



Office of the City Manager

October 29, 2025

Via Electronic Mail

Members of the Board of Supervisors
Alameda County Board of Supervisors
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors,

Thank you for your ongoing partnership to reduce homelessness. The City of Berkeley continues to focus diligently on the crisis of homelessness and has collaboratively made great strides. Over the past four years, the City has leveraged \$35M in local general funds to draw down over \$45M in State Homekey and Encampment Resolution Funding grants, resulting in the rapid creation of over 160 units of noncongregate interim and permanent housing. Alongside Oakland and Los Angeles, Berkeley is one of only three jurisdictions in the State to have received all three rounds of Encampment Resolution Funding, using these grants to open 93 units of interim, motel-based shelter dedicated to our largest and most unsafe encampments. The results have been remarkable: between 2022 and 2024, Berkeley had a 45% decrease in unsheltered homelessness and a 20% reduction in homelessness overall, the largest such declines for any major city in our County.

For these reasons, we were surprised to learn that, after declaring a goal to fund one such project in each region of the County, the County recently declined to fund the City-sponsored Measure W application from Episcopal Community Services (ECS) for new encampment-focused interim housing in Berkeley—the only such application in the North region of Alameda County—which the City proposed to match with local general funds for the purposes of housing people from West Berkeley's large and dangerous RV encampments along Dwight Way and Grayson St. Please know that we and ECS remain open to revising and resubmitting this proposal to better meet the needs and expectations of the County. We look forward to working with the County on this important and timely project.

Berkeley has deeply appreciated collaborating with the County and State to model proven solutions to homelessness, and we are all frustrated at the tenacity of the problem. It is a problem of deep human suffering throughout the city, county, state and country. Locally, recent PIT Count trends underscore this reality: of those experiencing homelessness in Berkeley in 2024, 43% reported that they were last housed outside the County at the time they became homeless—by far the largest such proportion amongst major cities in the County, and up from 33% in the 2022 PIT Count. Given the large 'fiscal cliff' the City faces for existing shelters dedicated to serving people from encampments (roughly \$5M over the next 4 years), in addition to the City's structural general fund deficit, opening any new programs to serve Berkeley's

existing homeless population, let alone newcomers, will not be possible without outside funding sources from the State or County.

Berkeley is a State designated Pro-Housing jurisdiction that has approved many policies to change zoning and other regulations to allow for more and denser housing, which over time will take pressure off the regional housing shortage that is directly contributing to our homelessness crisis. But this will take years, and the crisis of unsheltered homelessness needs a response now. While we will continue to push for more homeless housing in Berkeley, the city is densely-populated and largely built-out, and there are insufficient suitable locations (let alone local funding sources) to continue our effort to provide interim housing solutions at the pace we have or the pace that is needed to more significantly help people living on the streets move inside. Despite having among the highest per-capita rates of homelessness in the Bay Area, Berkeley is considered too small by the State of California to be a direct recipient of Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funding. If we are to continue making such measurable strides in solving homelessness, Berkeley and Alameda County must expand and increase our partnership, and we are eager to work with you towards that goal.

For these reasons, the Berkeley City Council voted unanimously on May 20, 2025, to adopt the following positions with respect to homelessness, and requested that I transmit it to you:

1. Direct the City Manager to report back to Council on "Opportunities to partner with Alameda County and other public agencies to utilize County, other governing jurisdictions, or state-owned land for temporary shelter and services outside of Berkeley's most heavily impacted neighborhoods."
2. "Support the City Manager in collaborating with Alameda County and other neighboring jurisdictions to identify potential sites outside of Berkeley city limits that may be suitable and more cost-effective than sites within Berkeley."

As you know, Berkeley city staff and many elected officials are actively engaged at all existing tables for city-county regional coordination on homelessness, including the Alameda County Mayor's Homeless Group (led by Mayor Ishii), the Technical Working Group, various committees of the Home Together 2030 Plan creation, and the Alameda County Continuum of Care, and we will continue to partner with the County in these and other ways moving forward. We welcome any additional opportunities to work collaboratively with you and your colleagues on the Board of Supervisors and staff to find paths forward on utilizing County, other governing jurisdictions, or state-owned land for temporary and/or permanent shelter and services outside of Berkeley, as well as shared advocacy to our State leaders for more resources to solve this regional problem.

Thank you for your leadership and advocacy. We look forward to working with you to solve this crisis.

Respectfully Submitted on Behalf of the Berkeley City Council,


Paul Buddenhagen
City Manager

cc: Susan Muranishi, County Administrator
Berkeley Mayor Adena Ishii and All Berkeley Councilmembers