, incorporating seismic strengthening, roof replacement, and masonry restoration.

- **Glendale-La Loma Park 2-5 and 5-12 Play Area and ADA Pathway Upgrade (\$2,960,000)**

- This would modernize both age-group playgrounds, replace surfacing, and improve ADA connections throughout the site.

- **Cedar Rose Park 2-5 Play Structure Replacement (\$2,400,000)**



- This would replace aging, noncompliant play equipment and surfacing with new accessible structures and shade elements.
- **San Pablo Park Drainage and Irrigation Improvement (\$1,560,000)**
 - This would replace outdated irrigation systems, improve turf health, and address stormwater ponding issues that limit year-round field use.
- **Shorebird Park Play Structure Replacement (\$830,000)**
 - This was last replaced over thirty years ago and needs a full replacement.

Waterfront Capital Projects

- **J-Dock Replacement (\$12,000,000)**
 - The J-Dock system at the Berkeley Marina was installed in 1975 and is long past its useful life, requiring numerous temporary repairs. This project will replace the entire J Dock system with a new concrete dock system with a projected lifespan of 60 years.
- **South Cove Seawall Replacement (\$5,780,000)**
 - The retaining seawall is a badly deteriorated sheet pile wall that retains the shoreline at the boat hoist area at the South Cove sailing docks (340 linear feet).

Adeline Corridor Specific Plan Improvements

- Finalized in 2020, the Adeline Corridor Specific Plan calls for improvements to open space and streets from Berkeley's downtown to the Oakland border. The city has recently secured conceptual design funding for the area from Ashby Avenue to the Oakland border, and construction is estimated to be up to \$50,000,000. The city is seeking additional grant funding to finalize the design for this portion of the plan.

Sidewalk 50/50 Program Upgrades

- There is an existing 2-3 year list of 50/50 sidewalk replacements requested from home owners. A \$2,000,000 allocation from T1 Phase 1 eliminated the waiting list, but this list has grown over the last five years and needs an infusion of funding to complete the work in a timely manner, estimated at \$5,000,000.

ADA Upgrades



- The city has completed a Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan to comply with section 504 of the American with Disabilities Act. The plan has identified hundreds of millions in need of work to city infrastructure. This measure would request up to \$5,000,000 to begin to address these needs.

Stormwater System Capital Improvements

- **Potter Watershed Smaller Pressure Pipe and Storage in Aquatic Park Main Lagoon**
 - The smaller pressure pipe would increase stormwater flow capacity to the Bay by 44%, allowing most runoff from a 10-year storm to bypass Aquatic Park and be discharged directly, while using the lagoon for temporary storage only during the largest events. This would reduce flooding, improve water quality by preventing trash and pollutants from entering the lagoon or Bay, and lessen the frequency of storm overflows into Aquatic Park. Est: \$50,000,000.

While Measures T1 and Parks Measures F and Y have been instrumental in advancing the design work, they were never intended to cover full construction costs for major facilities. Many of our funds support ongoing maintenance and small-scale capital renewal but cannot absorb multi-million-dollar replacements or modernizations. As a result, these design-complete projects remain unfunded for construction.

Without a dedicated revenue source, these facilities will continue to deteriorate, risking higher eventual replacement costs, service interruptions, and loss of critical community programming space.

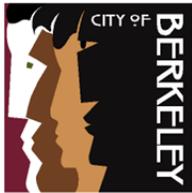
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

N/A

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The City of Berkeley's recreational, cultural, and community-serving facilities are vital public assets that sustain health, wellness, social cohesion, and equitable access to services. Many of these facilities — including King Pool, the Frances Albrier Community Center, the Maudelle Shirek Building, and others — have completed design work yet remain unfunded for construction. Advancing these projects is essential to prevent further deterioration, escalating repair costs, and lost service capacity.

The city faces a substantial and growing infrastructure funding gap. The Fiscal Year 2025–2029 Capital Improvement Program identifies more than \$241,600,000 in unfunded Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department projects alone, not including other citywide deferred maintenance liabilities. The Parks Tax (Measure F) is a critical maintenance funding tool, but it cannot absorb



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the multi-million-dollar capital costs associated with full facility replacements or modernizations. At the same time, the city's structural General Fund deficit limits the availability of discretionary dollars for major capital construction. Without a dedicated revenue measure, these shovel-ready projects will remain stalled and service levels will continue to decline.

Placing a revenue measure before the voters in the November 2026 midterm election would align with the city's project timelines, public engagement needs, and ballot-cycle advantages, allowing for transparent community discussion and a realistic funding path.

This recommendation advances several City of Berkeley Strategic Plan goals:

- **Provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities**
 - By securing funding for design-complete projects, the city can deliver modern, accessible, and sustainable facilities that meet current and future community needs.
- **Champion and demonstrate social and racial equity**
 - Many of these projects, including the Frances Albrier Community Center and San Pablo Park improvements, directly serve historically underrepresented and underserved neighborhoods, ensuring equitable access to high-quality public spaces and programming.
- **Be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment**
 - Modernized facilities will be designed to meet or exceed current environmental standards, incorporating energy-efficient systems, water conservation, green infrastructure, and resilient materials while improving public access to parks and waterfront areas that connect residents to the natural environment.

By moving forward with a dedicated funding assessment for these priority projects, the city will not only preserve critical public assets but also demonstrate a proactive, equity-focused, and environmentally responsible approach to infrastructure investment.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Several alternatives to pursuing a dedicated revenue measure have been identified and evaluated:

- **Rely on Existing Funding Sources**
 - The city could continue to fund capital projects through existing revenue streams such as the Parks Tax (Measure F), the General Fund, and one-time grant opportunities. However, these sources are already committed to ongoing maintenance, operations, and smaller-scale improvements. They cannot absorb



the multi-million-dollar construction costs of the identified design-complete projects without displacing other critical priorities. This approach would likely delay these projects indefinitely, leading to further deterioration, higher eventual replacement costs, and continued service gaps.

- **Reallocate General Fund Resources**
 - Redirecting significant General Fund dollars to these capital projects would require substantial cuts to core services, including public safety, homelessness programs, and maintenance of existing infrastructure. Given the city's structural General Fund deficit, this alternative is fiscally unsustainable and would not provide a stable or dedicated source of capital funding.
- **Pursue External Grants and Partnerships Only**
 - While the city actively seeks state, federal, and philanthropic grants for capital improvements, these sources are highly competitive, time-limited, and rarely cover full project costs. They are best used as supplemental funding rather than as the sole source for major facility construction. Relying solely on grants would introduce significant uncertainty and delay with no guarantee that projects could move forward.
- **Defer or Reduce Project Scope**
 - Postponing or scaling back projects could reduce short-term costs but would also diminish long-term community benefits, fail to address underlying infrastructure deficiencies, and increase life-cycle costs due to deferred maintenance. In some cases, reduced scopes would compromise program functionality, accessibility, and environmental performance.

While each alternative offers some degree of fiscal relief or reduced complexity, none provide the long-term, dedicated funding necessary to advance multiple high-priority, design-complete projects in a coordinated, timely manner. A voter-approved revenue measure remains the most viable and equitable approach to delivering these critical community assets while protecting the city's broader fiscal health.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

- 1: Civic Center Vision and Implementation Plan Staff Report (2020)
- 2: Maudelle Shirek Building Historic Structure Report (2020)
- 3: Fiscal Years 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan



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- 4: Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department Capital Improvement Project and Minor Maintenance Program Update (2025)
- 5: Status of the Southern Peninsula and the building at 199 Seawall Drive in the Berkeley Waterfront (2024)