



**BERKELEY CITY COUNCIL FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE,  
TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Wednesday, July 7, 2021  
2:30 PM**

Committee Members:

Councilmembers Terry Taplin, Rigel Robinson, and Kate Harrison  
Alternate: Councilmember Sophie Hahn

**PUBLIC ADVISORY: THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH  
VIDEOCONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE**

Pursuant to Section 3 of Executive Order N-29-20, issued by Governor Newsom on March 17, 2020, this meeting of the City Council Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Policy Committee will be conducted exclusively through teleconference and Zoom videoconference. Please be advised that pursuant to the Executive Order, and to ensure the health and safety of the public by limiting human contact that could spread the COVID-19 virus, there will not be a physical meeting location available.

To access the meeting remotely using the internet: Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device: Use URL <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89176068316>. If you do not wish for your name to appear on the screen, then use the drop down menu and click on "rename" to rename yourself to be anonymous. To request to speak, use the "raise hand" icon on the screen.

To join by phone: Dial **1-669-900-9128** or **1-877-853-5257 (Toll Free)** and Enter Meeting ID: **891 7606 8316**. If you wish to comment during the public comment portion of the agenda, press \*9 and wait to be recognized by the Chair.

Written communications submitted by mail or e-mail to the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Committee by 5:00 p.m. the Friday before the Committee meeting will be distributed to the members of the Committee in advance of the meeting and retained as part of the official record.

# AGENDA

## Roll Call

## Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters

## Minutes for Approval

*Draft minutes for the Committee's consideration and approval.*

### 1. Minutes - June 2, 2021

## Committee Action Items

*The public may comment on each item listed on the agenda for action as the item is taken up. The Chair will determine the number of persons interested in speaking on each item. Up to ten (10) speakers may speak for two minutes. If there are more than ten persons interested in speaking, the Chair may limit the public comment for all speakers to one minute per speaker. Speakers are permitted to yield their time to one other speaker, however no one speaker shall have more than four minutes.*

*Following review and discussion of the items listed below, the Committee may continue an item to a future committee meeting, or refer the item to the City Council.*

### 2. **Adopt an Ordinance Adding a Chapter 11.62 to the Berkeley Municipal Code to Regulate Plastic Bags at Retail and Food Service Establishments**

**From: Councilmembers Harrison and Hahn**

**Referred: November 25, 2019**

**Due: July 30, 2021**

**Recommendation:** Adopt an ordinance adding a Chapter 11.62 to the Berkeley Municipal Code to regulate plastic bags at retail and food service establishments.

**Financial Implications:** See report

Contact: Kate Harrison, Councilmember, District 4, (510) 981-7140

## Unscheduled Items

*These items are not scheduled for discussion or action at this meeting. The Committee may schedule these items to the Action Calendar of a future Committee meeting. Pursuant to Appendix D of the City Council Rules of Procedure and Order related to Temporary Rules for Policy Committees the deadline to take action on some items on the Unscheduled list may be postponed.*

## Unscheduled Items

**3. Refer to the City Manager to Prioritize Establishment of Impact/Mitigation Fees to Address Disproportionate Private and Public Utility Impact to the Public Right of Way**

**From: Councilmember Harrison (Author)**

**Referred: February 22, 2021**

**Due: July 12, 2021**

**Recommendation:** In order to ensure equitable support of the public right of way by private and public entities that use City facilities, refer to the City Manager and City Attorney to prioritize the following in consultation with the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment, & Sustainability Committee:

1. establish impact and/or mitigation fees to address disproportionate private impacts to the public right of way, such as our roads and utility poles; and
2. establish transfers between sewer, waste, or other utilities as appropriate to address impacts to the public right of way.

**Financial Implications:** See report

Contact: Kate Harrison, Councilmember, District 4, (510) 981-7140

## Items for Future Agendas

- Discussion of items to be added to future agendas

## Adjournment

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*Written communications addressed to the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Committee and submitted to the City Clerk Department will be distributed to the Committee prior to the meeting.*

*This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953. Members of the City Council who are not members of the standing committee may attend a standing committee meeting even if it results in a quorum being present, provided that the non-members only act as observers and do not participate in the meeting. If only one member of the Council who is not a member of the committee is present for the meeting, the member may participate in the meeting because less than a quorum of the full Council is present. Any member of the public may attend this meeting. Questions regarding this matter may be addressed to Mark Numainville, City Clerk, (510) 981-6900.*



### COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION:

To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services specialist at (510) 981-6418 (V) or (510) 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date.

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I hereby certify that the agenda for this meeting of the Standing Committee of the Berkeley City Council was posted at the display case located near the walkway in front of the Maudelle Shirek Building, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, as well as on the City's website, on July 1, 2021.



Mark Numainville, City Clerk

## **Communications**

*Communications submitted to City Council Policy Committees are on file in the City Clerk Department at 2180 Milvia Street, 1st Floor, Berkeley, CA, and are available upon request by contacting the City Clerk Department at (510) 981-6908 or [policycommittee@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:policycommittee@cityofberkeley.info).*

**BERKELEY CITY COUNCIL FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE,  
TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, June 2, 2021  
2:30 PM**

**Committee Members:**

Councilmembers Terry Taplin, Rigel Robinson, and Kate Harrison  
Alternate: Councilmember Sophie Hahn

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Written communications submitted by mail or e-mail to the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Committee by 5:00 p.m. the Friday before the Committee meeting will be distributed to the members of the Committee in advance of the meeting and retained as part of the official record. City offices are currently closed and cannot accept written communications in person.

## MINUTES

**Roll Call:** 2:37 p.m. All present.

**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters:** 1 Speaker

### Minutes for Approval

*Draft minutes for the Committee's consideration and approval.*

**1. Minutes - May 19, 2021**

**Action:** M/S/C (Robinson/Taplin) to approve the May 19, 2021 minutes as presented.

**Vote:** All Ayes

### Committee Action Items

*The public may comment on each item listed on the agenda for action as the item is taken up. The Chair will determine the number of persons interested in speaking on each item. Up to ten (10) speakers may speak for two minutes. If there are more than ten persons interested in speaking, the Chair may limit the public comment for all speakers to one minute per speaker. Speakers are permitted to yield their time to one other speaker, however no one speaker shall have more than four minutes.*

*Following review and discussion of the items listed below, the Committee may continue an item to a future committee meeting, or refer the item to the City Council*

## Committee Action Items

**2. Referral Response: Ordinance Amending Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 7.52, Reducing Tax Imposed for Qualifying Electrification, Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation Retrofits**

**From: City Manager**

**Referred: July 21, 2020**

**Due: September 30, 2021**

**Recommendation:** 1. Delay adoption of the first reading of an ordinance amending the Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Chapter 7.52 to expand the Seismic Transfer Tax Rebate Program to include qualifying sustainability and resilience measures, and any associated budget requests, until FYE 2022 when more information on budget due to COVID-19 response and recovery is available; and  
2. Refer to the City Manager the design of a companion Resilient Homes Equity Pilot Program that would provide funding for home retrofit improvements to low-income residents.

**Financial Implications:** See report

Contact: Jordan Klein, Planning and Development, (510) 981-7400

**Action:** 2 speakers. Discussion held. M/S/C (Robinson/Taplin) to send the item to Council with a qualified positive recommendation to amend the item to establish: a two-year Pilot Existing Building Electrification Incentive Program as seed funding, inclusive of staff costs, for FY 2022 to assist new homeowners, renters and existing homeowners with transition to zero-carbon buildings; and an annual process for the Energy (or successor) Commission and the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Policy Committee (FITES), in consultation with community groups, to provide input to staff and Council about eligible categories of fund expenditures to maximize equitable emissions reductions and impacts for eligible households while leaving the mechanism for engaging frontline community groups and for carrying out the functions to staff discretion.

**Vote:** All Ayes

## Committee Action Items

3. **Commit the City of Berkeley to a Just Transition from the Fossil Fuel Economy From: Councilmember Taplin (Author), Councilmember Bartlett (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Hahn (Co-Sponsor)**

**Referred: March 15, 2021**

**Due: September 18, 2021**

**Recommendation:** Adopt a resolution committing the City of Berkeley to a Just Transition from the fossil fuel economy and establishing a Just Transition Working Group convened by the author and including but not limited to 2 other members of the City Council, representatives from the Community Environmental Advisory Commission (CEAC), Energy Commission, Zero Waste, Labor Commission, the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission, the Community Health Commission, the Youth Commission, and Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC), the Ecology Center, as well as labor allies and community partners at the UC and in the City of Berkeley.

**Financial Implications:** See report

Contact: Terry Taplin, Councilmember, District 2, (510) 981-7120

**Action:** 2 speakers. Discussion held. Supplemental material was submitted by the author. M/S/C (Harrison/Robinson) to send the item to Council with a positive recommendation as submitted in the supplemental material and further revised to include a recommendation that all Council reports related to climate include a just transition section.

**Vote:** All Ayes

## Unscheduled Items

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4. **Refer to the City Manager to Prioritize Establishment of Impact/Mitigation Fees to Address Disproportionate Private and Public Utility Impact to the Public Right of Way**

**From: Councilmember Harrison (Author)**

**Referred: February 22, 2021**

**Due: July 12, 2021**

**Recommendation:** In order to ensure equitable support of the public right of way by private and public entities that use City facilities, refer to the City Manager and City Attorney to prioritize the following in consultation with the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment, & Sustainability Committee:

1. establish impact and/or mitigation fees to address disproportionate private impacts to the public right of way, such as our roads and utility poles; and
2. establish transfers between sewer, waste, or other utilities as appropriate to address impacts to the public right of way.

**Financial Implications:** See report

Contact: Kate Harrison, Councilmember, District 4, (510) 981-7140



## Unscheduled Items

5. **Adopt an Ordinance Adding a Chapter 11.62 to the Berkeley Municipal Code to Regulate Plastic Bags at Retail and Food Service Establishments**  
**From: Councilmembers Harrison and Hahn**  
**Referred: November 25, 2019**  
**Due: July 30, 2021**  
**Recommendation:** Adopt an ordinance adding a Chapter 11.62 to the Berkeley Municipal Code to regulate plastic bags at retail and food service establishments.  
**Financial Implications:** See report  
Contact: Kate Harrison, Councilmember, District 4, (510) 981-7140

## Items for Future Agendas

- None

## Adjournment

**Action:** M/S/C (Robinson/Taplin) to adjourn the meeting.  
Vote: All Ayes

Adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct record of the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Committee meeting held on June 2, 2021.

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Michael MacDonald, Assistant City Clerk

## Communications

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Kate Harrison  
Councilmember District 4

ACTION CALENDAR  
December 10, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmembers Harrison and Hahn  
Subject: Adopt an Ordinance Adding a Chapter 11.62 to the Berkeley Municipal Code to Regulate Plastic Bags at Retail and Food Service Establishments

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt an ordinance adding a Chapter 11.62 to the Berkeley Municipal Code to regulate plastic bags at retail and food service establishments.

BACKGROUND

Californians throw away 123,000 tons of plastic bags each year, and much of it finds its way into regional and international waterways.<sup>1</sup> The situation is only getting worse with 18 billion more pounds of plastic added to the already colossal amount in our seas.<sup>2</sup> Today, there are 100 million tons of trash in the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre;<sup>3</sup> in some parts, plastic outweighs plankton 6 to 1.<sup>4</sup>

Legislative action at the state level has been successful in achieving reductions in plastic bag pollution. According to the 2018 Change the Tide report, restrictions on plastic bags such as that in effect in California have resulted in a “steady drop” in plastic grocery bags found on California beaches. Berkeley has also recently made substantial progress on its restriction of plastic litter in the city through the Single Use Foodware and Litter Reduction ordinance (BMC Chapter 11.64).<sup>5</sup> The ordinance restricts food providers from offering take-out and dine-in food in single-use disposable ware. These items include “containers, bowls, plates, trays, cartons, boxes, pizza boxes, cups, utensils, straws, lids, sleeves, condiment containers, spill plugs, paper or foil wrappers, liners and any

<sup>1</sup> Environment California, “Keep Plastic Out of the Pacific,”

<https://environmentcalifornia.org/programs/cae/keep-plastic-out-pacific>.

<sup>2</sup> Division of Boating and Waterways, “The Changing Tide,”

[http://dbw.parks.ca.gov/pages/28702/files/Changing%20Tide%20Summer%202018%20HQ%20\(1\).pdf](http://dbw.parks.ca.gov/pages/28702/files/Changing%20Tide%20Summer%202018%20HQ%20(1).pdf).

<sup>3</sup> The North Pacific Gyre, also known as the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, is a system of ocean currents that covers much of the northern Pacific Ocean. It stretches from California to Japan and contains the Great Pacific Trash Patch, or Pacific trash vortex. National Geographic, “Great Pacific Garbage Patch,” <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/>.

<sup>4</sup> Environment California, “Keep Plastic Out of the Pacific,”

<https://environmentcalifornia.org/programs/cae/keep-plastic-out-pacific>.

<sup>5</sup> Berkeley Municipal Code, Chapter 11.64 Single Use Foodware and Litter Reduction.

other items used to hold, serve, eat, or drink Prepared Food.”<sup>6</sup> Notably, plastic bags do not fall within the purview of the Single Use Foodware and Litter Reduction ordinance.

In order to take a further step in protecting the environment and reaching our zero waste goal, Berkeley must consider more aggressive action to close critical loopholes in state law with regard to plastic bags.

California currently prohibits the sale of plastic bags that fall into several categories, based on composition, intended use and business size and type. The statewide Single-Use Carryout Bag Ban prevents the sale of single-use plastic carryout bags in most large grocery stores, retail stores with a pharmacy, convenience stores, food marts, and liquor stores. Affected stores may offer reusable or recycled paper bags to a customer at the point of sale. Despite these restrictions, the law provides for the sale of plastic bags that are more than 2.25 mils thick in these stores, and exempts a number of key commercial establishments such as restaurants, general retailers, farmers markets, and other smaller businesses. State law also fully exempts plastic bags in grocery stores used for carrying produce from the shelf to the check stand.<sup>7</sup>

This proposed ordinance intends to expand the scope of existing regulation to further reduce plastic waste across these exempt categories, avoiding further destruction of the local, regional and global environment.

### **State Restrictions on Plastic Bags**

California’s legislature decided in 2014 to take a step to limit single-use plastic bag waste. Senate Bill 270 mandates that stores of a certain size and type offer only reusable bags at checkout and sets a minimum price of at least \$0.10.<sup>8</sup> As a result, thin film bags, known as t-shirt bags, are no longer available at larger retail and grocery stores.

The scope of state regulation includes minimum percentage of post-consumer recycled plastics the bag must include and banning plastic bags deemed adequate for only one use. The state defines single-use plastic bags as thin film bags—bags made out of flexible sheets of plastic usually of polyethylene resin. Legislation often distinguishes between single-use film bags and reusable ones based on their thickness, measured in mils—1 thousandth of an inch.

The ban however does not apply to other types of plastic bags deemed reusable or to smaller retailers and restaurants. Many plastic film bags, in particular, are still permitted under SB 270. They are permitted for sale as long as: the bags contain more than 20%

<sup>6</sup> Berkeley Municipal Code Section 11.64.020D.

<sup>7</sup> Ban on Single-Use Carryout Bags (SB 270 / Proposition 67) Frequently Asked Questions, Office of the Attorney General and CalRecycle, April 2017, <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Plastics/CarryOutBags/FAQ/>.

<sup>8</sup> California Legislature, Senate Bill 270,

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201320140SB270](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB270)

post-consumer recycled material<sup>9</sup>; are recyclable in the state of California; are properly labeled as containing post-consumer recycled material; can carry over 22lb for a minimum of 175ft for at least 125 uses; and are at least 2.25 mils thick.

Despite the assumption of reusability, there is limited evidence to suggest that plastic bags are being repurposed to the degree accounted for by SB 270. Some studies suggest that fewer than 1% of people actually reuse the thicker and thus technically-reusable film bags.<sup>10</sup> This erroneous legislative assumption can be addressed at the local level.

Aside from SB 270, the only other legislation governing plastic bag usage in Berkeley is an Alameda County ordinance implementing SB 270 and local ordinances regulating the type of plastic allowed in food packaging.<sup>11</sup> By not addressing plastic produce bags and defining reusable bags as any film bag exceeding 2.25 mils, current regional and local law shares many of the shortcomings of state legislation.<sup>1213</sup>

### Local Restrictions on Plastic Bags

Contested but upheld in a 2016 ballot measure,<sup>14</sup> SB 270 set a statewide code that has been built upon by numerous local governments, including many in the Bay Area.

Palo Alto is one of the most recent cities to amend its municipal code and take the extra step in limiting the distribution of film bags. By splitting plastic bags into three categories by use—produce bags, checkout bags, and product bags—the city is able to differentiate regulation for each purpose. Its ordinance<sup>15</sup> bans grocery stores and farmers markets from packaging food in film bags, requiring instead the use of compostable plastics. For checkout, Palo Alto mandates that all stores only offer their customers recycled paper bags or reusable bags, a term it defines in accordance with California law as a bag thicker than 2.25 mils.

<sup>9</sup> [In 2020, the percentage required will increase to 40% post-consumer recycled material.](#)

<sup>10</sup> Save Our Shores, “Help Ban Plastic Bags,” <https://saveourshores.org/help-ban-plastic-bags/>

<sup>11</sup> Alameda County Waste Management Authority, “Ordinance Regulating the use of carryout bags and promoting the use of reusable bags,” <http://reusablebagsac.org/acwma-ordinance-2012-2-amended-ordinance-2016-2>.

<sup>12</sup> Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 11.58 Prohibition of Chlorofluorocarbon-Processed Food Packaging, <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Berkeley/cgi/NewSmartCompile.pl?path=Berkeley11/Berkeley1158/Berkeley1158.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 11.60 Polystyrene Foam, Degradable and Recyclable Food Packaging, <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Berkeley/cgi/NewSmartCompile.pl?path=Berkeley11/Berkeley1160/Berkeley1160.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Ballotpedia, “California Proposition 67, Plastic Bag Ban Veto Referendum (2016),” [https://ballotpedia.org/California\\_Proposition\\_67,\\_Plastic\\_Bag\\_Ban\\_Veto\\_Referendum\\_\(2016\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_67,_Plastic_Bag_Ban_Veto_Referendum_(2016))

<sup>15</sup> Palo Alto Municipal Code, “Chapter 5.35 Retail and Food Service Establishment Checkout Bag Requirements,” <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/63550>.

San Francisco has similar provisions.<sup>16</sup> It decided in July 2019<sup>17</sup> to both increase the amount of money charged for checkout bags from \$0.10 to \$0.25 and ban what it calls “pre-checkout bags”—defined as a “bag provided to a customer before the customer reaches the point of sale,” nearly identical in definition to Palo Alto’s produce bag language. San Francisco drew inspiration from Monterey, Pacifica, Santa Cruz and Los Altos, all of which charge more than SB270 requires for plastic bags.<sup>18</sup> The ordinance also specifically referenced an Irish law, which increased the price of plastic checkout bags from 15 cents to 22 cents, reducing plastic checkout usage by more than 95 percent, as precedent.<sup>19</sup>

Yet there are some cities that have gone even farther in their restriction of single-use plastics. Although Capitola does not ban produce/pre-checkout bags, it notably redefined the thickness of a reusable bag as equal or exceeding 4 mils, instead of 2.25 mils.<sup>20</sup> This means that any carryout bag provided by a retailer in the city is more durable than those considered multi-use by the state of California.

New York State recently introduced a plastic bag reduction ordinance that provides a number of precedents for a potential Berkeley ordinance. It bans “the provision of plastic carryout bags at any point of sale.”<sup>21</sup> It exempts compostable bag and *non*-film plastic bags and does away with any distinction between reusable and non-reusable film bags based on their thickness. Where the New York ban falls short is in its regulation of non-checkout bags: bags for produce, meat, newspapers, take-out food and garments remain legal.

Given the progress many cities and states have made in regulating plastic bags, Berkeley has many examples to emulate.

### Past Efforts in Berkeley

<sup>16</sup> San Francisco Municipal Code Chapter 17: Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance, [http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/California/environment/chapter17plasticbagreductionordinance?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:sanfrancisco\\_ca](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/California/environment/chapter17plasticbagreductionordinance?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:sanfrancisco_ca).

<sup>17</sup> San Francisco Municipal Code, “Ordinance amending the Environment Code,” <https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/o0172-19.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Isabela Agnus, “San Francisco bumps bag fee up to 25 cents,” <https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/SF-bumps-bag-fee-25-cents-plastic-produce-ban-14102908.php>.

<sup>19</sup> Republic of Ireland Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment, “Plastic Bags,” <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/environment/topics/waste/litter/plastic-bags/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>20</sup> Capitola Municipal Code Chapter 8.07: Single-use Plastic and Paper Carryout Bag Reduction, <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Capitola/#!/Capitola08/Capitola0807.html#8.07>.

<sup>21</sup> New York State Governor’s Office, “An act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to prohibiting plastic carryout bags,” <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/PlasticBagBan.pdf>.

Berkeley attempted to pass its own plastic bag ban in 2010.<sup>22</sup> In the years following councilmembers have pushed for reform, calling for an ordinance to improve upon county and state legislation.<sup>23</sup> Yet the threat of lawsuits<sup>24</sup> and movement on the state and county level appear to have delayed local reform.

### The Proposed Ordinance

This proposed ordinance picks up where prior attempts failed, bringing Berkeley on par with many of its neighbors in tightening restrictions on plastic bag sales. On some points, this ordinance ensures that the City again becomes a leader in environmental regulation. The following details the key changes that close loopholes in state and local law:

- Plastic bag regulations would now apply to a number of retail service establishments previously omitted from the state ban. Restaurants and food vendors would no longer be able to distribute single-use plastic carryout bags. Grocery stores and other retailers selling prepared food would be required to move away from single-use plastic produce bags.
- Retail service establishments of all sizes would be included, closing exemptions for smaller stores.
- Reusable plastic bags would be redefined as non-film plastic bags, adjusting the criteria to more accurately reflect common perceptions of reusability and the tendency for consumers treat all film bags as disposable, regardless of thickness.
- The price per non-plastic bag increases from \$0.10 to \$.25, to avoid a substitution effect.

The most common concern in reducing plastic bag waste is that the alternatives are even less sustainable. Substituting paper bags for plastic could be equally, if not more, hazardous for the environment because of the energy, transport and disposal processes required.<sup>25</sup> Cloth bags are also imperfect options, because of the large amount of energy and water necessary to produce them.<sup>26</sup> The California ban on bags thinner than 2.25

<sup>22</sup> Berkeley City Council, "Berkeley Bag Reduction Ordinance," [https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public\\_Works/Level\\_3\\_-\\_Solid\\_Waste/BagReductionDraftOrdinance.100316.pdf](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Solid_Waste/BagReductionDraftOrdinance.100316.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Kriss Worthington, "Adopt Expanded Single Use Plastic Bag Ban/Paper Bag Fee Ordinance," [https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Clerk/Level\\_3\\_-\\_City\\_Council/2012/01Jan/2012-01-31\\_Item\\_25\\_Adopt\\_Expanded\\_Single\\_Use\\_Plastic\\_Bag.pdf](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Clerk/Level_3_-_City_Council/2012/01Jan/2012-01-31_Item_25_Adopt_Expanded_Single_Use_Plastic_Bag.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Doug Oakley, "Berkeley's plan for plastic bag ban part of larger movement," <https://www.mercurynews.com/2009/12/23/berkeleys-plan-for-plastic-bag-ban-part-of-larger-movement/>.

<sup>25</sup> The Environmental Literacy Council, "Paper or Plastic?" <https://enviroliteracy.org/environment-society/life-cycle-analysis/paper-or-plastic/>.

<sup>26</sup> Patrick Barkham, "Paper bags or plastic bags: which are best?" <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/shortcuts/2011/dec/20/paper-plastic-bags-which-best>.

mils may also have resulted in a substitution toward thicker and less sustainable film bags.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, international studies confirm that even single-use bags are reused to a limited degree for other household functions, such as garbage disposal or to pick up dog feces.<sup>28</sup> A University of Sydney economist found that garbage bag consumption increased when California placed restrictions on single-use plastic bags, likely because consumers no longer had as many free single-use film bags at hand in which to dispose their waste. Yet that same study also concluded that the benefits of the ban were still significant: Californians consumed 28 million pounds fewer plastic than they did before.<sup>29</sup>

Still, eliminating plastic bags cannot be the only approach to combat the cycle of consumer waste. It must come, as this ordinance would ensure, in combination with higher prices and greater requirements for the percentage of recycled content in paper bags. Any paper bags sold in Berkeley must per this resolution contain no old growth fiber, be 100% recyclable overall and contain a minimum of 40% post-consumer recycled content.

Data from Alameda County as a whole seems to indicate that when the cost of single-use paper bags was set at \$0.10, consumption *decreased* by approximately 40% within three years.<sup>30</sup> The same report revealed that “plastic bags found in storm drains decreased by 44 percent, indicating that the ordinance has been successful in reducing single use plastic bag litter.” Further price increases have been shown to realize even larger benefits.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff or contractor costs for the launch, for outreach and education, enforcement, administration and analysis.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Reducing the amount of discarded plastic bags—previously classified as multi-use—in the city of Berkeley will result in less over all waste and fewer plastic that makes it into local and regional waterways.

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<sup>27</sup> Christian Britschgi, “California Plastic Bag Bans Spur 120 Percent Increase in Sales of Thicker Plastic Garbage Bags,” <https://reason.com/2019/04/11/california-plastic-bag-bans-spur-120-per/>.

<sup>28</sup> NPR Planet Money, “Are Plastic Bag Bans Garbage?” <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2019/04/09/711181385/are-plastic-bag-bans-garbage>.

<sup>29</sup> Rebecca L.C. Taylor, “Bag leakage: The effect of disposable carryout bag regulations on unregulated bags,” <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0095069618305291>.

<sup>30</sup> Alameda County Waste Management Authority, “Addendum to the Final Environmental Impact Report Mandatory Recycling and Single Use Bag Reduction Ordinances,” <http://reusablebagsac.org/resources/addendum-final-environmental-impact-report-2016>.



Furthermore, a switch toward bags made from polyester or plastics like polypropylene, which are more sustainable than film bags and sold at many grocery stores will lead to greater environmental sustainability.<sup>31</sup>

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Kate Harrison, Council District 4, (510) 981-7140

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<sup>31</sup> Claire Thompson, "Paper, Plastic or Reusable?" [https://stanfordmag.org/contents/paper-plastic-or-reusable?utm\\_source=npr\\_newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=20190408&utm\\_campaign=money&utm\\_term=nprnews](https://stanfordmag.org/contents/paper-plastic-or-reusable?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20190408&utm_campaign=money&utm_term=nprnews).

ORDINANCE NO. –N.S.

ADDING CHAPTER 11.62 TO THE BERKELEY MUNICIPAL CODE TO REGULATE PLASTIC BAGS AT RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Berkeley as follows:

Section 1. That Chapter 11.62 of the Berkeley Municipal Code is added to read as follows:

**Chapter 11.62**

**PLASTIC BAGS - RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS**

**Sections:**

**11.62.010 Findings and Purpose.**

**11.62.020 Definitions.**

**11.62.030 Types of Checkout Bags permitted at Retail Service and Food Service Establishments.**

**11.62.040 Checkout Bag charge for paper or Reusable Checkout Bags at Retail Service establishments.**

**11.62.050 Use of Compostable Produce Bags at Retail Service Establishments.**

**11.62.060 Hardship Exemption**

**11.62.070 Duties, responsibilities and authority of the City of Berkeley.**

**11.62.080 City of Berkeley--purchases prohibited**

**11.62.090 Liability and Enforcement.**

**11.62.100 Severability.**

**11.62.110 Construction.**

**11.62.120 Chapter supersedes existing laws and regulations.**

**11.62.130 Effective Date.**

### **11.62.010 Findings and Purpose.**

The Council of the City of Berkeley finds and declares as follows:

- A. Single-use plastic bags, plastic produce bags, and plastic product bags are a major contributor to street litter, ocean pollution, marine and other wildlife harm and greenhouse gas emissions.
- B. The production, consumption and disposal of plastic based bags contribute significantly to the depletion of natural resources. Plastics in waterways and oceans break down into smaller pieces that are not biodegradable, and present a great harm to global environment.
- C. Among other hazards, plastic debris attracts and concentrates ambient pollutants in seawater and freshwater, which can transfer to fish, other seafood and salt that is eventually sold for human consumption. Certain plastic bags can also contain microplastics that present a great harm to our seawater and freshwater life, which implicitly presents a threat to human life.
- D. It is in the interest of the health, safety and welfare of all who live, work and do business in the City that the amount of litter on public streets, parks and in other public places be reduced.
- E. The City of Berkeley must eliminate solid waste at its source and maximize recycling and composting in accordance with its Zero Waste Goals. Reduction of plastic bag waste furthers this goal.
- F. The State of California regulates single-use carryout bags as directed under Senate Bill 270, but numerous local governments, including San Francisco and Palo Alto, have imposed more stringent regulations to reduce the toll plastic bags inflict upon the environment.
- G. Stores often provide customers with plastic pre-checkout bags to package fruits, vegetables, and other loose or bulky items while shopping, before reaching the checkout area. They share many of the same physical qualities as single-use plastic carryout bags no longer permitted in California, and are difficult to recycle or reuse.
- H. SB 270 permits local governments to increase the price of bags provided at the point of sale and leaves open any regulation on pre-checkout bags, such as at meat or vegetable stands within grocery stores.
- I. The City of Berkeley regulates a number of disposable plastic items through the Single-Use Foodware and Litter Reduction Ordinance (Ord. 7639-NS § 1 (part), 2019), but does not impose regulations on bags.
- J. This Chapter is consistent with the City of Berkeley's 2009 Climate Action Plan, the County of Alameda Integrated Waste Management Plan, as amended, and the CalRecycle recycling and waste disposal regulations contained in Titles 14 and 27 of the California Code of Regulations.

### **11.62.20 Definitions.**

"Checkout Bag" means a bag provided by a Retail Service Establishment at the checkstand, cash register, point of sale or other point of departure for the purpose of transporting food or merchandise out of the establishment. Checkout Bags do not include Produce Bags or Product Bags.

"Recyclable Paper Checkout Bag" means a paper bag that meets the following criteria:

- 1. Contains no old growth fiber;
- 2. Is 100% recyclable overall and contains a minimum of 40% post-consumer recycled content;
- 3. Displays the word "Recyclable" on the outside of the bag along with the manufacturer, the location (country) where manufactured and the percentage of post-consumer recycled content in an easy-to-read size font;

4. Or is made from alternative material or meets alternative standards approved by the City Manager or their designee.

"Reusable Checkout Bag" means all Checkout Bags defined as reusable under Cal. PRC §42280-42288, such as cloth or other washable woven bags, but do not include film bags considered reusable under Cal. PRC §42280-42288.

"Produce Bag" means a bag provided to a customer to carry produce, meats, bulk food, or other food items to the point of sale inside a store and protects food or merchandise from being damaged or contaminated by other food or merchandise when items are placed together in a Reusable Checkout Bag or Recyclable Paper Checkout Bag.

"Compostable Produce Bags" means paper bags and bags made of plastic-like material if the material meets the ASTM Standard Specifications for compostability D6400 or D6868, or the product is Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified, or is considered acceptable within the City's compost collection program.

"Product Bag" means a bag provided to a customer to protect merchandise from being damaged or contaminated by other merchandise when items are placed together in a Reusable Checkout Bag or Recyclable Paper Checkout Bag; a bag to hold prescription medication dispensed from a pharmacy; or a bag without handles that is designed to be placed over articles of clothing on a hanger.

"Retail Food Establishment" means any establishment, located or providing food within the City, which provides prepared and ready-to-consume food or beverages, for public consumption including but not limited to any Retail Service Establishment, eating and drinking service, takeout service, supermarket, delicatessen, restaurant, food vendor, sales outlet, shop, cafeteria, catering truck or vehicle, cart or other sidewalk or outdoor vendor or caterer which provides prepared and ready-to-consume food or beverages, for public consumption, whether open to the general public or limited to certain members of the public (e.g., company cafeteria for employees).

"Retail Service Establishment" means a for-profit or not-for-profit business that where goods, wares or merchandise or services are sold for any purpose other than resale in the regular course of business (BMC Chapter 9.04.135).

#### **11.62.030 Types of Checkout Bags permitted at Retail Service and Food Service Establishments.**

A. Retail Service Establishments and Food Service Establishments shall provide or make available to a customer only Reusable Checkout Bags, Compostable Produce Bags, or Recyclable Paper Checkout Bags for the purpose of carrying away goods or other materials from the point of sale, subject to the terms of this Chapter.

1. Exception: Single-use plastic bags exempt from the Chapter include those integral to the packaging of the product, Product Bags, or bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage, pet waste or yard waste bags.

B. Effective [ ], 2020, farmers markets shall only provide Compostable Produce Bags to hold produce, meats, bulk food or other food items. Single-use Plastic Checkout Bags, Produce Bags or Product Bags shall not be provided by farmers markets for produce or meat.

- C. Nothing in this Chapter prohibits customers from using bags of any type that they bring to the establishment themselves or from carrying away goods that are not placed in a bag at point of sale, in lieu of using bags provided by the establishment.

**11.62.040 Checkout Bag charge for paper or Reusable Checkout Bags at Retail Service Establishments.**

- A. Effective [ ], 2020, no Retail Service Establishment shall provide a Compostable Produce Bag, Recyclable Paper Checkout Bag or Reusable Checkout Bag to a customer at the point of sale, unless the store charges the customer a Checkout Bag charge of at least twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per bag to cover the costs of compliance with the Chapter, the actual costs of providing Recyclable Paper Checkout Bags, educational materials or other costs of promoting the use of Reusable Checkout Bags.
- B. Retail Service Establishments shall establish a system for informing the customer of the charge required under this section prior to completing the transaction. This system can include store clerks inquiring whether customers who do not present their own Reusable Checkout Bag at point of checkout want to purchase a Checkout Bag.
- C. The Checkout Bag charge shall be separately stated on the receipt provided to the customer at the time of sale and shall be identified as the Checkout Bag charge. Any other transaction fee charged by the Retail Service Establishment in relation to providing a Checkout Bag shall be identified separately from the checkout bag charge. The Checkout Bag charge may be completely retained by the Retail Service Establishment and used for public education and administrative enforcement costs.
- D. Retail services establishments shall keep complete and accurate records of the number and dollar amount collected from Recyclable Paper Checkout Bags and Reusable Checkout Bags sold each month and provide specifications demonstrating that paper and reusable bags meet the standards set forth in Section 11.62.030 using either the electronic or paper reporting format required by the city. This information is required to be made available to city staff upon request up to three times annually and must be provided within seven days of request. Reporting false information, including information derived from incomplete or inaccurate records or documents, shall be a violation of the Chapter. Records submitted to the city must be signed by a responsible agent or officer of the establishment attesting that the information provided on the form is accurate and complete.

**11.62.050 Use of Compostable Produce Bags at Retail Service Establishments.**

Effective [ ], 2020, Retail Service Establishments shall only provide Compostable Produce Bags to carry produce, meats, bulk food, or other food items to point of sale within the store.

**11.62.060 Hardship Exemption.**

- A. Undue hardship. The City Manager, or their designee, may exempt a retail service or food service establishment from the requirements of this Chapter for a period of up to one year, upon sufficient evidence by the applicant that the provisions of this Chapter would cause undue hardship. An undue hardship request must be submitted in writing to the city. The phrase "undue hardship" may include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - 1. Situations where there are no acceptable alternatives to single-use plastic Checkout Bags for reasons which are unique to the Retail Service Establishment or Food Service Establishment.

2. Situations where compliance with the requirements of this Chapter would deprive a person of a legally protected right.
- B. Retail Service Establishments shall not enforce the ten cent (\$0.25) store charge for customers participating in the California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or in CalFresh, or in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

**11.62.070 Duties, responsibilities and authority of the City of Berkeley.**

The City Manager or their designee shall prescribe, adopt, and enforce rules and regulations relating to the administration and enforcement of this Chapter and is hereby authorized to take any and all actions reasonable and necessary to enforce this Chapter including, but not limited to, inspecting any Retail Service Establishment's premises to verify compliance.

**11.62.080 City of Berkeley—purchases prohibited.**

The City of Berkeley shall not purchase any Foodware or Bag that is not Compostable, Recyclable or Reusable under Disposable Foodware and Bag Standards in Section 11.64.080, nor shall any City-sponsored event utilize non-compliant Disposable Foodware and Bag.

**11.62.090 Liability and Enforcement.**

- A. Anyone violating or failing to comply with any requirement of this Chapter may be subject to an Administrative Citation pursuant to Chapter 1.28 or charged with an infraction as set forth in Chapter 1.20 of the Berkeley Municipal Code; however, no administrative citation may be issued or infraction charged for violation of a requirement of this Chapter until one year after the effective date of such requirement.
- B. Enforcement shall include written notice of noncompliance and a reasonable opportunity to correct or to demonstrate initiation of a request for a waiver or waivers pursuant to Section 11.64.090.
- C. The City Attorney may seek legal, injunctive, or other equitable relief to enforce this Chapter.
- D. The remedies and penalties provided in this section are cumulative and not exclusive.

**11.62.100 Severability.**

If any word, phrase, sentence, part, section, subsection, or other portion of this Chapter, or any application thereof to any person or circumstance is declared void, unconstitutional, or invalid for any reason, then such word, phrase, sentence, part, section, subsection, or other portion, or the prescribed application thereof, shall be severable, and the remaining provisions of this Chapter, and all applications thereof, not having been declared void, unconstitutional or invalid, shall remain in full force and effect. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this title, and each section, subsection, sentence, clause and phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases had been declared invalid or unconstitutional.

**11.62.110 Construction.**

This Chapter is intended to be a proper exercise of the City's police power, to operate only upon its own officers, agents, employees and facilities and other persons acting within its boundaries, and not to regulate inter-city or interstate commerce. It shall be construed in accordance with that intent.

**11.62.120 Chapter supersedes existing laws and regulations.**

The provisions of this Chapter shall supersede any conflicting law or regulations.

**11.62.130 Effective Date.**

The provisions in this ordinance are effective [ ], 2020.

Section 2. Copies of this Ordinance shall be posted for two days prior to adoption in the display case located near the walkway in front of the Maudelle Shirek Building, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Within 15 days of adoption, copies of this Ordinance shall be filed at each branch of the Berkeley Public Library and the title shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation.







Kate Harrison  
Councilmember District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR  
March 9, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Harrison

Subject: Refer to the City Manager to Prioritize Establishment of Impact/Mitigation Fees to Address Disproportionate Private and Public Utility Impact to the Public Right of Way

RECOMMENDATION

In order to ensure equitable support of the public right of way by private and public entities that use City facilities, refer to the City Manager and City Attorney to prioritize the following in consultation with the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment, & Sustainability Committee:

1. establish impact and/or mitigation fees to address disproportionate private impacts to the public right of way, such as our roads and utility poles; and
2. establish transfers between sewer, waste, or other utilities as appropriate to address impacts to the public right of way.

BACKGROUND

A Metropolitan Transportation Commission report warns that Berkeley's overall paving condition is "At Risk," meaning on the cusp of falling into "Failing" category.<sup>1</sup> The current five-year paving plan is the result of historic deferred maintenance and an underfunded, imperfect and complex balance between arterial, collector and residential streets distributed across Council districts. The City's bicycle, pedestrian and Vision Zero projects are severely underfunded. Meanwhile, neighboring cities in the Bay Area, such as Richmond, El Cerrito, San Francisco have "Excellent/Very Good" to "Fair/Good" streets conditions.

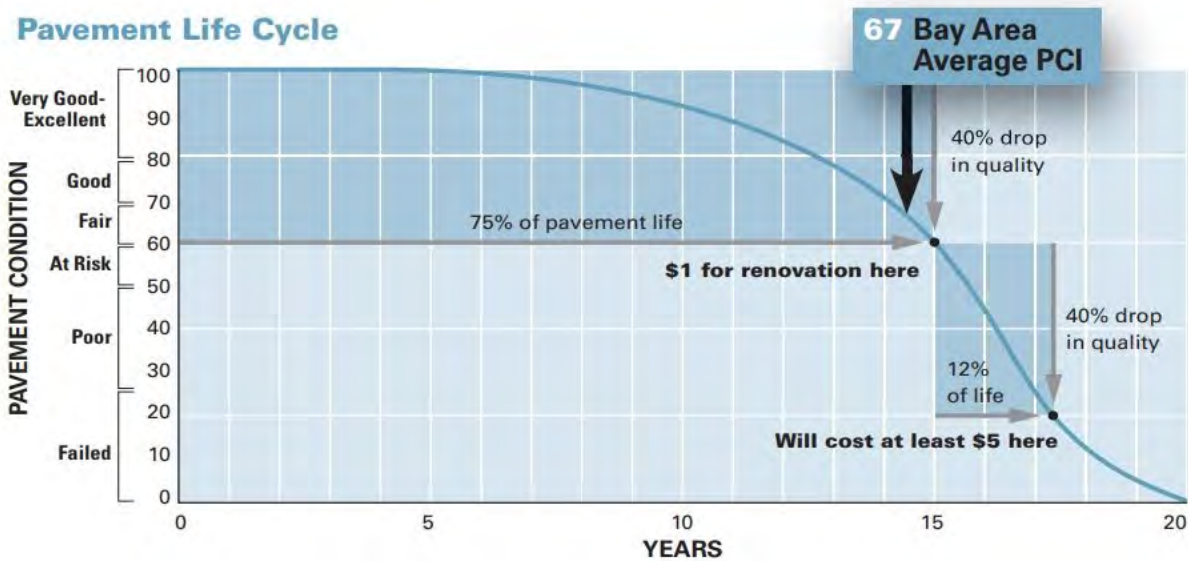
Critically, maintenance of the public right of way has been underfunded due to (1) historic lack of impact/mitigation fees levied against private corporations who

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<sup>1</sup> "The Pothole Report: Bay Area Roads At Risk," Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission, September 2018, [https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/Pothole%20Report%20III\\_September%202018.pdf](https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/Pothole%20Report%20III_September%202018.pdf)

disproportionally cause negative impacts to Berkeley’s streets and (2) an absence of transfers from public utility ratepayers to the Berkeley Public Works Department to mitigate utility-related damage to the right of way. The public right of way is key part of the City’s “commons,” a public resource that is available to all community members and to be managed for the collective benefit. As learned during recent FITES hearings, it appears that certain private actor and public utilities have not been paying their fair share to address their disproportionate impact on the condition of Berkeley’s right of way.

The Public Works Department has advised that ongoing funding under the rolling 5-Year Street Plan will not be enough to stabilize Berkeley’s streets. In fact, if street investment is not increased, Public Works warns that the City could face \$1 billion in future repair costs as the cost of deferred paving maintenance increases exponentially each year.



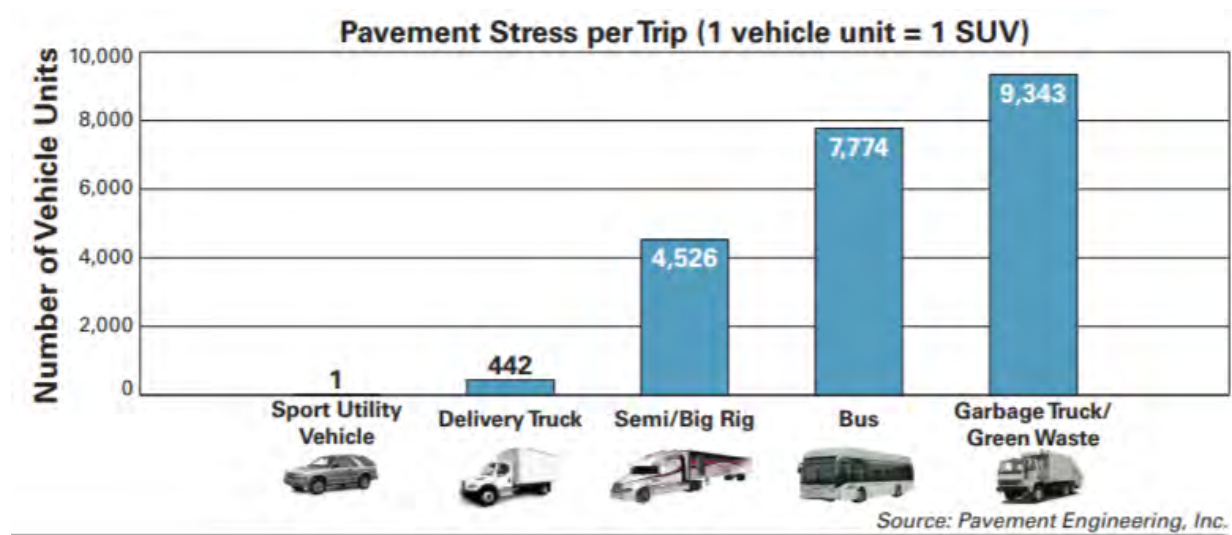
Since January 2020, the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment, & Sustainability (FITES) Committee has been working with the Public Works Department and Public Works Commission to explore funding opportunities to enhance the Paving Condition Index (PCI) of Berkeley’s streets. In addition, it has been reviewing the City’s Paving Policy, which was last updated in 2009, and has been working to develop a Paving Master Plan.

To stabilize street conditions, the City will likely need to pursue a combination of investment strategies ranging from increasing General Fund allocations, initiating

transfers from waste, sewer and other utility accounts, initiating impact/mitigation fees in response to heavy private vehicle use and potentially issuing bonds. However, before going to the voters for new bonds, who already pay significant sales, property and other taxes, which contribute to paving maintenance, it is critical that the Council exhaust all equitable alternatives, including leveraging the proceeds of new fees and transfers from private corporations and public utilities who contribute disproportionately to the deterioration of Berkeley’s streets and greenhouse gas emissions.

The current 2009 Paving Plan, which is being revised by the Public Works Commission, Public Works Department and the FITES Committee, explicitly specifies that “fees [may be] assessed to mitigate for excessive deterioration on and wear and tear of streets resulting from construction activities, public or private, shall be used for street rehabilitation.”<sup>2</sup> However, the FITES Committee has not been able to identify historical evidence of such fee being levied upon private users for such excessive deterioration.

During hearings on the paving policy, the FITES Committee has learned that large private vehicles such as delivery trucks, big rigs, private buses and construction vehicles contributed heavily to excessive deterioration. The same is true for vehicles acting on behalf of public utilities, such as AC Transit, the City’s Sanitary Sewer Program, Recology waste services, and gas, electric and telecommunications utilities.



<sup>2</sup> “City of Berkeley Street Rehabilitation and Repair Policy,” Public Works Department, March 2009, [https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Public\\_Works/Sidewalks-Streets-Utility/Street\\_Rehabilitation\\_and\\_Repair\\_Policy\\_updated\\_March\\_2009.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Public_Works/Sidewalks-Streets-Utility/Street_Rehabilitation_and_Repair_Policy_updated_March_2009.aspx)

Refer to the City Manager to Prioritize Establishment of Impact/Mitigation Fees to Address Disproportionate Private and Public Utility Impact to the Public Right of Way

CONSENT CALENDAR  
March 9, 2021

Public Works staff indicate that transfers could bring in approximately \$1 million per year in additional paving funding, but more research will need to be done to calculate potential revenue from impact fees.

It is in the public interest to ensure an equitable and rapid as possible assessment of such private and public actors for the purpose of providing supplemental funding to Berkeley's Street Repair Program.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The item would require staff time to develop potential fees and transfers, however it could potentially offset and supplemental millions of dollars in existing City paving funding.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Supporting low-carbon asphalt alternatives and building bicycle and alternative mobility infrastructure will compliment and accelerate Berkeley's ongoing efforts to reduce carbon emissions at an emergency and equitable pace in line with the Climate Action Plan and Climate Emergency Declaration.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Kate Harrison, Council District 4, 510-981-7140