

DISASTER AND FIRE SAFETY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

October 29, 2025

7:00 PM

Fire Department Division of Training Classroom – 997 Cedar Street

Mayor's Appointee- Andy Katz

District 1 – Michael Wilson
District 2 – Weldon Bradstreet
District 3 – Todd Darling
District 4 – Robert Kinosian

District 5 – Shirley Dean
District 6 – Greg Murphy*
District 7 – Taj Herzer-Baptiste
District 8 – Theo Gordon**

AGENDA

Preliminary Matters

Public Present

Approval of the Agenda

Discussion –

Agenda approved as amended by Acclamation or Vote?

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters

Public speakers:

1. Chairperson's Report
2. Fire Department Staff Report

REGULAR AGENDA MATTERS *All Regular Agenda Matters are for discussion and possible action.*

- 3. Action/Discussion:** Minutes of September 17, 2025

Recommendation: Approve the draft minutes of the September 17, 2025 Regular meeting.

Written Material: DFSC 9/17/25 Regular Meeting Minutes

4. Action/Discussion: Adding Permanent Vegetation Removal in Fire Zone Zero as eligible for the transfer tax rebate for wildfire hardening.(Murphy)

Recommendation: Amend Ordinance 7.52.5060 to add eligibility for the TRR for permanent vegetation removal within 5' of the perimeter of properties in high-risk fire zones as required in the EMBER ordinance for Fire Zones 3 and 4 consisting of heavy woody vegetation of established shrubs, brush, or woody plants exceeding two feet in height or width that cannot be removed with standard hand tools (hand pruners, loppers, or hand saws).

Written Material: Permanent Vegetation Removal Draft

5. Action/Discussion: Draft Update to the Bike Plan (Wilson)

Recommendation: Direct staff to modify and revise the Draft Update to the Bike Plan dated July 29, 2025, to accommodate recommendations presented to Council from the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission (TIC) on Sept. 18, 2025, and to take into consideration additional recommendations from the DFSC noted in the attached document.

Written Material: Draft Update to the Bike Plan

6. Work Group Reports

Receive reporting on recent activities by the following work groups:

- Plan & Budget Oversight
- Neighborhood Fire Resiliency
- Safe Passages
 - Evacuation Time Study Communication w/ staff
- Community Outreach
- Street Trauma Prevention Program

7. Future Agenda Items and Next Steps

-

Adjournment

This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953. Any member of the public may attend this meeting. Questions regarding this matter may be addressed to Keith May, kmay@berkeleyca.gov 510-981-5508. Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: E-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required but, if included in any communication to a City board, commission, or committee, will become part of the public record. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission, or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission, or committee for further information. Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at Berkeley Fire Department located at 2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Way Berkeley, CA.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION:

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair-accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

~~~~~  
 I hereby certify that the agenda for this regular/special meeting of the Berkeley City's Disaster and Fire Safety Commission was posted at the front of the Division of Training, 997 Cedar Street, as well as on the City's website, three days prior to the scheduled Commission meeting.

SECRETARY SIGNATURE

## DFSC Staff Report

October 29, 2025

1. Measure FF Monthly Report
  - a. Budget Overview –
  - b. Quarter 1 (July, August, September) report due in November  
Quarter 2 (October, November, December) report due in February  
Quarter 3 (January, February, March) report due in May  
Quarter 4 (April, May, June) End of Year Report due in **October**
    - i. Program Review
      - **WUI Interns** – The Interns provide Berkeley Fire Department with a trained, mobile and mission-specific workforce that is principally assigned to monitor vegetative hazardous fuel on or near structures, collect data, and identify reduction activities
        - **Updates:** The interns are conducting full access inspections, re-inspections, and delivery mesh to residnets.
      - **Wildfire Prevention / Mitigation – Vegetation Management Inspections** –
        - **Updates:** No new Updates.
        - **Safe Passage - The Fire Department has contracted with a vendor to help the City of Berkeley meet the requirements outlined in SB 99, AB 747, and AB 1409, provide City with professional services in the areas of traffic and evacuation modeling and planning, given various evacuation and/or emergency response scenarios as determined by the City.**
          - **Update:** No new updates.
2. Measure GG Monthly Report
  - a. Budget Overview – No new update
  - b. Quarter 1 (July, August, September) report due in November  
Quarter 2 (October, November, December) report due in February  
Quarter 3 (January, February, March) report due in May  
Quarter 4 (April, May, June) End of Year Report due in **October**
3. Fire Facilities Master Plan (FMP): Berkeley Fire Department stations are undersized, in poor condition and in need of remodels or replacement. The Department initiated a long-term replacement planning process to better understand infrastructure needs. This process will

provide the City leaders of today and tomorrow with actionable information ahead of future infrastructure bond measures. *(Measure FF has funded the study only)*

- a. **Update:** No new Updates.

4. Department Activities

- a. **114<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Academy:** We are moving forward with a new revised start date of February 2, 2026.
- b. **Fire HQ:** Crews continue to make fast progress on the job. The trenching for the main bathroom plumbing has been completed, and a lot of the walls are up.

5. Call Volume Report

| <b>Fire Department Report by California Incident Type</b>                                                                                                                                                   |     |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>September</b>                                                                                                                                                                                            |     |  |
| <b>Fires – including Encampment Fires</b><br>(structures, mobile properties, vegetation, rubbish, equipment, cooking, chimney,                                                                              | 39  |  |
| <b>Explosion</b> - no fire<br>(overpressure ruptures, explosions)                                                                                                                                           | 1   |  |
| <b>Rescue &amp; EMS</b> (medical assist, vehicle accident                                                                                                                                                   | 936 |  |
| <b>Hazardous Condition</b> - no fire<br>(combustible spills/leaks, chemical release, radioactive condition, electrical wiring problem, biological hazard, potential accident w/ building/aircraft/vehicles) | 54  |  |
| <b>Service Calls</b> (person in distress, water issue, smoke/odor problem, animal                                                                                                                           | 114 |  |

|                                                                                                 |              |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| issue, public assist, cover assignment/standby)                                                 |              |  |
| <b>Good Intent</b> (canceled en-route, wrong location, nothing found, steam mistaken for smoke) | 97           |  |
| <b>False Alarm Calls</b> (malicious, malfunction, unintentional, biohazard scare)               | 238          |  |
| <b>Severe WX</b> (lightening, wind storms)                                                      | 1            |  |
| <b>Special Incidents</b> (citizen complaints)                                                   | 3            |  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                    | <b>1,482</b> |  |
| <b>Apparatus Count</b>                                                                          |              |  |
|                                                                                                 | <b>3,255</b> |  |

**DFSC Action Tracker**

| Date of DFSC Action | Description                                                                                                                                                        | Status                                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>3/26/2025</b>    | Remove the 1-year pre-transfer eligibility restriction of the transfer tax rebate for wildfire hardening from BMC 7.52.060, to encourage early mitigation efforts. | Submitted for Council Agenda on 10/28/2025. |

# WILDLAND FIRE MITIGATION MONTHLY REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2025

Prepared by the SPP Division



## Program Data - Cumulative 2024-2025 (+/- current month)



### Grizzly Peak Project Clean-up Updates:

- Phase 1: Completed 4 miles
- Phase 2: Completed 3.24 miles
- Phase 3: Completed .85 miles
- **727.9 tons** of vegetation removed



### FireWise Application Status



**18** FireWise Communities    **3** Pending / In-Progress



### Home Hardening Mesh Program

Pick-ups and deliveries provided bi-weekly



**332 (+40)**

Applications



**137 (+8)**

Pickups



**109 (+24)**

Deliveries



### Eucalyptus Understory Program



**51 (+0)**

Applications



**31 (+0)**

Properties Completed



**156,698**

Total Spent



### Chipping Program



**5989.5 (+301.50)**

Cubic yards removed



**2006 (+132)**

Pickups



**50 (+3)**

Weeks Completed

## Defensible Space Inspections YTD (+/- current month)

**1166 (+117)**

Inspections

**45 (+5)**

Re-Inspections

**1482 (+264)**

Violations

**674 (+100)**

Discoveries

**789 (+165)**

Resolved Violations

**11 (+0)**

Total Citations

**241 (+8)**

Resolved Items

**6 (-3)**

Inspectors

## Right of Entry Agreement Program

50.9% + of our total inspections were full access.



**8713**

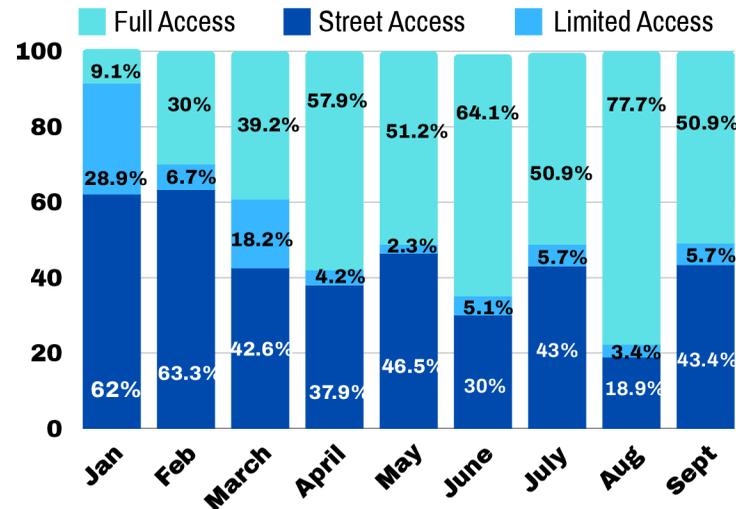
Invitations Sent



**508**

RoE's Signed

## Inspection Access %



## Announcements

### WUI Vegetation Code Workgroup

The group is focused on refining and strengthening the vegetation management section of the Fire Code to enhance wildfire prevention and public safety in Berkeley's very high fire hazard zones.

## EMBER Initiative Timeline

### Effective Mitigations for Berkeley's Ember Resilience (EMBER)

- Introduced EMBER- January 2025
- First Reading of the Ordinance- March 2025
- Council Meeting to Adopt the Resolution- April 15, 2025
- Public Hearing to Adopt the Code- June 17, 2025
- Education Campaign May – December 2025
- Increased Services and Support July 2025
- Enforcement by Inspection January 1, 2026
- Reduced Risk of Loss Zone 4 2026

ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY25/JUL TO EOY

FUND 140

ACCOUNT

| ACCOUNT NAME                                                          | BEG. BALANCE | DEBITS     | CREDITS  | NET CHANGE | END BALANCE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-511110-<br>WAGES - REG - MONTHLY MISC     | .00          | 12,931.97  | 462.71   | 12,469.26  | 12,469.26   |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-511170-<br>WAGES - REG - OTHER COMP       | .00          | 268.75     | .00      | 268.75     | 268.75      |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520110-<br>EMP FB - MEDICAL               | .00          | 3,337.71   | .00      | 3,337.71   | 3,337.71    |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520120-<br>EMP FB - DENTAL                | .00          | 227.15     | .00      | 227.15     | 227.15      |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520140-<br>EMP FB - LIFE INSURANCE        | .00          | 7.12       | .00      | 7.12       | 7.12        |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520210-<br>EMP FB - MEDICARE              | .00          | 176.59     | 6.20     | 170.39     | 170.39      |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520220-<br>EMP FB - SRIP                  | .00          | 293.72     | .80      | 292.92     | 292.92      |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520310-<br>EMP FB - PERS - MISC           | .00          | 4,922.78   | 300.51   | 4,622.27   | 4,622.27    |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520410-<br>EMP FB - OPEB - RETIREE MEDICA | .00          | 258.60     | 9.25     | 249.35     | 249.35      |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520520-<br>EMP FB - TERMINAL PAYOUT       | .00          | 245.70     | 8.79     | 236.91     | 236.91      |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520540-<br>EMP FB - COMMUTER CHECK        | .00          | 125.07     | 4.62     | 120.45     | 120.45      |
| 140-33-324-341-0000-000-412-520550-<br>EMP FB - OTHER FRINGE BENEFITS | .00          | 207.37     | 7.45     | 199.92     | 199.92      |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-511110-<br>WAGES - REG - MONTHLY MISC     | .00          | 118,477.48 | 5,129.77 | 113,347.71 | 113,347.71  |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-511170-<br>WAGES - REG - OTHER COMP       | .00          | 2,325.00   | .00      | 2,325.00   | 2,325.00    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520110-<br>EMP FB - MEDICAL               | .00          | 30,421.41  | 297.08   | 30,124.33  | 30,124.33   |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520120-<br>EMP FB - DENTAL                | .00          | 2,378.22   | 45.99    | 2,332.23   | 2,332.23    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520140-<br>EMP FB - LIFE INSURANCE        | .00          | 71.07      | .00      | 71.07      | 71.07       |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520210-<br>EMP FB - MEDICARE              | .00          | 1,641.61   | 79.74    | 1,561.87   | 1,561.87    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520220-<br>EMP FB - SRIP                  | .00          | 3,043.65   | 8.00     | 3,035.65   | 3,035.65    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520310-<br>EMP FB - PERS - MISC           | .00          | 41,518.47  | 2,847.79 | 38,670.68  | 38,670.68   |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520410-<br>EMP FB - OPEB - RETIREE MEDICA | .00          | 3,052.41   | 151.12   | 2,901.29   | 2,901.29    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520520-<br>EMP FB - TERMINAL PAYOUT       | .00          | 2,169.12   | 94.56    | 2,074.56   | 2,074.56    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520540-<br>EMP FB - COMMUTER CHECK        | .00          | 1,020.69   | 39.42    | 981.27     | 981.27      |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-520550-<br>EMP FB - OTHER FRINGE BENEFITS | .00          | 1,827.40   | 81.27    | 1,746.13   | 1,746.13    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-625110-<br>RENTAL OF REAL PROPERTY        | .00          | 3,964.00   | .00      | 3,964.00   | 3,964.00    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-632120-<br>COMM SVCS - TELE - CELLULAR    | .00          | 1,264.32   | .00      | 1,264.32   | 1,264.32    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-634120-                                   |              |            |          |            |             |

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY25/JUL TO EOY**

FUND 140

ACCOUNT

| ACCOUNT NAME                        | BEG. BALANCE | DEBITS       | CREDITS    | NET CHANGE   | END BALANCE  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| TRAIN AND CONF - REGISTRATION       | .00          | 850.00       | .00        | 850.00       | 850.00       |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-634210- |              |              |            |              |              |
| TRAVEL - AIRFARE                    | .00          | 645.94       | .00        | 645.94       | 645.94       |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-634220- |              |              |            |              |              |
| TRAVEL - LODGING                    | .00          | 1,280.98     | .00        | 1,280.98     | 1,280.98     |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-634230- |              |              |            |              |              |
| TRAVEL - OTHER TRANSPORTATION       | .00          | 128.38       | .00        | 128.38       | 128.38       |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-634240- |              |              |            |              |              |
| TRAVEL - MEALS                      | .00          | 204.00       | .00        | 204.00       | 204.00       |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-641110- |              |              |            |              |              |
| SUPPLIES - OFFICE                   | .00          | 185.21       | .00        | 185.21       | 185.21       |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-642990- |              |              |            |              |              |
| SUPPL - FIELD - OTHER               | .00          | 30,133.87    | .00        | 30,133.87    | 30,133.87    |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-644110- |              |              |            |              |              |
| SUPPLIES - FOOD - NON-EMPLOYEE      | .00          | 400.37       | .00        | 400.37       | 400.37       |
| 140-51-506-557-2049-000-451-651110- |              |              |            |              |              |
| NON-CAP - COMP, SOFTWARE & OFE      | .00          | 805.96       | .00        | 805.96       | 805.96       |
| 140-54-624-694-3017-000-412-612990- |              |              |            |              |              |
| PROF SVCS - MISCELLANEOUS           | .00          | 367,200.00   | .00        | 367,200.00   | 367,200.00   |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-511170- |              |              |            |              |              |
| WAGES - REG - OTHER COMP            | .00          | 3,000.00     | .00        | 3,000.00     | 3,000.00     |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-513110- |              |              |            |              |              |
| WAGES - OT - MISCELLANEOUS          | .00          | 2,078,624.85 | 206,495.09 | 1,872,129.76 | 1,872,129.76 |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-520140- |              |              |            |              |              |
| EMP FB - LIFE INSURANCE             | .00          | 44.93        | .00        | 44.93        | 44.93        |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-520210- |              |              |            |              |              |
| EMP FB - MEDICARE                   | .00          | 29,832.08    | 2,962.64   | 26,869.44    | 26,869.44    |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-520220- |              |              |            |              |              |
| EMP FB - SRIP                       | .00          | 4,384.65     | .00        | 4,384.65     | 4,384.65     |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-520340- |              |              |            |              |              |
| EMP FB - PERS - FIRE                | .00          | 1,757.50     | 195.17     | 1,562.33     | 1,562.33     |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-520410- |              |              |            |              |              |
| EMP FB - OPEB - RETIREE MEDICA      | .00          | 6,868.60     | 1,500.72   | 5,367.88     | 5,367.88     |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-625120- |              |              |            |              |              |
| RENTAL OF EQUIPMENT                 | .00          | 252,646.08   | .00        | 252,646.08   | 252,646.08   |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-632120- |              |              |            |              |              |
| COMM SVCS - TELE - CELLULAR         | .00          | 5,227.25     | .00        | 5,227.25     | 5,227.25     |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-634120- |              |              |            |              |              |
| TRAIN AND CONF - REGISTRATION       | .00          | 3,494.00     | .00        | 3,494.00     | 3,494.00     |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-634220- |              |              |            |              |              |
| TRAVEL - LODGING                    | .00          | 1,305.03     | .00        | 1,305.03     | 1,305.03     |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-634230- |              |              |            |              |              |
| TRAVEL - OTHER TRANSPORTATION       | .00          | 312.74       | .00        | 312.74       | 312.74       |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-634240- |              |              |            |              |              |
| TRAVEL - MEALS                      | .00          | 190.00       | .00        | 190.00       | 190.00       |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-642990- |              |              |            |              |              |
| SUPPL - FIELD - OTHER               | .00          | 78.26        | .00        | 78.26        | 78.26        |
| 140-72-742-835-0000-000-422-651110- |              |              |            |              |              |
| NON-CAP - COMP, SOFTWARE & OFE      | .00          | 8,633.45     | .00        | 8,633.45     | 8,633.45     |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-511130- |              |              |            |              |              |
| WAGES - REG - FIRE                  | .00          | 220,738.80   | 8,643.39   | 212,095.41   | 212,095.41   |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-513110- |              |              |            |              |              |
| WAGES - OT - MISCELLANEOUS          | .00          | 12,397.75    | .00        | 12,397.75    | 12,397.75    |

ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY25/JUL TO EOY

FUND 140

ACCOUNT

| ACCOUNT NAME                                                      | BEG. BALANCE | DEBITS     | CREDITS   | NET CHANGE | END BALANCE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520120-EMP FB - DENTAL                | .00          | 2,055.76   | .00       | 2,055.76   | 2,055.76    |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520130-EMP FB - CASH-IN-LIEU          | .00          | 7,005.71   | 258.80    | 6,746.91   | 6,746.91    |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520140-EMP FB - LIFE INSURANCE        | .00          | 110.18     | .00       | 110.18     | 110.18      |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520210-EMP FB - MEDICARE              | .00          | 3,132.69   | 116.00    | 3,016.69   | 3,016.69    |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520220-EMP FB - SRIP                  | .00          | 2,488.36   | 11.04     | 2,477.32   | 2,477.32    |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520340-EMP FB - PERS - FIRE           | .00          | 129,362.79 | 18,668.66 | 110,694.13 | 110,694.13  |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520410-EMP FB - OPEB - RETIREE MEDICA | .00          | 14,481.33  | 536.42    | 13,944.91  | 13,944.91   |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520520-EMP FB - TERMINAL PAYOUT       | .00          | 6,883.87   | 239.29    | 6,644.58   | 6,644.58    |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520530-EMP FB - ALLOWANCES            | .00          | 1,457.72   | 53.85     | 1,403.87   | 1,403.87    |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520540-EMP FB - COMMUTER CHECK        | .00          | 250.12     | 9.24      | 240.88     | 240.88      |
| 140-72-742-836-0000-000-422-520550-EMP FB - OTHER FRINGE BENEFITS | .00          | 1,646.69   | 57.43     | 1,589.26   | 1,589.26    |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-511170-WAGES - REG - OTHER COMP       | .00          | 19,290.00  | .00       | 19,290.00  | 19,290.00   |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-513110-WAGES - OT - MISCELLANEOUS     | .00          | 995,979.22 | 66,652.95 | 929,326.27 | 929,326.27  |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-520140-EMP FB - LIFE INSURANCE        | .00          | 26.51      | .00       | 26.51      | 26.51       |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-520210-EMP FB - MEDICARE              | .00          | 14,693.27  | 965.30    | 13,727.97  | 13,727.97   |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-520220-EMP FB - SRIP                  | .00          | 2,637.34   | .00       | 2,637.34   | 2,637.34    |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-520340-EMP FB - PERS - FIRE           | .00          | 2,372.13   | 263.42    | 2,108.71   | 2,108.71    |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-520410-EMP FB - OPEB - RETIREE MEDICA | .00          | 3,708.37   | 685.00    | 3,023.37   | 3,023.37    |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-612410-PROF SVCS - PHYS AND MED PROF  | .00          | 73,333.15  | .00       | 73,333.15  | 73,333.15   |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-612990-PROF SVCS - MISCELLANEOUS      | .00          | 131,721.53 | .00       | 131,721.53 | 131,721.53  |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-634120-TRAIN AND CONF - REGISTRATION  | .00          | 269.00     | .00       | 269.00     | 269.00      |
| 140-72-742-837-0000-000-423-642990-SUPPL - FIELD - OTHER          | .00          | 79,127.22  | .00       | 79,127.22  | 79,127.22   |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-511110-WAGES - REG - MONTHLY MISC     | .00          | 399,401.98 | 14,249.64 | 385,152.34 | 385,152.34  |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-511130-WAGES - REG - FIRE             | .00          | 221,021.23 | 8,251.26  | 212,769.97 | 212,769.97  |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-511170-WAGES - REG - OTHER COMP       | .00          | 6,415.50   | .00       | 6,415.50   | 6,415.50    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-512110-WAGES - HOURLY                 | .00          | 28,154.83  | 768.89    | 27,385.94  | 27,385.94   |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-513110-                               |              |            |           |            |             |

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY25/JUL TO EOY**

FUND 140

ACCOUNT

| ACCOUNT NAME                                                      | BEG. BALANCE | DEBITS     | CREDITS   | NET CHANGE | END BALANCE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| WAGES - OT - MISCELLANEOUS                                        | .00          | 11,731.39  | 879.13    | 10,852.26  | 10,852.26   |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520110-EMP FB - MEDICAL               | .00          | 89,791.51  | 2,218.94  | 87,572.57  | 87,572.57   |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520120-EMP FB - DENTAL                | .00          | 7,144.12   | 301.12    | 6,843.00   | 6,843.00    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520130-EMP FB - CASH-IN-LIEU          | .00          | 316.33     | .00       | 316.33     | 316.33      |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520140-EMP FB - LIFE INSURANCE        | .00          | 256.36     | .55       | 255.81     | 255.81      |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520150-EMP FB - VISION                | .00          | 86.94      | .00       | 86.94      | 86.94       |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520210-EMP FB - MEDICARE              | .00          | 8,711.23   | 315.91    | 8,395.32   | 8,395.32    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520220-EMP FB - SRIP                  | .00          | 11,703.72  | 340.94    | 11,362.78  | 11,362.78   |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520310-EMP FB - PERS - MISC           | .00          | 144,706.69 | 8,837.53  | 135,869.16 | 135,869.16  |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520340-EMP FB - PERS - FIRE           | .00          | 122,610.14 | 20,604.80 | 102,005.34 | 102,005.34  |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520350-EMP FB - PARS                  | .00          | 1,055.88   | 28.84     | 1,027.04   | 1,027.04    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520410-EMP FB - OPEB - RETIREE MEDICA | .00          | 15,133.16  | 541.70    | 14,591.46  | 14,591.46   |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520520-EMP FB - TERMINAL PAYOUT       | .00          | 12,756.22  | 454.14    | 12,302.08  | 12,302.08   |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520530-EMP FB - ALLOWANCES            | .00          | 849.84     | 31.73     | 818.11     | 818.11      |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520540-EMP FB - COMMUTER CHECK        | .00          | 1,285.39   | 52.45     | 1,232.94   | 1,232.94    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-520550-EMP FB - OTHER FRINGE BENEFITS | .00          | 6,471.17   | 224.19    | 6,246.98   | 6,246.98    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-612990-PROF SVCS - MISCELLANEOUS      | .00          | .00        | 758.95    | -758.95    | -758.95     |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-632110-COMM SVCS - TELE - LANDLINE    | .00          | 2,829.82   | .00       | 2,829.82   | 2,829.82    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-634120-TRAIN AND CONF - REGISTRATION  | .00          | 1,948.00   | .00       | 1,948.00   | 1,948.00    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-634220-TRAVEL - LODGING               | .00          | 1,380.45   | .00       | 1,380.45   | 1,380.45    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-634230-TRAVEL - OTHER TRANSPORTATION  | .00          | 192.69     | .00       | 192.69     | 192.69      |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-634240-TRAVEL - MEALS                 | .00          | 167.19     | .00       | 167.19     | 167.19      |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-635110-PRINTING AND BINDING           | .00          | 408.31     | .00       | 408.31     | 408.31      |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-639120-FEES - PROF DUES AND FEES      | .00          | 100.00     | .00       | 100.00     | 100.00      |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-642120-SUPPL - FIELD - TOOLS AND PART | .00          | 179.79     | .00       | 179.79     | 179.79      |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-642990-SUPPL - FIELD - OTHER          | .00          | 2,021.80   | .00       | 2,021.80   | 2,021.80    |
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-651110-NON-CAP - COMP, SOFTWARE & OFE | .00          | 5,429.34   | .00       | 5,429.34   | 5,429.34    |

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY25/JUL TO EOY**

FUND 140

ACCOUNT

| ACCOUNT NAME                                                         | BEG. BALANCE | DEBITS       | CREDITS    | NET CHANGE   | END BALANCE  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| 140-72-744-000-0000-000-427-664140-<br>CAP - FA - COMPUTER EQUIPMENT | .00          | 1,517.90     | 1,517.90   | .00          | .00          |
| <b>TOTALS FOR FUND 140</b>                                           |              |              |            |              |              |
| MEAS GG - FIRE PREPARATION TAX                                       | .00          | 5,865,359.94 | 378,268.09 | 5,487,091.85 | 5,487,091.85 |

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY25/JUL TO EOY**

FUND 140

ACCOUNT

| ACCOUNT NAME  | BEG. BALANCE | DEBITS       | CREDITS    | NET CHANGE   | END BALANCE  |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| REPORT TOTALS | .00          | 5,865,359.94 | 378,268.09 | 5,487,091.85 | 5,487,091.85 |

\*\* END OF REPORT - Generated by Clarke, Stacie \*\*

**Measure GG Summary**

from FY 2018 to FY 2025

| Description                       | FY 2018<br>Actuals | FY 2019<br>Actuals | FY 2020<br>Actuals | FY 2021<br>Actuals | FY 2022<br>Actuals | FY 2023<br>Actuals | FY 2024<br>Actuals | FY 2025<br>Actuals |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Beginning Balance</b>          | <b>2,514,379</b>   | <b>2,566,004</b>   | <b>2,593,648</b>   | <b>2,718,312</b>   | <b>2,799,525</b>   | <b>3,003,859</b>   | <b>1,882,799</b>   | <b>2,692,677</b>   |
| <b>Revenues</b>                   | <b>5,212,511</b>   | <b>5,147,228</b>   | <b>5,282,327</b>   | <b>5,293,612</b>   | <b>5,437,121</b>   | <b>5,452,583</b>   | <b>5,657,552</b>   | <b>5,936,490</b>   |
| Special Assessment Tax            | 4,911,612          | 5,037,790          | 5,232,958          | 5,275,758          | 5,419,431          | 5,428,505          | 5,601,380          | 5,936,490          |
| Reimb. from Mutual Aid Deployment | 248,448            | 51,474             | 5,727              | 17,854             | 0                  | 0                  | 0                  | 0                  |
| Other Revenues                    | 52,451             | 57,964             | 43,643             | 0                  | 1,019              | 24,078             | 56,172             | 0                  |
| <b>Expenditures</b>               | <b>5,160,886</b>   | <b>5,119,584</b>   | <b>5,157,663</b>   | <b>4,630,814</b>   | <b>5,232,786</b>   | <b>6,573,643</b>   | <b>4,847,675</b>   | <b>5,487,092</b>   |
| Personnel Costs                   | 4,584,888          | 4,344,901          | 4,442,948          | 4,369,973          | 4,329,043          | 5,690,756          | 3,444,510          | 4,509,793          |
| Non-Personnel                     | 575,998            | 774,683            | 714,715            | 260,841            | 903,743            | 882,887            | 1,403,165          | 977,299            |
| Annual Surplus/Shortfall          | 51,625             | 27,644             | 124,664            | 81,211             | 204,334            | (1,121,060)        | 809,877            | (741,826)          |
| <b>Ending Balance</b>             | <b>2,566,004</b>   | <b>2,593,648</b>   | <b>2,718,312</b>   | <b>2,799,523</b>   | <b>3,003,859</b>   | <b>1,882,799</b>   | <b>2,692,677</b>   | <b>3,142,075</b>   |

| <b>Measure GG Reserve</b>                  |          |          |          |          |          |          |                  |                  |
|--------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------|------------------|
| Ringdown (Replace in FY33)                 | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | 284,130          | 284,130          |
| Radio (Replace in FY30)                    | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | 334,270          | 334,270          |
| LUCAS (Begin 62k in FY26, replace in FY33) | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | -                | -                |
| Cardiac Monitor Replacement                | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | 576,521          | 576,521          |
| Monitor Service Agreement                  | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | 13,384           | 13,384           |
| Capital Asset Target Savings (Per Finance) | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | 1,208,305        | 2,416,610        |
| Reserve Target                             | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        | 1,500,000        | 1,545,000        |
| <b>Total Target Reserve</b>                | <b>-</b> | <b>-</b> | <b>-</b> | <b>-</b> | <b>-</b> | <b>-</b> | <b>2,708,305</b> | <b>3,961,610</b> |

**FY2026 Measure GG**  
**Quarter 1 Report**

| Program                   | Original Budget     | Actuals            |                   | Q1 Total          | % Budget Available | Available Budget    |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
|                           |                     | Q1 July-Sept. 2025 | Q2 Oct.-Dec. 2025 |                   |                    |                     |
| Disaster Prep             | \$ 1,257,269        | \$ 178,470         | \$ -              | \$ 178,470        | 86%                | \$ 1,078,800        |
| FRALS                     | \$ 540,159          | \$ 20,000          | \$ -              | \$ 20,000         | 96%                | \$ 520,159          |
| Minimum Staffing          | \$ 3,138,589        | \$ 7,620           | \$ -              | \$ 7,620          | 100%               | \$ 3,130,969        |
| Radio Interoperability    | \$ 669,251          | \$ 635,651         | \$ -              | \$ 635,651        | 5%                 | \$ 33,599           |
| Training                  | \$ 374,048          | \$ 77,137          | \$ -              | \$ 77,137         | 79%                | \$ 296,911          |
| Community Outreach - HHCS | \$ 309,953          | \$ 46,925          | \$ -              | \$ 46,925         | 85%                | \$ 263,027          |
| <b>Totals</b>             | <b>\$ 6,289,268</b> | <b>\$ 965,803</b>  | <b>\$ -</b>       | <b>\$ 965,803</b> | <b>85%</b>         | <b>\$ 5,323,465</b> |

**FY2026 Measure GG**  
**Quarter 1 Report**

| Program                   | Original Budget     | Actuals            |                   | Q1 Total          | % Budget Available | Available Budget    |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
|                           |                     | Q1 July-Sept. 2025 | Q2 Oct.-Dec. 2025 |                   |                    |                     |
| Disaster Prep             | \$ 1,257,269        | \$ 178,470         | \$ -              | \$ 178,470        | 86%                | \$ 1,078,800        |
| FRALS                     | \$ 540,159          | \$ 20,000          | \$ -              | \$ 20,000         | 96%                | \$ 520,159          |
| Minimum Staffing          | \$ 3,138,589        | \$ 7,620           | \$ -              | \$ 7,620          | 100%               | \$ 3,130,969        |
| Radio Interoperability    | \$ 669,251          | \$ 635,651         | \$ -              | \$ 635,651        | 5%                 | \$ 33,599           |
| Training                  | \$ 374,048          | \$ 77,137          | \$ -              | \$ 77,137         | 79%                | \$ 296,911          |
| Community Outreach - HHCS | \$ 309,953          | \$ 46,925          | \$ -              | \$ 46,925         | 85%                | \$ 263,027          |
| <b>Totals</b>             | <b>\$ 6,289,268</b> | <b>\$ 965,803</b>  | <b>\$ -</b>       | <b>\$ 965,803</b> | <b>85%</b>         | <b>\$ 5,323,465</b> |



**October 22, 2025**

Disaster Fire Safety Commission

**Re: Measure GG and FF Reserve Fund Policies**

**Measure GG Reserve Fund Policy**

The City aims to maintain an unencumbered reserve balance equivalent to at least 20% of actual annual Measure GG expenditure. This reserve helps stabilize the fund against revenue fluctuations, ensures readiness for unplanned capital needs, and supports continuity of essential emergency services during fiscal or operational disruptions.

In addition to that 20% the City aims to save 1.3 million annually to finance the replacement of known capital expenditures that have been funded by Measure GG since its adoption in 2008. These expenditures include fire station alerting systems, portable and mobile radios, EKG cardiac monitors, and the fleet of mechanical CPR devices.

| <b>FYE 25</b>                              |             |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Unencumbered Reserve Goal (20% of actuals) | \$969,535   |
| Encumbered Reserve Goal                    | \$2,416,610 |
| Total Reserve Goal                         | \$3,386,145 |
| Actual Total Reserve Balance               | \$3,142,074 |

**Measure FF Reserve Fund Policy**

The City aims to maintain an unencumbered reserve balance equivalent to at least 20% of actual annual Measure FF expenditure. This reserve helps stabilize the fund against revenue fluctuations, ensures readiness for unplanned needs, and supports continuity of essential emergency services during fiscal or operational disruptions.

Since 2021 the Department has been intentionally building the FF reserve fund in anticipation of acquiring a new Headquarters. 7.5m from the reserve fund has already been used for construction and at present, the remaining reserve funds are being held



through completion of the project which is anticipated to be mid-2026. When construction is complete we will revert to the 20% reserve goal.

*Fire HQ: This facility will include expanded administrative offices to allow for the new programs and projects that were funded by FF, it will also include a modern Emergency Operations Center, additional classrooms, an ambulance deployment center, and a temporary fire station that will be used to displace personnel during future fire station renovations. This project supports operational continuity while advancing long-term infrastructure goals as outlined in the Department's Facility Master Plan.*

| <b>FYE 25</b>                            |             |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Encumbered Reserve Goal (20% of actuals) | \$1,809,103 |
| Actual Total Reserve Balance*            | \$4,103,971 |

\* The Fire HQ project is expected to use all the current Measure FF surplus. Fire staff are engaged with the design and construction team in value engineering the project in hopes of reducing the total funds required to complete the project.

# DISASTER AND FIRE SAFETY COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING

September 17, 2025

7:00 PM

Fire Department Division of Training Classroom – 997 Cedar Street

Mayor's Appointee- Andy Katz

District 1 – Michael Wilson  
District 2 – Weldon Bradstreet  
District 3 – Todd Darling  
District 4 – Robert Kinosian

District 5 – Shirley Dean  
District 6 – Greg Murphy\*  
District 7 – Taj Herzer-Baptiste  
District 8 – Theo Gordon\*\*

### DRAFT MINUTES

#### Preliminary Matters

**Call to Order:** 7:02  
**Present:** Wilson, Bradstreet, Kinosian, Dean, Murphy, Herzer-Baptiste,  
Gordon  
**Late:** Katz (7:10pm)  
**Absent:** Darling  
**LOA:** 0  
**Public Present** 3

#### Approval of the Agenda

*Discussion –  
Agenda approved as amended by Acclamation or Vote?*

#### Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters

*Public speakers: 1*

1. Chairperson's Report

2. Fire Department Staff Report

**REGULAR AGENDA MATTERS** *All Regular agenda Matters are for discussion and possible action.*

- 3. Action/Discussion:** Minutes of August 20, 2025
- Recommendation:** Approve the draft minutes of the August 20, 2025 Regular meeting.
- Motion:** Motion to Approve the Agenda
- Motion to approve:** Gordon
- Second:** Wilson
- Vote: Ayes:** Katz, Wilson, Kinoshian, Dean, Murphy, Herzer-Baptiste, Gordon
- Nays:** 0
- Absent:** Bradstreet
- Written Material:** DFSC 8/20/25 Regular Meeting Minutes

4. **Work Group Reports**

Receive reporting on recent activities by the following work groups:

- Plan & Budget Oversight
- Neighborhood Fire Resiliency
- Safe Passages
  - Evacuation Time Study Communication w/ staff
- Community Outreach
- Street Trauma Prevention Program

**Written Materials:**

**Presentation:**

5. Future Agenda Items and Next Steps
- Year End Budget Presentation

Motion to Adjourn: Wilson, Kinoshian  
Acclamation

**Adjournment at 8:13 PM**

*This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953. Any member of the public may attend this meeting. Questions regarding this matter may be addressed to Keith May, [kmay@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:kmay@berkeleyca.gov) 510-981-5508. Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: E-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required but, if included in any*

*communication to a City board, commission, or committee, will become part of the public record. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission, or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission, or committee for further information.*

*Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at Berkeley Fire Department located at 2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Way Berkeley, CA.*

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION:

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair-accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

~~~~~  
I hereby certify that the agenda for this regular/special meeting of the Berkeley City's Disaster and Fire Safety Commission was posted at the front of the Division of Training, 997 Cedar Street, as well as on the City's website, three days prior to the scheduled Commission meeting.

SECRETARY SIGNATURE

Keith May 9/18/2025

Calendar []

Date

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Disaster and Fire Safety Commission
Submitted by: Greg Murphy, Chairperson
Subject: Adding Permanent Vegetation Removal in Fire Zone Zero as eligible for the transfer tax rebate for wildfire hardening

RECOMMENDATION

Amend Ordinance 7.52.5060 to add eligibility for the TRR for permanent vegetation removal within 5' of the perimeter of properties in high-risk fire zones as required in the EMBER ordinance for Fire Zones 3 and 4 consisting of heavy woody vegetation of established shrubs, brush, or woody plants exceeding two feet in height or width that cannot be removed with standard hand tools (hand pruners, loppers, or hand saws).

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Increased utilization of the transfer tax exemption. Reduced risk of significant costs due to wildfire disaster.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City of Berkeley has responded to wildfire risk with a variety of mitigation measures to improve prevention. One type of mitigation measure to reduce risk is through home "hardening" which is the process of increasing resistance to wildfire by replacing combustible materials with ignition resistant and/or non-combustible materials and other scientifically proven actions including:

- Reducing the home's vulnerability to heat.
- Creating fire-resistant surfaces
- Blocking any potential points of ingress for embers and other flammable material.

Retrofitting our homes against seismic damage and destruction has proven to be good policy; hardening against wildfire will be as well. On Sept. 10, 2024, Councilmember Wengraf recommended that Ordinance BMC 7.52.060 be amended to include "Wildfire Hardening" in the Real Property Transfer Tax Exceptions. Council then approved and amended that ordinance.

The inherent wildfire risk Berkeley faces because of the natural topography and weather conditions is increasing due to climate change, which is bringing more frequent and substantial draughts, and higher temperatures. The City of Berkeley has and will continue to implement strategies that reduce the wildfire risk to our community, and should a wildfire occur, improve the emergency response. The City has responded by

the EMBER ordinance in June of 2025. While the ordinance is in the process of being amended, in order to provide more clarity and delay implementation of the requirements, there will still be a significant challenge to getting this work completed, even for motivated residents. There is a need to be nimble and adapt our legislation to incentivize the work we know must get done, work that will help slow an advancing fire so firefighters can protect the community. This amendment will provide an opportunity and mechanism for the City to incentivize homeowners to make these improvements.

BACKGROUND

Maintaining our housing stock is essential to the health and welfare of our city. The impacts from wildfire are not just seen in the structures; it has devastating consequences on mental health, individual sense of security, and our financial stability as a community. The Loma Prieta Earthquake took the Bay Area by surprise on October 17, 1989. According to the California Department of Conservation, that 6.9 magnitude earthquake killed 63 people, injured close to 4,000 and displaced over 12,000 people. Less than two years later, June 25, 1991, Berkeley City Council voted for an exception on transfer property taxes to help homeowners pay for seismically upgrading their homes, and BMC 7.52.060, Sub-section K was established. In the last 10 years, the Finance Department processed approximately 1,200 seismic upgrade rebates for a total of \$7.2M. Since the seismic retrofit exception was included in BMC 7.52.060 in 1991 no expanded safety exceptions have been added. The City of Berkeley is in one of the highest wildfire risk areas in the state. We have a long history of catastrophic wildfire here in Berkeley.

Most notably, in 1923, when wildfire destroyed more than 600 homes, leaving more than 1,000 residents homeless. In 1991, the Berkeley/Oakland Tunnel Fire was responsible for 25 deaths and destroyed more than 3,000 homes. In 2024 valuation, that conflagration cost 4 billion dollars. Now is the time to improve and adapt policies that helps residents mitigate vulnerability to wildfires. Fire science studies are decisive. Home hardening and Vegetation Management reduces the chances of a home catching fire.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

- The Commission previously evaluated requiring that some investment to harden against wildfire while making major renovations and / or additions to the property will comply owners to undertake these important upgrades and reduce our vulnerability to destruction and damage as a result of a wildfire. This approach was found to be difficult for the Building Department to implement in a broader area, indicating that incentive approaches are important until staff can develop more experience after implementation of these aspects of the EMBER program within Fire Zone 4.

- While eligibility to take advantage of the Transfer Tax Rebate may encourage property owners to perform the vegetation management required to comply with the upcoming Zone Zero requirements, it is not (and should not) be the only mechanism to help property owners cover the costs of Fire Mitigation measures including Home Hardening and Vegetation Management. The City is considering other means of helping property owners and should continue to look at measures that could help encourage property owners to engage in this work, including providing or guarantying low interest loans, providing direct grants, and seeking funds from sources such as the State of California, UC Berkeley, philanthropists and other possible sources.

CONTACT PERSON

Keith May, Commission Secretary, Deputy Fire Chief, (510) 510-981-5508

Attachments:

- 1: Ordinance Amending Sections of 7.52.060 of the BMC
- 2: Email from Commissioner Katz to Chief Sprague, Interim Chief Arnold and Commission Chair Greg Murphy, dated October 1, 2025

ORDINANCE NO. ##### -N.S.

AMENDING SECTIONS 7.52.060 OF THE BERKELEY MUNICIPAL CODE
BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Berkeley as follows:

Section 1. That Berkeley Municipal Code 7.52.060, Real Property Transfer Tax Exceptions, Sub-section L, is amended to read as follows:

BMC 7.52.60 Sub-section L

L. 1. Up to one-third of the tax imposed by this chapter shall be rebated, on a dollar for dollar basis, for all expenses incurred on or after January 1, 2025 to "wildfire harden" either any structure which is used exclusively for residential purposes, or any mixed-use structure which contains two or more dwelling units. Multiple rebate applications may be submitted for a partial rebate of the tax paid. However, the total rebate for any combination of seismic retrofit and/or wildfire hardening shall not exceed the maximum of one-third (1/3) of the tax paid per property. *When an application is submitted more than two years after the Home Hardening work is completed, the basis value of the rebate for all expenses incurred shall be adjusted based on changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area, as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. To be eligible for a rebate, the parcel must be located in a Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, as defined by BMC 19.48.020.FFF.*

2. The term "wildfire harden" within the meaning of this chapter means work which is the process of increasing resistance to wildfire by replacing combustible materials with ignition resistant and/or non-combustible materials and other scientifically proven actions. The work must be permanent, including permanent removal of vegetation within 5' of the building or structure. Normal gardening or adaptations that require continued landscape maintenance are not eligible. To be eligible for a rebate, the parcel level mitigations set forth in the California Department of Insurance "Safer from Wildfires" Framework REG-2020-00015 adopting California Code of Regulations Title 10, Chapter 5, Subchapter 4.8, Article 4, Section 2644.9 must be satisfactorily completed as determined by the Building Official (when a permit is required) and a Berkeley Fire Department Defensible Space Inspection. These include:

- (a) All improvements must be permanent and comply with design, material and construction methods as described in the California Building Code, Chapter 7A. and BMC 19.28.030.
- (b) Structures with a wood shake roof must be replaced with a Class A fire rated roof before qualifying for the transfer tax rebate.

(c) Clearing combustible materials, including fences, gates and heavy woody vegetation of established shrubs, brush, or woody plants exceeding two feet in height or width and that cannot be removed with standard hand tools (hand pruners, loppers, or hand saws).

where they are, and all movable combustible objects, from the area within five (5) feet of the building being evaluated, provided that all movable combustible objects are (Replaced with only noncombustible materials.).

(d) At least six (6) inches of noncombustible vertical clearance at the bottom of the exterior surface of the building, measured from the ground up.

(e) Fire-Resistant Vents and Gutter Covers of 1/16 to 1/8 inch noncombustible, corrosion-resistant metal mesh or OSFM Category 8165 approved ember resistant vents.

(f) Multi-paned windows, including dual pane windows, or functional shutters, which when closed, cover the entire window and do not have openings. (g) Enclosed eaves.

(h) Remove combustible materials and debris from under decks and installation of non-combustible siding or ember resistant mesh of 1/8" or finer around deck perimeter.

(i) Removal or absence of combustible structures, including sheds and other outbuildings, from the area within thirty (30) feet of the building being evaluated or, in the event that the applicant does not control the entirety of the area extending thirty feet from the building being evaluated, removal of combustible structures from as much of such area as is under the control of the applicant.

(j) Block spaces between roof covering and sheathing with noncombustible materials (bird stops).

(k) The property upon which the building being evaluated is situated complies with Section 4291 of the Public Resources Code, when applicable, and any applicable local ordinances, governing defensible space.

(l) Any other work found by the Building Official or Fire Marshal (or their designee) to substantially increase the capability of those structures, specified in subsection L.1, to withstand destruction or damage in the event of a wildfire.

3. The work to wildfire harden as provided herein shall be completed either up to one year prior to the transfer of property or as provided in subsection L.5.

4. (a) If the work to wildfire harden structures and property provided for herein is to be performed after the transfer of property which is subject to the tax imposed by

this chapter, upon completion of such work and certification by the building official as to the amount of the expenses of such work the City Manager or their designee may refund such expenses not to exceed one-third of the tax imposed to the parties to the sale in accordance with the terms of such sale. Any remaining tax shall be retained by the City.

(b) The City Manager or their designee may require that a rebate application require self-certification that the hardening measures remain in service for all measures, and that Applications requesting rebate including any vegetation removal attach photographic documentation of conditions at the time of transfer if the transfer occurs five or more years after the date of removal.

(c) The City Manager or their designee may require that an application for rebate for Home Hardening work that occurred more than one year prior to transfer be preceded by the Applicant's certification filed with the City documenting any eligible expenses no later than one year after the Home Hardening work is completed.

5. From the date of the recordation of the transfer document, the applicant shall have one year to complete all wildfire hardening work and submit a wildfire hardening verification application to the **Codes and Inspection Division** of the City of Berkeley. If the work is not completed at the end of one year, that portion which has been completed may be credited as a rebate to the applicant upon submission of a Home Hardening verification application and substantiating documentation, as required by the codes and inspections division of the City of Berkeley, showing the dollar amount of work completed up to that date.

6. Within the one-year period established by paragraph 5, an applicant may request, and the City Manager may approve, an extension of up to one year. The City Manager or their designee may grant such an extension only for good cause. The decision of the City Manager or their designee shall be entirely within their discretion and shall be final.

(a) "Good cause" includes (i) the inability of the applicant, after a prompt and diligent search to find and retain the services of an architect, engineer, contractor or other service provider whose services are necessary for the Home Hardening work; (ii) unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances such as a significant change in the scope of the Wildfire Hardening work due to circumstances in the field which could not reasonably have been known earlier; and (iii) serious illness or other extraordinary and unforeseeable circumstances that prevented the timely commencement or completion of the Wildfire Hardening work.

(b) "Good cause" does not include (i) ignorance of the applicable City

ordinances or regulations concerning the Wildfire Hardening rebate provided in this chapter or state or local laws relating to the standards with which wildfire hardening work must comply; or (ii) any delays which were within the control or responsibility of the applicant.

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 Council Chambers, 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.

TTR / Woody Vegetation Language

Inbox

A

Andy Katz

Oct 1, 2025,
5:29 PM

to David, Colin, me

Chief Sprague,

To clean up the remaining detail on woody vegetation removal that wouldn't be too expansive into recurrent management like weeds and leaves maintenance, this is what I came up with, and an alternative (with elements that could be merged) to identify the category of vegetation eligible for removal in addition to the small trees category:

Recommended:

Heavy woody vegetation consisting of established shrubs, brush, or woody plants exceeding two feet in height or width that cannot be removed with standard hand tools (hand pruners, loppers, or hand saws).

Alternative 1:

Mature woody brush and shrubs requiring chainsaws, stump grinders, or professional removal services, including but not limited to juniper, manzanita, ceanothus, and similar established woody vegetation.

This language may also be helpful in a memo or findings:

The Program incorporates vegetation removal that presents cost barriers to property owners, excluding routine landscape maintenance that property owners can reasonably perform themselves.

Hope this is helpful. Thanks for your assistance getting the language ready for the City Council.

Andy



Office of the City Manager

[CONSENT OR ACTION]
CALENDAR

[Meeting Date (Month Day, yyyy)]

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Disaster and Fire Safety Commission

Submitted by: Greg Murphy, Chair

Subject: Draft Update to the Bike Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to modify and revise the Draft Update to the Bike Plan dated July 29, 2025, to accommodate recommendations presented to Council from the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission (TIC) on Sept. 18, 2025, and to take into consideration additional recommendations from the DFSC noted below.^{1,2}

SUMMARY

The DFSC supports the comments submitted to Council by the TIC on Sept. 18, 2025, and agrees with the overall conclusion that the Draft Update to the Bike Plan (Draft Update) should align more clearly with existing City of Berkeley plans and policies; with Council's June 17, 2025 *Resolution Reaffirming Our Commitment to Vision Zero and Transportation-Related Plans and Policies*; and with the recently established Street Trauma Prevention (STP) program. Additionally, we recommend the Council take into consideration further recommendations from the DFSC noted below.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

As currently drafted, the Draft Update will not effectively meet its stated objective of serving as a "citywide planning document that presents recommendations for improving bicycle safety, comfort, and connectivity at a network level." The Draft Update will therefore require substantial revisions. Costs associated with these revisions will vary depending on who is assigned to perform them.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

In their September 18, 2025 letter to Council, the TIC pointed to four overarching problems in the Draft Update that will make it more difficult for the City to deliver the kinds of street safety measures the Council has long called for, and that Berkeley

¹ City of Berkeley Bicycle Plan (July 2025). Produced by Alta.

https://berkeleybikeplan.org/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/draft/DRAFT_Berkeley_Bike_Plan_08072025.pdf.

² Transportation and Infrastructure Commission, Regular Meeting Agenda (Sept 18, 2025)

<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/legislative-body-meeting-agendas/2025-09-18%20Agenda%20packet.pdf>.

See p. 58.

residents recently voted to support with the passage of Measure FF. The TIC letter offers recommendations to correct these problems and describes key elements that are missing from the Draft Update. The DFSC supports and affirms the TIC's findings and recommendations.

The DFSC shares the TIC's concern regarding the considerable emphasis in the Draft Update on street trauma response and the relative absence of strategies associated with street trauma prevention. Safer streets and efficient emergency response are mutually beneficial, and yet the language of trauma response as a policy priority over trauma prevention appears as an unstated bias throughout the report. A more balanced approach is needed throughout the Draft Update that more clearly reflects: (1) existing City policies and plans; (2) the Council's June 17, 2025 Resolution; and (3) the Council's intentions in establishing the Street Trauma Prevention (STP) program. The DFSC recommends that the Draft Update be redrafted in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the TIC.

BACKGROUND

Consistent with the Council's June 17, 2025 *Resolution Reaffirming Our Commitment to Vision Zero and Transportation-Related Plans and Policies*, the DFSC has continued to involve itself in this and other matters relevant to "ensuring the City moves forward in protecting its constituents and visitors when they travel throughout Berkeley, whether it is by public transit, walking, motor vehicle, bicycle, assisted mobility devices, and other manners of transit."³ The DFSC shares the Council's goal of "creating a safer, more sustainable, and equitable transportation system for all its travelers." Toward this goal, the DFSC supported the creation of the Street Trauma Prevention Program under the management of Berkeley Fire in March 2024.

The DFSC appreciates the work of staff and consultants over the last three years in producing the Draft Update, which involved numerous stakeholders in an extensive community engagement process. Overall, the Draft Update reflects the long-running interests of Berkeley residents in building a safer and more sustainable city. On the other hand, the Draft Update would benefit by aligning more clearly with existing City plans and policies, as described by Council in its June 17, 2025 Resolution, notably the Council's desire for "fully implementing previously adopted transportation plans and policies" and supporting "City staff efforts to streamline transportation project planning and delivery processes so as to more quickly implement the aforementioned plans and transform Berkeley's streets into safe, sustainable, accessible, and equitable public spaces."⁴

³ Resolution Reaffirming Our Commitment to Vision Zero and Transportation-Related Plans and Policies (June 17, 2025). Consent Calendar. Mayor Adena Ishii (Author), Councilmember Lunaparra (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Taplin (Co-Sponsor), Council Humbert (Co-Sponsor).

<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06-17%20Item%2026%20Resolution%20Reaffirming%20Our%20Commitment.pdf>.

⁴ Resolution (June 17, 2025), *ibid*.

The DFSC supports and affirms the TIC's findings and recommendations.

The TIC has identified several problems in the Draft Update. In their September 18, 2025 letter to Council, the TIC pointed to four overarching problems in the Draft Update that will make it more difficult for the City to deliver the kinds of street safety measures the Council has long called for, and that Berkeley residents voted to support with the recent passage of Measure FF. The TIC letter offers recommendations to correct these problems and describes key elements that are missing from the Draft Update.

Among its other findings and recommendations, the DFSC concurs with the TIC that requiring numerous, separate and undefined studies before individual projects can move forward could set the stage for delaying or vetoing street safety improvements. As the TIC notes, this approach appears to run counter to Council's direction that staff develop bicycle boulevard implementation guidelines similar to Oakland's, for example, which require only public notification, without the need for additional public processes, before installing basic traffic calming features along bike boulevards, such as speed tables and traffic circles, as part of any capital project.

Delays resulting from the studies called for in the Draft Update potentially have serious implications for Berkeley residents, workers and visitors.

As the DFSC wrote to Council in May 2024, each year on average, 694 walkers, bicyclists and vehicle occupants are injured on Berkeley streets, and five die.⁵ Severe and fatal collisions disproportionately affect people walking and biking. Berkeley residents report that they walk or bike for 40% of trips made in the city, but people walking and biking suffer 61% of severe and fatal collisions.⁶ These incidents include children on their way to and from Berkeley schools. Drivers operating at unsafe speeds and failing to yield at crosswalks are the two most common violations contributing to severe and fatal collisions in Berkeley, amounting to 33% of such incidents over the period 2011-2020.⁷ A 2017 City survey found that 71% of Berkeley residents reported being interested in relying on bicycles for daily use, but most were too concerned about safety to act on this choice.⁸ A 2024 survey conducted by Embold Research reaffirmed this finding.⁹ Delays in implementing well-recognized street safety measures could

⁵ Revised Agenda Material for Supplemental Packet 1. Consent Calendar (May 7, 2025). Support the Fire Department to Fund a Program Manager II Position. <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2034%20Fund%20Program%20Manager%20Position.pdf>.

⁶ City of Berkeley, Vision Zero Annual Report (June 2022). https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-06-28%20Item%2023%20Vision%20Zero%20Annual%20Report_0.pdf. (p. 13).

⁷ City of Berkeley, Vision Zero Annual Report (June 2022), *ibid* (p. 14).

⁸ Berkeley City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley (June 29, 2022). Consent Calendar on Vision Zero Annual Report, 2021-2022. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Impacts (https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-06-28%20Item%2023%20Vision%20Zero%20Annual%20Report_0.pdf). (p. 3).

⁹ Libby Lee-Egan and Marc Hedlund (March 3, 2025). New survey supports a strong Berkeley Bike Plan: Op-ed. The Berkeley Scanner. <https://www.berkeleyscanner.com/2025/03/03/traffic-safety/op-ed-new-survey-supports-strong->

result in preventable injuries and fatalities among Berkeley residents, workers and visitors.

The balanced perspective of Berkeley's STP program is missing from the Draft Update.

The DFSC shares the TIC's concern regarding the considerable emphasis in the Draft Update on street trauma response and the relative absence of street trauma prevention. The language of trauma response as a policy priority over trauma prevention appears as an unstated bias throughout the report. In contrast to bike plans in Oakland and San Francisco, for example, the word "emergency" appears 83 times in the document, primarily as a prerequisite to taking steps to alter the design of streets in ways that would improve safety and equity for all users.

The May 2024 DFSC Memo to Council described the STP program as "a new initiative within the Department to support the transportation and infrastructure projects of Vision Zero," and that "to be successful, this will require the Department to adopt street trauma prevention as a core element of its public safety mission, just as the fire service adopted a prevention function within its fire suppression mission over the last 50 years, with remarkable success." The DFSC pointed out that on the current trajectory, traffic-related street trauma, and the demand for the Department's EMS services that accompany it, is expected to increase alongside increases in housing density. The Department already reports that the growing number of EMS calls is taxing its resources and personnel."

In approving funding for the STP, the Council called on Berkeley Fire to "(1) engage consistently and constructively in the City's Vision Zero planning and implementation processes; (2) collaborate with other City departments, as well as the Fire Marshal, to advance Vision Zero and other policies; and (3) build an evidence-based approach to balancing street trauma response and prevention." The objectives of the STP program, and the charge by Council in establishing it, are not sufficiently evident in the Draft Update.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Refrain from drawing on the findings of the July 15, 2025 Evacuation Time Study by KLD Associates until questions posed to BFD by the DFSC have been addressed.

The DFSC has raised concerns about the methodology, findings and recommendations in the Evacuation Time Study.¹⁰ We have submitted a set of 15 questions to the fire department to resolve these concerns. We recommend that until questions regarding

[berkeley-bike-plan/](#). See Embold Research survey results at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y2PzvbXVTQQjetZh_9xRBLup39ZRFxel/view.

¹⁰ Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager (July 15, 2025). Memo on Evacuation Time Study. https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Evacuation%20Time%20Study_1.pdf

the study have been addressed, and the study has been accepted by Council, it should not be relied upon as a technical resource in the Draft Update.

Carefully evaluate the metrics used in assessing response times and their applicability to the City of Berkeley.

The metrics used to evaluate Berkeley Fire's response times are worth careful consideration, given their prominence in the Draft Update. Conditions in the hills vary considerably from those in the flats, for example, and the use of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) values might be less relevant than comparing Berkeley Fire's response times with those of comparable California cities.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Bike Plan is a core policy of the City's sustainability policies and plans. As presently drafted, the Draft Update to the Bike Plan does not adequately reflect existing policies and plans, nor does it reflect the balanced approach of the STP program or the wishes of Council as asserted in its June 17, 2025 Resolution. As a consequence, the Draft Update does not effectively comport with the City's environmental sustainability objectives.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

As presently drafted, the Draft Update to the Bike Plan does not adequately reflect existing policies and plans, nor does it reflect the balanced approach of the STP program or the wishes of Council as asserted in its June 17, 2025 Resolution. As a consequence, the Draft Update will require substantial revisions.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Keith May, Deputy Fire Chief, 510-981-5508

Safe Passages Workgroup

Evacuation Time Study Questions & City Staff Responses

October 20, 2025

Below are City staff answers to questions provided by the Disaster & Fire Safety Commission's Safe Passages Workgroup (questions indicated in **bold**). Feedback has been provided by a multidisciplinary team from the Public Works and Fire Departments.

Overall:

1. What are the next steps for the Study? Will it be going to council?

The Evacuation Time Study is complete and now serves as a tool to support staff in planning, design and policy development alongside their professional judgment. City staff may commission additional Sensitivity Studies to evaluate how future transportation, capital improvement, or large-scale development projects could affect evacuation times.

The Study itself does not require Council action and is not scheduled to return to Council for further consideration. Councilmembers were briefed on the Evacuation Study in three separate meetings held in July, and an [Off-Agenda Memo regarding the Study](#) was also provided to Councilmembers at that time.

2. How is the FD prioritizing the recommendations in table 11-1, what steps have already been taken, and what is the timeline for the next stages of action? Or what is the timeline for completing the prioritization?

The Study was completed in July, and staff are currently reviewing the recommendations to determine how best to incorporate them into ongoing and future workplans. City Departments will be working together to prioritize recommendations as most of them rely on cross-departmental collaboration. Staff will consider level of impact, readiness for implementation, and cost. Prioritization will take into account overall departmental workloads and coordination with other City initiatives.

3. What input has the FD been giving on the upcoming corridor rezoning project based on these results? What input has the FD been giving on the upcoming city bike plan?

The Fire Department is an active partner in multidisciplinary efforts such as corridor rezoning and the City's Bike Plan. Fire Department staff participate in interdepartmental workgroups with Planning & Development and Public Works staff to ensure that fire and life

safety considerations are integrated early in the process. Through this collaborative approach, Fire Department staff evaluate proposed roadway design considering emergency vehicle access including curb access, turning movements, and impacts on response times.

- 4. During the August presentation, we heard that parking restrictions are not a high priority for egress because additional traffic lanes just move the congestion to the intersections which are the real bottlenecks. Does this logic also apply to bike lanes? In other words, does adding bike lanes to a road also not slow down evacuations because they effect street width and not intersection design?**

The analysis of narrow roadways and parking is specific to the Berkeley Hills and their relevance to fire evacuation. The Study found that evacuation delays are driven less by side-to-side friction on narrow streets and more by the sheer volume of evacuees trying to leave together on roadways with limited capacity.

With that in mind, adding a bike lane would not affect modeled evacuation times so long as it did not reduce the number of vehicle travel lanes (for example, if the bike lane replaces parking).

Questions often come up about whether vehicle contraflow or removing parking to create additional lanes would help. Broadly speaking, the Study shows that any pinch point, such as an intersection or a very tight turn, acts like a funnel and constrains the entire route. To meaningfully increase evacuation speeds, added lanes or capacity would need to extend continuously from the point of origin all the way to the endpoint of the evacuation path.

More specifically, effects would differ by bikeway type and protection. A one-way protected bike lane that replaces parking and uses mountable or removable separators would not be expected to reduce evacuation throughput because it would preserve the number of vehicle through lanes and retain some emergency overrun options. By contrast, a two-way (bidirectional) cycle track protected by rigid concrete barriers can behave like a continuous curb, limiting curbside flexibility for emergency maneuvers or temporary lane conversions unless it includes regularly spaced emergency access openings, mountable sections, and well-designed tapers at intersections.

Questions regarding specific recommendations:

- 1. The report recommends continuing the Leave Early policy but it doesn't lay out recommendations to increase the participation rates. How is the FD planning to get more residents to Leave Early?**

Leave early participation will increase with the following approaches, which are in process:

- Additional community education. The Evacuation Time Study validates that the hills roadway network will not support a fast evacuation.
 - Refinement of Leave Early areas (areas that are most likely to have problems with evacuation).
 - Refinement of Extreme Fire Weather thresholds to further home in on conditions that can result in catastrophic fires while reducing false positives.
 - Engaging partner jurisdictions in Leave Early approach for consistent practice across larger area.
 - Ability to provide supportive resources (ex: sheltering) for people who are not able to evacuate themselves. This will require regional coordination and buy-in.
- 2. Many of the recommendations involve other agencies including in the city like BUSD, BPD, planning, public works and infrastructure, to external agencies like highway patrol, and even BART and AC Transit. How has the FD been working with those agencies on the outcome of the report and what will FD be doing in the future?**

The Evacuation Time Study was only recently completed, and City staff's immediate focus has been on internal education and sharing the findings with partner agencies. The goal at this stage is to ensure that all the organizations that must plan for and respond to a wildfire evacuation are working from a common understanding of the Study's results.

This work includes collaboration with local partners such as UC Berkeley and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, which may face the same hazards at the same time and therefore need to coordinate evacuation planning with the City. Staff are also introducing the findings into broader conversations at regional and State levels. For example, staff provided Study results as part of the stakeholder feedback process to inform the State's development of new evacuation guidance.

We recognize that this is a gradual process. Some of the Study's conclusions challenge long-held assumptions about evacuation practices which were designed primarily for suburban or rural settings, such as the effectiveness of funneling traffic to larger arterials or relying on contraflow strategies. Moving forward, City staff will continue to engage with partner agencies across jurisdictions to build alignment and integrate the Study's findings into future planning efforts.

In addition to working with external partners on planning for evacuations, staff is integrating findings from the Study into community disaster readiness outreach, including

meetings and trainings on wildfire and tsunami, and evacuation readiness tools like the Household Fire Weather Planning Tool and Evacuation StoryMaps. For example, messaging is emphasizing the concept that evacuation begins before an evacuee enters the roadway, and that reducing time to be alerted to an evacuation (notification) and to pack up and leave (mobilization) will reduce not only a household's time on the road but also their overall evacuation time.

3. Specifically, what is the plan to work with BUSD on school closures or evacuations? The recommendation that 'Parents should make provisions with schools' seems to put the onus on individual parents and will likely not have the same results as a plan that is led by BUSD.

BUSD is a critical partner in evacuation planning, and alignment between the District and the City will be essential to ensure the safety of students and staff during a wildfire evacuation. The Study highlights opportunities to strengthen readiness by working directly with BUSD on coordinated planning, resource allocation, and community education.

City staff have had initial meetings with BUSD staff in order to build a shared understanding of the Study's findings and BUSD's operational approaches. These discussions are foundational to joint planning on issues such as school closures, evacuation procedures, and communication with families. While individual household preparedness remains important, staff agree that effective planning must also be led at the institutional level in collaboration with the school district.

4. Regarding the Traffic Calming Devices recommendations, how are various TCDs being evaluated (for example speed bumps vs barriers) and how is the FD planning to weigh the needs of evacuation times against every day safety? Several of the recommendations here are basically 'create a plan.' What is the timeline for that plan/methodology and what will the FD's stance be on roadway improvements in the meantime?

As part of the Evacuation Time Study, the contractor carried out a citywide field survey, driving every block to ensure that the roadway model matched real-world conditions. During the survey, consultants recorded the locations of traffic calming devices (TCDs) to identify how various TCDs are affecting vehicle speed.

The Study produced three recommendations (7.1–7.3) related to TCDs: developing a citywide connectivity and capacity strategy, creating a methodology for roadway infrastructure development, and establishing a methodology for weighing traffic calming approaches together with first responder response times and evacuation needs.

These are strategy-level recommendations, so the immediate next step is to develop the methodologies themselves. The Fire Department plans to participate as an active partner alongside Public Works in this multidisciplinary effort. At this stage, staff are reviewing how best to integrate the recommendations into future workplans.

At present the Fire Department joins Public Works' interdepartmental technical advisory committees to review and evaluate individual projects. Transportation projects will continue to be reviewed and moved forward as these methodologies are developed. When they are finalized City Staff will incorporate them as a tool used by the integrated project delivery teams on future projects.

In addition to considering the planning-level recommendations, the Public Works and Fire Departments are also evaluating traffic calming devices (e.g., speed bumps/cushions vs. tables/barriers) through comparative research and real-world testing. Staff are actively reviewing practices from other municipalities and conducting live testing with our own apparatus (where feasible). This work provides a layer of practical validation to ensure that approaches incorporate best practices in use elsewhere together with Berkeley's operational realities.

Methodology questions:

- 1. Please describe the technical methodology applied to perform a “demographic survey of a representative sample of the Study area population,” as stated on page D-1.**

A total of 1,453 surveys were completed within the city, which corresponds to a sampling error of $\pm 2.5\%$ at the 95% confidence level based on the 2020 Census household data. The survey results were drawn from the various subdivisions within the city and a statistically reliable sample was obtained Citywide, for residents of the Berkeley flats, and for residents of the Berkeley hills.

The survey was conducted from August 10 – October 8, 2023. Survey outreach included a community message posted to BerkeleyCA.gov, outreach messages sent through GovDelivery and Nixle, and physical postings at Berkeley bus stops and on the UC Berkeley campus, as well as postcards at community sites. In addition, survey responses were collected in person at community events, including 2023 Solano Stroll and the 1923 Fire Centennial Commemoration.

The final survey instrument used for the demographic survey is presented in the Study in Attachment A.

2. The report methodology mentions that it did not simulate evacuation times by foot or bike, when and why was the decision made to not do that evaluation and is there an opportunity to do that modeling?

The City selected KLD to conduct the Evacuation Time Study because of their expertise in evacuation modeling. From the outset, the scope was designed to focus on vehicular evacuation, since cars are the primary mode of travel in Berkeley and the greatest driver of roadway congestion during an evacuation.

To account for scenarios with fewer vehicles, the Study included a Leave Early Sensitivity Analysis (Section 10.3), which modeled what happens when some households have already left the area at the point an evacuation order is issued. This analysis showed improvements in travel times when fewer cars are on the road. Using these results as a proxy for non-vehicular evacuation may overstate the benefits, because pedestrians and cyclists would still interact with vehicles on constrained roadways and at intersections.

The key takeaway is that strategies that reduce the number of evacuees on the road at the same time will improve evacuation outcomes. This gives the City and its partners the information needed to guide evacuation planning efforts going forward.

3. Please explain why the report estimates that “approximately 97% of households of 2 or more people have access to at least one vehicle” and that “7.5% of households have no vehicles (page ES-6)” whereas the City of Berkeley reported at the 8/19/25 public meeting on the Bike Plan Update that 25.3% of households do not own a vehicle (see attached slide), based on the 2023 American Community Survey

The vehicle access estimates used in the Evacuation Time Study are based on a community survey conducted specifically for this project (Appendix D). When comparing these survey results to U.S. Census data, it's important to note a few key considerations:

- Census estimates can fluctuate. For example, the City's Bike Plan cites a 25.3% rate of households without vehicle access from the 2023 1-Year (1Y) American Community Survey (ACS). However, the 2024 1Y data shows a decrease to 20.3%. The 5-Year (5Y) data, which the Census Bureau recommends for reliability, indicates 21.1% for “Berkeley city, California,” and 18.6% when using Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs).

- Survey context matters. Survey responses can differ depending on how the question is framed. For instance, a resident who normally lacks daily car access may report having access during an emergency if they anticipate borrowing or sharing a vehicle.
- Participation in the Study survey was higher in the areas more likely to be subject to an evacuation: the Berkeley Hills (wildfire risk) and the Marina (tsunami risk). Statistically significant samples were achieved for both the Berkeley Hills (538 responses) and the Berkeley flats (791 responses). The UC Berkeley campus area did not generate a statistically significant sample.
- Citywide averages: The Study applies citywide averages to estimate evacuation times because hazard impacts do not conform to zip code boundaries. These estimates are general guidelines, not rigid rules.

An implied question is whether the Study survey undercounts residents without access to a vehicle, and if so, how staff will ensure that the plans and policies informed by the Study support the safe evacuation of those community members. Hazards affect different parts of the city in different ways. As staff use Study findings to inform plans and policies, they consider the hazard's areas of exposure and patterns of spread together with survey results, both from the Study and ACS data (particularly by zip code). All this data together informs neighborhood-level risks, capacities, and approaches.

For example, zip code 94708 (North Berkeley Hills) is Berkeley's zip code with the greatest wildfire exposure. The Study survey responses on vehicle access align closely with the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS2023) data by zip code, which show higher-than-average car ownership (>97% in 94708). The City recommends that people in the Berkeley hills leave early during extreme fire weather, as the roadways will not accommodate a fast large-scale evacuation of the area, and residents evacuating on foot or bike remain unprotected from extreme heat, toxic gases, smoke, flames, and the risk of collisions with others evacuating under stressful conditions.

By comparison, in the area at highest risk from tsunamis, 94710 (West Berkeley, including the Marina) ACS (ACS2023) figures say 15.3% of households do not have access to a car. The City actively encourages walking and biking as tsunami evacuation options. Tsunamis generally provide ample notice before arrival, and do not pose the same threats to evacuees as the heat and toxic smoke and gas produced by a wildfire. In addition, the two multi-use paths over I-80 provide escape routes out of the Berkeley Marina for pedestrians and cyclists, which in turn connect to gridded, much higher-capacity roadway infrastructure as compared to roadways in the Hills.

If the focus is not on hazards but specifically on evacuation approaches in areas with low vehicular access, we can look at zip code 94704. This zip code reflects the area around the UC Berkeley campus, as well as Panoramic Hill. Per 5-year (5Y) ACSDT5Y2023 data for the zip code, 49% of households in this area do not have access to a vehicle. Since this area is not in the tsunami inundation zone, the primary hazard of concern is wildfire. The evacuation considerations then must be broken down by geography (hills/flats):

- **Southside/Downtown Berkeley:** This area does not have immediate exposure to wildfire, as a fire would need to build momentum in the Berkeley hills before it reached the flats. This gives residents in the area notice to evacuate before fire has entered the area. In addition, there is far less vegetation, especially within five feet of structures and construction in this area tends toward commercial type structures, which use materials that are more fire resistive, meaning the rate of structure-to-structure ignition is expected to be reduced as compared to the hills, which have more homes built with materials prone to promote fire spread. As it relates to evacuation movement, the area has a gridded street pattern, sidewalks, and considerable roadway capacity, which will enable multi-modal evacuation (via personal vehicle, walking, cycling, and potentially mass transit, if available.) Based on this risk profile, the City recommends that people in this area integrate walking, cycling and use of personal and mass transit options into their evacuation plans if they do not have access to a vehicle.
- **Panoramic Hill:** This area is at significant risk from wildfire, due to its mountainous topography, wind speeds, dense vegetation around homes, and ample use of wood-frame residential construction, which is more fire-prone. The City recommends that people in the Berkeley hills, including Panoramic Hill, leave early during extreme fire weather, as the roadways will not accommodate a fast large-scale evacuation of the area, the area has one way in and out, and residents evacuating on foot or bike remain unprotected from extreme heat, toxic gases, smoke, flames, and the risk of collisions with others evacuating under stressful conditions.

This example demonstrates how the Study, and Study survey results – like any survey results, including the Census – are not in themselves policies or plans. Rather they must be used as tools alongside staff’s professional expertise to inform planning processes and policy development.

- 4. Please describe how the following statements would be amended by applying the corrected no-car ownership figure to 25.3%:**
 - a. Page 11-11-7. This analysis indicates that the Traffic Calming Devices (TCDs) throughout the city are performing as designed, effectively**

reducing vehicular speeds and thus reducing the risk of severe injury and/or fatality traffic crashes. However, this intended function conflicts with the goal of evacuation, which is to expedite the egress of individuals from the affected area.

Use of the ACS 2023 1-Year (1Y) data on citywide household vehicle access does not change the underlying findings of the Study. The Evacuation Time Study focused on modeling evacuations of high-risk areas like the Hills and Marina, where car ownership is higher than the citywide average. This means that while citywide statistics suggest more households without cars, the practical impact on evacuation modeling is smaller in those hazard-exposed areas.

The Study also accounted for evacuees leaving in their own vehicles, carpooling, or using public transit, meaning that car ownership was never treated as a strict proxy for evacuation access.

For traffic calming, the conclusion remains the same: these devices improve everyday safety but can slow vehicle evacuation, even though not all households will evacuate by car.

- b. Page 11-11-6. This study does not specifically explore how overall roadway evacuation times change with a multimodal evacuation because of the 3.6% of evacuees citywide who plan to bike or walk instead of using a vehicle**

This is a vehicular-based study; however, to estimate potential benefits of fewer vehicles on the road, we referenced the Leave Early Sensitivity Study. That analysis assumes some residents have already departed before the evacuation order is issued, thereby reducing the number of vehicles in circulation. The results show improvements in overall evacuation times when fewer cars are present (see Section 10.3 of the Evacuation Study).

- c. On page ES-7, the report state, “Citywide 2.2% of Berkeley residents, employees, and college students plan to evacuate on foot and 1.4% plan to evacuate on bicycle. (Appendix D). The survey, however, did not include any questions about whether residents would evacuate by walking or cycling. Please explain why the report asserts that these low estimates are correct.**

Study Survey Question 3b asked households how many cars they would use during an evacuation. Response options also included alternatives such as bicycle, walking, and bus. The results were as follows:

- 0 vehicles – 5.9%
- 1 vehicle – 73.6%
- 2 vehicles – 14.6%
- 3 vehicles – 1.3%
- 4+ vehicles – 0.5%
- Bicycle – 1.4%
- On foot – 2.2%
- Bus – 0.5%

These findings are presented in Figure D-11 of the report and are the basis for the estimates cited on page ES-7. While the vast majority of respondents indicated they would evacuate by car, the survey did capture percentages of households who anticipate walking, biking, or using transit.

5. The survey question 3B asks how respondents plan to evacuate. How do those results vary by geographical area? Specifically, what are the results for student heavy areas like Southside compared to the hills?

It is important to note that Southside is not generally in a high-risk area for wildfire or tsunami and therefore is less likely to be subject to a large-scale evacuation.

That said, survey responses do show differences in expected evacuation behavior. Citywide, respondents who identified as students were significantly more likely to report walking, biking, or using public transit as their evacuation mode:

- Bicycle – 1.9%
- On foot – 15.4%
- Bus – 9.6%

By contrast, in the Berkeley Hills (the area at greatest wildfire risk) responses overwhelmingly indicated reliance on household vehicles, with small percentages anticipating evacuation by foot, bike, or bus.

These results reflect both the built environment and the demographics of each area: student-heavy neighborhoods have lower vehicle ownership and greater proximity to transit, while hillside neighborhoods have higher vehicle access and more limited alternatives.

Additional questions:

6. What are the worst streets or neighborhoods in the hills that need special attention to address? Commissioner Katz brought up the example of roads that wind uphill and downhill where evacuees would not know which direction to go.

This is not part of the Evacuation Study; however, these topics are addressed separately in the [Access Impaired Neighborhood Analysis](#) and [Evacuation Route Safety, Capacity, and Viability Analysis](#). Summaries and full reports are available at the links provided.

7. Overall there seems to be a disconnect between things like Leave Early, the department's view of additional housing in the hill, and the use of non-vehicular modes of egress with the sensitivity analysis which shows that significant reduction in vehicles doesn't meaningfully improve evac times. Can you help us understand tables 10-1 through 10-17 and what actionable conclusions we should take from them?

The Study was completed in July, and staff are currently reviewing the findings to determine how best to incorporate them into ongoing and future workplans. Primary takeaways for each of the Sensitivity Studies described in Section 10 of the Study are:

- 10-1 (Evacuation Readiness): Encouraging people to prepare more quickly can reduce overall evacuation time. However, this is not guaranteed due to complex factors like the specific area being evacuated, traffic congestion from increased demand, and the time needed to mobilize mass transportation support. Therefore, we cannot assume a direct link between faster individual readiness and faster area-wide evacuation.
- 10-2 (Effect of Changes in the Number of People who Voluntarily Relocate): When people outside official evacuation zones choose to leave, their movement can interfere with evacuation traffic, potentially slowing down those who are under evacuation orders.
- 10-3 (Leaving Early - Reduction in Evacuation Demand): Leaving early can reduce the number of vehicles on the road and help ease evacuation traffic congestion to some extent. However, because those leaving early are dispersed and the exact fire location is unpredictable, the primary benefit is to the individuals who leave early, not to overall evacuation traffic flow.
- 10-4 (Second Egress Out from Panoramic Hill): Adding a second evacuation route from Panoramic Hill could improve evacuation times for Oakland residents of Panoramic Hill.
- 10-5 (Accessory Dwelling Units and Middle Housing Developments): Additional density in the Berkeley hills will increase evacuation times. Because additional people in the hills means additional people who will need to evacuate, evacuation

times will still increase even if new residents do not have vehicles and are assumed to evacuate via bus.

- 10-6 (Optimized Signals): Upgrading Berkeley's traffic signals from pre-timed to sensor-based (actuated) systems could improve evacuation times.

September 18, 2025

To the Members of the City Council,

We write to you today as the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission, fulfilling our role to “advise the City Council on matters related to transportation and public works infrastructure policies, facilities, and services in the City.”

On July 28th, the City released the 2025 Draft Bicycle Plan Update. We appreciate the hard work completed by staff and consultants over the past 3 years to develop this Draft Plan, including extensive community outreach and coordination with multiple stakeholders. There are numerous positive elements contained within the Plan, but **as a commission we’ve identified several top-level policy concerns with the Draft Plan**. Many of our concerns relate to inconsistencies between the Draft Bike Plan and other transportation-related policies outlined in the recently adopted [Resolution Reaffirming Our Commitment to Vision Zero and Transportation Related Plans and Policies](#),¹ including Council’s desire for “fully implementing previously adopted transportation plans and policies” and support for “City staff efforts to streamline transportation project planning and delivery processes so as to more quickly implement the aforementioned plans and transform Berkeley’s streets into safe, sustainable, accessible, and equitable public spaces.”

We’ve expressed these concerns to staff and have asked that they work to address these contradictions. **We require consistency between transportation plans in order to recommend this Plan be approved by City Council.**

We have two major sets of concerns, outlined briefly here and with greater detail provided at this letter’s end.

(I) Draft Plan Language that will Slow or Prevent Project Delivery

We are very concerned that some of the **language** in the Bike plan **will make it more difficult to deliver** the safety projects the Council has asked for and we would like to see happen. These instances of problematic language **run directly counter to [Council’s recent declaration](#)**² in support of “City staff efforts to streamline transportation project planning and delivery processes.”

To address this and **ensure that Berkeley can efficiently deliver** the projects outlined in the Bike Plan and elsewhere, we recommend:

¹<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06-17%20Item%2026%20Resolution%20Reaffirming%20Our%20Commitment.pdf>

²<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06-17%20Item%2026%20Resolution%20Reaffirming%20Our%20Commitment.pdf>

1. Consistent with [Council direction to develop bicycle boulevard implementation guidelines similar to Oakland's](#),³ the Plan should clarify that City staff need only provide **public notification (and no other public process), before installation of basic traffic calming** features along bike boulevards (e.g., speed tables and traffic circles) as part of any capital project. **Public engagement for bike boulevards has already been part of the Bike Plan process.**

2. **Remove language throughout the document requiring numerous separate and ill-defined studies** before a project can be built and **remove the phrase “will not be implemented.”** This language is not only unnecessary, as studying project impacts is always a part of the project design and delivery process, but the veto power implied by the “will not be implemented” language **has the potential to substantially slow or even prevent the construction of any bikeway improvement on procedural rather than substantive objections.** Instead, **we recommend the below language** at the start of the document (while only a truncated reference is needed on each map). This would apply to any projects beyond basic safety improvement (e.g., speed tables or traffic circles):

Planning processes will study impacts on traffic, evacuation, and the environment and will include a public process and coordination with the Police and Fire Departments and all affected state, county, and local transit agencies.

3. In order to quickly deliver proven safety measures, **eliminate or revise language requiring the use of non-mandatory standards** (e.g., MUTCD) as directed previously by City Council on several occasions (once in [2019](#)⁴ and again in [2022](#)⁵). **Requiring MUTCD compliance will slow projects and prevent important safety measures** supported by numerous professional traffic safety organizations.

4. **Language regarding emergency response and evacuation** in the Draft Bike Plan should **reflect the prevention of crashes, as outlined in the Street Trauma Prevention Program (STPP) created by Council**⁶ in collaboration with the Fire Department. Aiming to minimize impacts on emergency response and evacuation times should absolutely be goals for bicycle improvements, but these goals should **complement, not eclipse, the goals of street safety improvements.** A good model is [San Francisco's 2025 Bike Plan](#)⁷ which states “outcome should seek to develop 24-hour traffic calming and safe passage for people on bikes while also ensuring that emergency response times are acceptable and on-street operations can respond to fires and trauma.”

³<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2043%20Budget%20Referral%20%20Vision%20Zero%20Rapid.pdf>

⁴<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2019-11-12%20Item%2010%20Stop%20Sign%20Warrant%20Policy.pdf>

⁵<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-09-13%20Item%2034%20Supp3%20Taplin.pdf>

⁶<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2034%20Fund%20Program%20Manager%20Position.pdf>

⁷<https://www.sfmta.com/media/41810/download?inline>

(II) Missing Elements in the Bicycle Boulevard Design Guidelines

Bicycle boulevard design guidelines are missing critical elements, and despite citing NACTO as a key reference, fails to adhere to its criteria and guidance on effective Bicycle Boulevard design. We recommend:

1. **Greater focus on lowering volume** (i.e. more diverters, etc) as well as speeds, in line with recommendations from NACTO⁸, with **particular focus on times of high peak volumes** such as *school drop-off and pickup times*, as well as when **bicycle boulevard crossing** treatments also facilitate motor vehicle crossing (i.e., stop signs, PHBs or traffic signals).
2. **Specifying maximum distances between speed tables, not minimum**, in order to ensure that very long blocks have at least two speed tables.
3. Specifying the **target speed of all Bicycle Boulevards as 20 mph and utilizing physical speed management design elements to achieve target speeds. Staff to pursue 20 mph posted speed limits accordingly and where feasible**, in accordance with [Council's referral to implement AB 43](#).⁹
4. Specifying a **minimum width of 6' and up to 8.5' for cargo bikes as specified by NACTO** to accommodate a bicyclist and rider. The "Design Needs of Bicyclists" of the Draft Bike Plan section deviates significantly from NACTO guidelines¹⁰ by specifying **only 5'** for all bicycle and rider configurations. Additionally, while several bicycle configurations and dimensions were considered, **cargo bikes and adult tricycles were completely omitted**. And although wheelchair users aren't "cyclists," they are regular users of bicycle facilities, and **we suggest including a standard motorized wheelchair and rider profile in this section**.
5. **Clarifying** that Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)-only intersection treatments **are to be used only in exceptional situations where additional calming/diversion elements cannot be used. RRFB's alone**, without other vertical calming/diversion elements, are wholly unsafe and **inappropriate as bicycle boulevard crossing treatments**.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. Additional details are provided in the appendix below and members of the Bike Plan Subcommittee would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Berkeley's Transportation & Infrastructure Commission

⁸<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/designing-bikeways-for-all-ages-and-abilities/bikeways-on-low-speed-low-volume-streets/bike-boulevards/>

⁹<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022-03-08%20Item%2016%20Referral%20to%20Implement%20State%20Law%20AB%2043.pdf>

¹⁰<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/designing-bikeways-for-all-ages-and-abilities/design-controls-for-bicycle-facilities/>

Appendix providing additional detail for each of the above:

(I) Draft Plan Language that will Slow or Prevent Project Delivery

We are very concerned that this Draft Bike Plan includes **language that will make it more difficult to deliver** the safety projects mandated by Council. These instances of problematic language **run directly counter to [Council's recent declaration](#)**¹¹ in support of “City staff efforts to streamline transportation project planning and delivery processes.” To address this and **ensure that Berkeley can efficiently deliver** the projects outlined in the Bike Plan and elsewhere, we recommend:

1. Consistent with [Council direction to develop bicycle boulevard implementation guidelines similar to Oakland's](#),¹² the Bike Plan should indicate that **public notification, but no other public process, is needed before installation of basic traffic calming** features along bike boulevards (e.g., speed tables and traffic circles) as part of any capital project. Public engagement for bike boulevards has already been part of the Bike Plan process.
 - a. Consistent with other cities, drop the need for study and engagement on standard elements like speed tables or cushions and circles and instead proceed with neighbor notification as is done for paving of Berkeley streets.
 - b. [Oakland's Neighborhood Bike Route \(NBR\) Implementation Guide](#)¹³ states “Residents on and near proposed NBRs should be notified early in the project development process when public comments can be addressed. Typically, the City will send a project mailer to addresses within 400’ of the proposed bikeway describing the project and providing an opportunity to weigh in and, optionally, to provide supporting comments. For NBR projects, an additional notification should be sent to addresses immediately adjacent to the locations of proposed traffic calming. Projects that restrict traffic (e.g., street closures, turn restrictions) may involve a broader process to address neighborhood concerns associated with diverted traffic.”
2. **Remove language** throughout the document requiring numerous separate and **ill-defined studies** before a project can be built and **remove the phrase “will not be implemented.”** This language is not only unnecessary, as studying project impacts is always a part of the project design and delivery process, but the veto power implied by the “will not be implemented” language **has the potential to substantially slow or even prevent the construction of any bikeway improvement on procedural rather than substantive objections.** Instead, **we recommend the below language** at the

¹¹<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06-17%20Item%2026%20Resolution%20Reaffirming%20Our%20Commitment.pdf>

¹²<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2043%20Budget%20Referral%20%20Vision%20Zero%20Rapid.pdf>

¹³https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/transportation/documents/transportation-permits-amp-engineering/oakland-bicycle-facility-design-guidelines/oadot_nbr_guidance.pdf

start of the document (while only a truncated reference is needed on each map). This would apply to any projects beyond basic safety improvement (e.g., speed tables or traffic circles):

Planning processes will study impacts on traffic, evacuation, and the environment and will include a public process and coordination with the Police and Fire Departments and all affected state, county, and local transit agencies.

- a. The phrase “will not be implemented” is present throughout the Plan regarding all ranges of bicycle improvements (from speed tables on bicycle boulevards to separated bikeways) with a long list of undefined and seemingly separate studies. For example, the following language is used throughout the Plan:
 - i. On maps showing separated bikeways: “Separated bikeways (Class IV) and other bikeway types that might impact transit operations, emergency response traffic, parking, or roadway capacity **will not be implemented** without these Complete Streets Corridor Studies. They **will include a traffic study, evacuation sensitivity study, environmental analysis, public process, and coordination with the Police and Fire Departments, and all affected state, county, and local transit agencies.**”
 - ii. On maps showing only bicycle boulevards: “Bikeway improvements that might impact emergency response traffic, parking, or roadway capacity and connectivity **will not be implemented** without appropriate **studies of traffic circulation and evacuation and emergency response times, and will include environmental analysis, public process, and coordination with the Police and Fire Departments.**”
- b. This language (i.e., “will not be implemented”) is effectively a means to veto a project. It is redundant, counterproductive and an antagonistic way to frame the need for study. Instead, the Bike Plan should discuss collaborative and cooperative approaches to balanced, multi-departmental/agency deliberations.
 - i. This sentence in the executive summary is more appropriate: “the recommendations in this Bike Plan require further project-specific planning, data collection, analysis, public engagement, and engineering design before they may be implemented.”
 - ii. **We would prefer the following:** “Planning will study impacts on traffic, evacuation, and the environment and will include a public process, and coordination with the Police and Fire Departments and all affected state, county, and local transit agencies.”

- c. Our recommendation to adjust the language may seem semantic, but it actually has very serious implications. The phrase “will not be implemented” will allow almost anyone who objects to any bikeway improvement to claim that there was fault in any number of the listed (but undefined) studies, and that therefore, the city may not move forward with project implementation. This has the potential to completely grind to a halt the construction of any bikeway improvement, in stark opposition to the safety spending mandate outlined in Measure FF, as approved by 61% of Berkeley voters in November 2024. This is not just problematic for bicycle projects, but sets a dangerous precedent for future safety improvements related to pedestrian and transit projects.
3. In order to quickly deliver proven safety measures, **eliminate or revise language to require the use of non-mandatory standards** (e.g., MUTCD) as directed previously by the City Council on several occasions. Requiring MUTCD compliance will slow projects and prevent important safety measures supported by numerous professional traffic safety organizations.
 - a. Two examples of language requiring MUTCD standards from the Draft Plan are:
 - i. “Intersection must meet a CA MUTCD STOP warrant before being considered for this treatment.”
 - ii. “These studies will also adhere to relevant California guidelines, such as the California Highway Design Manual (HDM), the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD), and local City of Berkeley standards.”
 - b. CA MUTCD language is very clear that Standards do not have to be met and that engineering judgement can be used.
 - i. [MUTCD 1A.09](https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/ca-mutcd/rev9/2025-camutcd-2014-rev9-all.pdf)¹⁴: “This Manual describes the application of traffic control devices, but shall not be a legal requirement for their installation.... while this Manual provides Standards, Guidance, and Options for design and applications of traffic control devices, this Manual should not be considered a substitute for engineering judgment. Engineering judgment should be exercised in the selection and application of traffic control devices, as well as in the location and design of roads and streets that the devices complement.”
 - ii. Berkeley should follow what other progressive Vision Zero cities do, which is lean on other reliable sources (NACTO, AASTHO, ITE) to support engineering judgement when the context does not perfectly meet the MUTCD standard.

¹⁴<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/ca-mutcd/rev9/2025-camutcd-2014-rev9-all.pdf>

- c. Berkeley City Council has already twice given direction about avoiding strict reliance on MUTCD standards
 - i. November 12, 2019: [Stop Sign Warrant Policy](#)¹⁵ (standards for installing stop signs that do not meet CA MUTCD STOP warrant).
 - ii. September 13, 2022: [Equitable Safe Streets and Climate Justice Resolution](#)¹⁶ (restricts use of the MUTCD to only those projects where the Public Works Director certifies, in writing, that the MUTCD is better suited to achieving City goals).

- 4. **Language regarding emergency response and evacuation** within the Draft Bike Plan should **reflect the prevention of crashes, as outlined in the Street Trauma Prevention Program (STPP) created by Council**¹⁷ in collaboration with the Fire Department. Aiming to minimize impacts on emergency response and evacuation times should absolutely be goals for bicycle improvements, but these goals should **complement, not eclipse, the goals of street safety improvements**. A good model is [San Francisco's 2025 Bike Plan](#) which states "outcome should seek to develop 24-hour traffic calming and safe passage for people on bikes while also ensuring that emergency response times are acceptable and on-street operations can respond to fires and trauma."
 - a. The TIC completely supports the Berkeley Fire Department's mission to aim for quick response times and plan for scenarios involving evacuation, but as currently inserted into the Draft Bike Plan, infrastructure elements designed to keep bicyclists (and pedestrians) safe are framed with language that paint these safety improvements as less important than and antithetical to emergency response despite Council's repeated commitments to promoting the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. Examples include:
 - i. In Section 3.2, describing "City Plans, Policies, and Studies Since 2017," less than half a page of text is dedicated each to the Vision Zero Action Plan and the Transit-First Policy Implementation Plan, each of which reflect policies first passed by Council ([Vision Zero Goal](#)¹⁸ and [Transit-First Policy](#),¹⁹ respectively), and then Plans that were subject to years of public input and adoption by the City Council. In what follows,

¹⁵<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2019-11-12%20Item%2010%20Stop%20Sign%20Warrant%20Policy.pdf>

¹⁶<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-09-13%20Item%2034%20Supp3%20TApIn.pdf>

¹⁷<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2034%20Fund%20Program%20Manager%20Position.pdf>

¹⁸https://visionzeronetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/3_27_2018-CLK-Resolution-City-Council-68371-In-Support-of-Vision-Zero.pdf

¹⁹https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/05_Transportation%20Element%20-%20FINAL_0.pdf

nearly two full pages of text are dedicated to two studies from the Fire Department that reflect neither adopted policies by City Council nor adopted Plans. This imbalance in weight given to these Fire Department studies is concerning given their relative level of public and Council scrutiny and review.

- ii. The idea that bikeway projects should prioritize designs that “maintain or improve emergency response times” rather than optimize safety for bicyclists while minimizing impact on emergency response seems to pit these two safety goals against each other.
- iii. In several locations throughout the Draft Bike Plan is peppered the following sentence:

For example, the community engagement process used to inform these recommendations did not include community education of potential impacts to emergency response times, nor did it offer an opportunity or structure for respondents to consider emergency response times or impacts to evacuation as a priority in bike infrastructure planning.

The community engagement process was not about education and if it had been, there are nearly infinite other examples of community education that were not provided during the Bike Plan engagement (such as about the proven benefits of protected bike lanes for pedestrians). To single out emergency response here is inappropriate and inaccurately pits emergency response against the safety of all road users.

- iv. Another example of antagonistic language regarding road safety infrastructure with respect to evacuation is seen in the graphic on page 69, which shows evacuation congestion caused by too many vehicles entering an intersection but with a caption reading:

On normal days, traffic calming devices (like diverters, traffic circles, and speed humps) make roads safer by slowing down cars, reducing traffic on residential streets and limiting how cars move through neighborhoods. But during evacuations, the safety goal is to move traffic quickly. Traffic calming may slow down evacuees and/or add to traffic jams.

Not only does this again pit bicyclist and pedestrian safety against evacuation but it does so inaccurately, as the Evacuation Study found that the primary cause of congestion in an evacuation will be car drivers approaching intersections. The evacuation study never actually provided any quantitative assessment of congestion generated by traffic calming devices.

- b. The TIC was shocked by the outsized presence of emergency response and evacuation language inserted into the Draft Bike Plan. Even just on word count, the term “emergency” appears 83 times in the document and “evacuation” appears 55 times. In contrast, “low-stress” appears 60 times, “safety” appears 52 times; and “all ages and abilities” appears only 17 times. Compare this with [Oakland’s 2019 Bicycle Plan](#)²⁰ which mentions “emergency” 1 time, “evacuation” 0 times, but “safety” 41 times, and “low-stress” 51 times, or [San Francisco’s 2025 Bicycle Plan](#)²¹ which mentions “emergency” 12 times, “evacuation” 0 times, but “safety” 37 times and “all ages and abilities” 30 times.
- c. Instead, we recommend emergency response and evacuation language be incorporated into the Bike Plan as follows:
 - i. Any mentions of the need to consider emergency response and evacuation during bikeway design and implementation should be brief and occasional, and it should focus on how design can optimize safety for bicyclists while minimizing impact on emergency response and evacuation
 - ii. Removing all references to the Evacuation Time Study, which has had little review and has numerous inconsistencies that have raised serious concerns for members of the Disaster & Fire Safety Commission and others. Additionally, any references to “evacuation studies” should not be included, as those are based on the Evacuation Time Study, and it is premature to include these studies in the Bike Plan at this point in time.
 - iii. It would be most in line with City Council policy for contributions from the Fire Department’s to outline how emergency response and evacuation goals can be complementary and synergistic to bicycle and pedestrian safety goals, in line with the stated goals of the Fire Department’s Street Trauma Prevention Program [when funded by City Council](#),²² which is “to support the transportation and infrastructure projects of Vision Zero.”

(II) Missing Elements in Bicycle Boulevard Design Guidelines

Bicycle boulevard design guidelines are missing critical elements, and do not adhere to or adopt key elements of effective bicycle boulevard design criteria as specified by NACTO, despite language claiming otherwise (See Section 1.2 “Plan Organization” page 23

²⁰https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/transportation/documents/walking-and-biking-in-oakland/bicycle-planning-amp-evaluation/oakland-bicycle-plan/lboakland_finaldraft_20190807_web.pdf

²¹<https://www.sfmta.com/media/41810/download?inline>

²²<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2034%20Fund%20Program%20Manager%20Position.pdf>

of Bike Plan). In keeping with the goal of better aligning with best practices as recommended by NACTO and other organizations, we recommend:

1. Greater focus on **lowering volume** (i.e. more diverters, etc) as well as speeds, in line with recommendations from NACTO²³, with **particular focus on times of high peak volumes** such as school drop-off and pickup times, as well as when **bicycle boulevard crossings** treatments also facilitate motor vehicle crossing (i.e., stop signs, PHBs or traffic signals).
 - a. While the draft Bicycle Plan includes many elements that encourage lower driving *speeds* (circles, speed tables, etc.), it does not currently do enough to ensure lower car *volumes* on Bicycle Boulevards. Both are essential in creating a Bicycle Boulevard network that is truly safe and low stress for micromobility users of all ages and abilities. NACTO's Contextual Guidance for Selecting All Ages & Abilities Bikeways²⁴ specifies the following speed and volume target thresholds for Bicycle Boulevards, which we recommend codifying verbatim into the Bicycle Boulevard Design Guide:
 - i. 20mph and between 1,000 and 2,000 ADT (average daily traffic) and less than 50 vehicles per hour in the peak direction at peak hour, or
 - ii. 25mph and between 500 and 1,500 ADT and less than 50 vehicles per hour in the peak direction at peak hour
 - b. Many Berkeley schools are located on the Bicycle Boulevard network. Parents across Berkeley are deeply concerned about the dangerous conditions that exist on these streets during school drop off and pick up times, the Bicycle Plan should include extra attention to the needs of each particular school site, utilizing recommendations from SafeTREC's Complete Streets Safety Assessment²⁵ as well as Alameda County's School Safety Assessments for Berkeley.²⁶
 - c. Volume reduction strategies should include traditional diversion, but might also include treatments such as slip-lane removal or repurposing at select intersections throughout the city. As NACTO suggests, right-turn slip lanes "require larger intersections and allow higher-speed turn movements"²⁷. Eliminating slip-lanes will necessarily lead to reduced car volumes on intersecting roadways and bike boulevards, since higher speed turning movements will be discouraged, decreasing the attractiveness as a route for drivers.

²³<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/designing-bikeways-for-all-ages-and-abilities/bikeways-on-low-speed-low-volume-streets/bike-boulevards/>

²⁴https://nacto.org/wp-content/uploads/NACTO_Designing-for-All-Ages-Abilities.pdf

²⁵<https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/programs/complete-streets-safety-assessments>

²⁶<https://alamedacountysr2s.org/our-program/school-safety-assessments/#berkeley>

²⁷<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/designing-safe-intersections/reassess-and-reorganize-the-intersection/>

2. **Specifying maximum distance between speed tables, *not minimum***, in order to ensure that very long blocks have at least two speed tables.
 - a. Vertical deflection should be spaced at regular intervals so that a consistent target speed is maintained along the entire Bike Blvd route. This allows drivers to see the next vertical deflection element in the series as they pass over each one, encouraging drivers to maintain a consistently low speed rather than abrupt accelerations and decelerations.
 - b. NACTO specifies a spacing of 150-300 ft, and no greater than 500 ft.
3. Specifying the **target speed of all Bicycle Boulevards as 20 mph and utilizing physical speed management design elements to achieve target speeds. Staff to pursue 20 mph posted speed limits accordingly and where feasible**, in accordance with [Council's referral to implement AB 43](#).²⁸
 - a. As noted by NACTO, All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Boulevards provide the most comfort, and thus maximum usage by all users, when traffic speeds are no greater than 20 mph. This is particularly important on Berkeley Bicycle Boulevards since they coincide with safe routes to school and serve many children. Every effort should be made to make these facilities safe and accessible to these vulnerable road users.
 - b. It is likely that nearly all bicycle boulevards throughout the city would qualify for a 20 mph (or even 15 mph) speed limit allowed under AB 43, as almost all bicycle boulevards are situated on local roads ([per Caltrans](#)²⁹), and so [do not require an Engineering & Traffic Survey for speed limit setting](#).³⁰
 - c. AB2290³¹ mandates a 20 mph design speed for Class III Bikeway projects, to qualify for ATP grant funding.
4. Specifying a **minimum width of 6' and up to 8.5' for cargo bikes as specified by NACTO** to accommodate a bicyclist and rider. The "Design Needs of Bicyclists" of the Draft Bike Plan section deviates significantly from NACTO guidelines³² by specifying **only 5'** for all bicycle and rider configurations. Additionally, while several bicycle configurations and dimensions were considered, **cargo bikes and adult tricycles were completely omitted**. And although wheelchair users aren't "cyclists," they are regular

²⁸<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022-03-08%20Item%2016%20Referral%20to%20Implement%20State%20Law%20AB%2043.pdf>

²⁹<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=026e830c914c495797c969a3e5668538>

³⁰<https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/tools/california-safe-speeds-toolkit/california-safe-speeds-toolkit-next-steps#anchor1>

³¹ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2290

³²<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/designing-bikeways-for-all-ages-and-abilities/design-controls-for-bicycle-facilities/>

users of bicycle facilities, and **we suggest including a standard motorized wheelchair and rider profile in this section.**

- a. Cargo bikes, adult tricycles and other types of wider or longer, non-standard bikes ridden by parents, workers, and older adults are already among the most common types of bicycles on Berkeley's streets.
 - b. Cargo bike sales are expected to triple nation-wide over the next ten years. Our planning process needs to take into account this rapidly growing form of transportation as we create lasting infrastructure.
 - c. Motorized wheelchair users are regular users of bicycle facilities as they offer the same benefits as they do to cyclists, and should be given consideration when describing "typical" configurations of rider and mobility device.
5. **Clarifying** that Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)-only intersection treatments **are to be used only in exceptional situations where additional calming/diversion elements cannot be used. RRFB's alone**, without other vertical calming/diversion elements, are wholly unsafe and **inappropriate as bicycle boulevard crossing treatments.**
- a. Drivers are not legally obligated to yield to bicyclists when an RRFB is activated, which may lead to a false sense of security for those attempting to cross after activation of the RRFB.
 - b. Staff have verbally confirmed to the Bike Plan Subcommittee that RRFB's alone, with no other treatment such as diverters or medians, will not be used in future (not-yet-designed) bike plan projects, but this commitment should be addressed in writing in the Bike Plan.

FROM: Greg Murphy, Vice Chair, Disaster and Fire Safety Commission

TO: Keith May, Deputy Chief, BFD

RE: Communication to DFSC Commission

DATE: October 20, 2025

Please forward this communication to the full DFSC:

Commissioners, I will be asking the leaders of each of the workgroups to provide a report on the Workgroup's activities at every DFSC meeting starting with the October 29, 2025, meeting.

I have attached the finalized FY 26 DFSC Work Plan for your reference that details the name of the group, the activities and expected outcomes of each group, and the leader and members of each group.

To avoid any conflicts with the Brown Act, please do not reply to me, or to other commissioners to this specific communication, however you may certainly continue your communication to workgroup members for any activities you are engaging.

Thank you.

Greg Murphy

To: **Disaster and Fire Safety Commission**

Care of Chief May

I extend congratulations to city staff and consultants on the substantial, thoughtful work put into the draft Berkeley Bike Plan Update to date. I applaud the focus on ensuring that access to active transportation in Berkeley is equitable and welcoming for all users, regardless of age or ability. Berkeley sees itself as a leader in this space, and with the right actions, it can be.

But there is much work to do to reduce the unacceptable numbers of injuries and deaths that currently occur among bicyclists, pedestrians, and others who travel outside of public cars. As the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission (DFSC) wrote to the City Council in May 2024, each year on average, 694 walkers, bicyclists and vehicle occupants are injured on Berkeley streets, and five die.

This Bike Plan Update is an important opportunity to get more people out of cars and on to bikes, helping the city to meet cross-cutting and cross-departmental goals such as achieving climate-relevant emissions. A 2017 City survey found that 71% of Berkeley residents reported being interested in relying on bicycles for daily use, but most were too concerned about safety to act on this choice. A 2024 survey conducted by Embold Research reaffirmed this finding.

Below, I lay out 11 areas for improvement that are critical to the success of the Berkeley Bike Plan Update, and to the goal of encouraging Berkeley's residents and visitors to choose less-polluting, safer, healthier, more joyful forms of transport. Encouraging residents and visitors to choose active transport and/or public transport (over private motorized vehicles) is essential to the health and vibrancy of Berkeley as a community and destination.

Here are my requests for changes and improvements to the draft. Please consider and respond to each of these points individually.

1. **Correct the definition of "emergency response" to reflect the [public health understanding that an emergency is already underway in Berkeley](#)** (694 injuries and 5 deaths on average per year in Berkeley as a result of injuries under current street conditions, among those using active transportation) and that emergency response includes updating Berkeley's infrastructure to *prevent* incidents that cause injuries and death on the streets. Reexamine the plan to see how it creates a cohesive emergency response in the sense of preventing injuries and death by design *as well as* through acute response to incidents *after* they occur. Berkeley will be in good company with [leading cities around the world](#) if and when it updates its Bicycle Plan using this perspective. Current draft Bike Plan Update language is not aligned with the recently-passed Measure FF and the new Street Trauma Prevention program. It is unacceptable to take a narrow view of emergency response to include only emergency vehicle access, as is implied in several places in the plan. This must be amended before finalization.
2. **Lower the speed limit to 20 MPH speed limit on "neighborhood" streets**, consistent with "20 Is Plenty" campaign which in the Action section of the City's Vision Zero Plan. Slower speeds are proven to be substantially safer for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other active transport users. Reduced traffic speeds will improve emergency response. Many cities have shown that safely designed streets that reduce traffic speeds and protect walkers and people on bikes can actually improve emergency response times by reducing congestion, and they reduce the EMS call volume and exposure to severe trauma among firefighters and paramedics.
3. **Eliminate wording that says certain types of bikeways will not be implemented without Complete Street Corridor Studies** including "a traffic study, evacuation sensitivity study, environmental analysis, public process, and coordination with the Police and Fire Departments, and all affected state, county, and local transit agencies." Of course a Complete Street Corridor Study will include many pieces - there is no need to say "will not be implemented" nor to specifically list all of the studies which may change during the Bike Plan's lifetime or not be appropriate for every bikeway that ends up being studied. Such language leaves the City open to lawsuits from those opposed to a bikeway project or bikeways. Delaying safe streets with endless and undefined studies means more people will be injured and killed while proven, best-practice safety improvements are held up.
4. **Create the "pre-approved toolbox of traffic safety infrastructure design treatment improvements with the Vision Zero Coordinating Committee to**

streamline the implementation of projects” as called for in the City’s Vision Zero Plan.

5. **Narrow lanes to the minimum width allowed on all streets** so that traffic is forced to go slower making it safer for pedestrians and bikers to cross and reducing risk for car drivers as well.
6. **Upgrade all traffic lights in the City to be activated by a bike approaching an intersection so bikers are not forced to dismount or navigate to a sidewalk** to push the pedestrian beg button (aka pedestrian call button). Including this in the bike plan is essential to allocate resources accordingly.
7. **Install speed bumps (not tables or humps) on every neighborhood street as an automatic part of each repaving plan.** Delete the minimum distance requirement between speed bumps. Deliver robust traffic calming on bicycle boulevards routinely - the City should use the same process it uses for paving projects to add well-recognized and effective traffic calming features on all bike boulevards and on all streets surrounding schools, parks, senior centers, childcare centers and other high-risk areas. This is a common-sense investment in health, safety, and happiness.
8. **Request geofences from map apps (such as Google Maps, Waze)** around all schools (including preschools and private schools) so that cut-through traffic is routed away from schools.
9. **Explore more full diverters throughout the city** to keep cut-through vehicle traffic on main roads, not neighborhood roads. We have seen how protective and successful these diverters are in recent weeks, as they kept a dangerous driver from further hurting people in the Elmwood neighborhood.
10. **Set the timing of traffic lights to protect bicycle safety** and discourage cars racing to catch green lights. Telegraph and Shattuck are two examples of streets where the faster one drives, the less red lights one has. Reducing speeds protects all vulnerable road users as well as vehicles.
11. **Update [Resolution 64,732-N.S.](#) which says that the 85th percentile speed must be at least 3mph over the speed limit next to a park or school** to get traffic calming (5mph higher if there is no park or school nearby!). This outdated language works *against* the city's efforts to prioritize vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists on our neighborhood streets and must be amended.

The outcome of this Bike Plan Update should be a city in which traveling by bicycle is a safe, easy and joyful choice for as many children and adults as possible. With implementation of the 11 points outlined above, the draft will come closer to accomplishing that outcome. The stakes are high for this document. With additional work based on public comment, it can become a much more effective blueprint for safe active travel, enabling Berkeley to meet the goals of Vision Zero.

Thank you for your attention and work on this,

Zoe Chafe, PhD (Energy and Resources Group, UC Berkeley), MPH (UC Berkeley School of Public Health)

To the Transportation staff, Disaster & Fire Safety Commission, Mayor, City Council, Manager and Fire Chief:

I am thrilled that the Bike Plan is moving forward and proposing many important improvements to our street safety infrastructure. I do, however, have some significant concerns about Berkeley's ability to implement any of these improvements as the Bike Plan is currently framed and request a fundamental shift in the approach to prioritize reducing injury and death on the roads.

Cars injure and kill directly by hitting each other and people and injure and kill us indirectly by polluting our air (yes, even EVs due to tire and brake particulate emissions) and destroying the climate. Cars are lethal.

Cars are also major impediments to emergency response. Whether clogging the traffic lanes or parking lanes of roadways, cars are difficult for emergency vehicles to navigate around for both emergency vehicles and evacuees escaping by car, further exacerbating injuries and the chance of death.

Bicycles, on the other hand, take up a fraction of the space on the roadway and can be moved out of the way much more quickly and completely, posing very little impediment to emergency responders or car based evacuees.

Every single time a Berkeley resident makes a trip by bicycle instead of by car, the number of lethal cars on the road goes down, emissions are reduced, congestion is reduced, and thanks to the removal of vehicle obstacles, *emergency response time & evacuation time is improved.*

Yet we know that the gaps in Berkeley's bicycle infrastructure are still keeping large majorities of Berkeley residents from making that choice.

Every year that we spend on redundant, poorly defined, expensive studies that the City cannot afford and does not have the staff capacity or even the study definitions to undertake before implementing already well vetted street safety measures means another year of unnecessary injuries and deaths from traffic violence. Another year of unnecessary and damaging air pollution and climate emissions. Another year of congestion and associated reduced emergency response times.

I am deeply concerned that this Bike Plan will never be even close to fully implemented in my lifetime due to the commitment to study each improvement to death. Literally.

I fully support the comments and directions recommended by Mike Wilson and the detailed recommendations by Walk Bike Berkeley on

- how to balance improving street safety with emergency response and evacuation,
- how to streamline delivery
- use of speed cushions,
- setting maximum instead of minimum distances between tables/cushions
- reducing vehicle speed (20 mph) and volumes on bike boulevards
- removing the MUTCD STOP warrant requirement, and
- adding the NACTO design guide.

Thank you for your continuing efforts to reduce injuries and deaths on our roadways.

Sincerely,

Tom Lent

Tom Lent
2464 West St

Berkeley, CA 94702
510-504-3673 (cell)

Dear Disaster and Fire Safety Commissioners,

I'm a 65-year-old resident of North Berkeley and have lived in Berkeley for over 30 years. I'm writing today because I plan to age "in place" and biking is an integral part of how I get around town. In fact, it's how I mainly get around town. But biking is rife with dangers, and most of these dangers arise from lack of adequate infrastructure that would make it possible for cars and bikes and pedestrians to "share the road" safely.

I have "close calls" several times a month, even though I'm assiduous in obeying traffic laws and signal conscientiously to let drivers know what I'm doing. Why is this? It's because when drivers cut corners or rush to their destination or fail to signal or make other such errors of judgment, it poses the immediate threat of collision (e.g., death or maiming) to a pedestrian or a biker.

I worry about this all the time.

I'm grateful for the new bike infrastructure that provides for separate car and bike lanes; this has made it easier to negotiate certain streets and intersections I regarded as dangerous: Fulton, Bancroft, the intersection at Milvia and University, to name just a few.

But I'm disappointed by the way Berkeley's Updated Bike Plan throws new barriers in the way of realizing a more complete vision for safe streets.

Here are four areas where the Updated Bike Plan needs immediate improvement:

(1) Cut the red tape that will delay safety improvements on Berkeley's dangerous streets: delaying safe streets with endless and undefined studies means more people will be injured and killed while proven, best-practice safety improvements are held up.

(2) Don't pit safe streets against emergency response: many cities have shown that safely designed streets that reduce traffic speeds and protect walkers and people on bikes can actually *improve* emergency response times by reducing congestion, and they reduce the EMS call volume and exposure to severe trauma among firefighters and paramedics in the first place.

(3) Deliver robust traffic calming on bicycle boulevards routinely: the City should use the same process it uses for paving projects to add well-recognized and effective traffic calming features on all bike boulevards and on all streets surrounding schools, parks, senior centers, childcare centers and other high-risk areas.

(4) Strengthen bicycle boulevard crossing treatments: rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons should *only* be used when paired with other roadway features that protect people on

bikes.

I want to point out that the Updated Bike Plan ignores the City of Berkeley's own street trauma prevention and response program, funded in 2024 with the cooperation of the Fire Department, and a laudable outcome of much work put in by the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission in furtherance of the City's Vision Zero goals.

I find it discouraging that the consistent bias in the Updated Bike Plan is that the best we can do is *respond* to traffic violence and street trauma, rather than embrace proven strategies to *prevent* these things. Through my work with East Bay Kidical Mass as a volunteer organizer, I know that Berkeley's young families (more and more of whom get around town on cargo bikes with their children as passengers) are recognizing that you need to design streets so that they're safe not just for cars but also for kids who are getting around on foot and on bikes. They know that what happened to Adam Moss and his two young children on Feb. 13 of 2024, when he was hit by a driver who was "in a hurry" to drop her own kids off at school, is unacceptable because his own kids could easily have been seriously injured or killed. They also know that emergency responders won't necessarily be able to save a young child who has been hit by a car or truck, whereas better street design that fairly balances pedestrian and bike infrastructure *can and does prevent such deaths*.

So our Updated Bike Plan must reflect these goals, not thwart them. Safety is prevention -- and safety is not compatible or synonymous with prioritizing an ever increasing volume of car traffic and/or facilitating higher travel speeds for cars in the name of "emergency response". Such thinking demonstrates a lack of vision and understanding, and is itself the root of the problem.

Sincerely,

Sheila Newbery
1727 Marin Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94707-2211
(510) 776-4647

Action: Amendment and Approval of individual activities proposed in a 2025 – 2026 DFSC Work Plan that will then be finalized and submitted to City Council for Approval

Recommendation: The DFSC reviews, amends if necessary and approves the proposed workplan, with the activities and outcomes as detailed below. To the extent possible, commissioners will be selected for each work plan assignment with a designated leader of each work group. The final approved plan will be effective commencing on the date of approval of the new Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2026 by the City Council.

Rationale for Recommendation:

The City Council requires Commissions submit an annual Work Plan. The current Commissioner’s Manual, dated 2019* states:

DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PLAN

In 2016, the City Council took formal action directing all commissions, except Board of Library Trustees (BOLT), Design Review, and Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB), to submit an annual work plan at the start of each fiscal year to the Council in the form of an Information Report. A commission work plan should contain the commission’s mission statement, goals, resources, activities, outputs, and desired outcomes. This planning document specifies how and when the commission plans to accomplish its objectives (by specifying outcomes) during the fiscal year. Goal statements explain the nature and scope of the work to be performed, and the time needed to accomplish the goal. Designing yearly work plans or goal statements may be done in conjunction with the development of the relevant departmental work plan so that the work of the department and the commission will complement each other throughout the year. When developing a work plan, commissions should take special care to ensure that they remain within the subject area purview of their enabling legislation.

Written Material:

**Berkeley Disaster and Fire Safety Commission
Proposed WORK PLAN – FY 2025-2026**

Mission Statement The Disaster and Fire Safety Commission serves as the public oversight body for Berkeley’s Measure GG and Measure FF funds, charged with reviewing the budget on a regular basis to ensure that the funds are spent in accordance with the intent of the voter approved measures, recommending the appropriate annual increase to the tax rate, and recommending new programs and policy positions requiring Measure GG and Measure FF funding. The ultimate goal of the Commission is to increase community safety, resilience, and education for community disaster preparedness. The Commission also reviews and makes recommendations on items referred by the City Council or other Commissions.

Summary of 2025 - 2026 Work Plan Activities

NAME	ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	COMMISSIONERS
1. Plan & Budget Oversight BFD Staff Contact: D. Sprague / K. May	a) Review BFD budget materials on a quarterly basis b) Review current presentation materials / dashboards and make possible recommendations for changes or modifications c) Review the percentage of funds earmarked for Fire Zones 3 and 4 d) Collaborate with Staff on providing recommendations to obtain additional funding for Vegetation Management and Home Hardening	a) Provide input for quarterly and annual budget; Provide Annual budget recommendation to City Council on FF & GG; Provide City Council on annual GG increases b) Review and Support concentration of FF mitigation funds to Fire Zones 3 & 4 without sacrificing important programs and efforts in remaining fire zones c) Research possible funding resources for Home Hardening and Vegetation Management d) Research possible funding for the Facilities Master Plan	<u>Murphy</u> Gordon Katz
2. Neighborhood Fire Resiliency BFD Staff Contact: C. Arnold	a) Initiate process to monitor EMBER and new Building Code compliance with Staff-including the Fire Marshall and Building Department b) Obtain updates on HH mesh program	a) Review metrics and presentation materials/dashboards provided by Staff on EMBER and HH compliance b) Provide input and recommendations to BFD on expanding and improving the HH program	<u>Murphy</u> Herzer-Baptiste Katz

2025-2026 DFSC WORK PLAN

Internal

	c) Monitor progress by Berkeley Firesafe Council on Tree removal and clean-up project	c) Reports to full Commission from the Workgroup on a regular basis and requests an annual presentation from BFC	
<p>3. Safe Passages</p> <p>BFD Staff Contact: C. Arnold / S. Lana</p>	<p>a) Review Safe Passage Components to EMBER ordinance, discuss implementation priorities with Staff</p> <p>b) Review Evacuation Study Results with Staff and draft recommendations for implementation</p> <p>c) Coordinate efforts with Vision Zero Workgroup</p>	<p>a) Recommendations for Safe Passages implementation in very high and high Fire Zones</p> <p>b) Provide input to Staff on recommendations and implementation</p> <p>c) Provide a joint report with Street Trauma Prevention Program workgroup to the full commission</p>	<p><u>Gordon</u> Wilson Herzer-Baptiste</p>
<p>4. Street Trauma Prevention Program</p> <p>BFD Staff Contact: R Ahmed</p>	<p>a. Meet regularly with the STP program manager on priorities, decision-making, internal processes, challenges and other matters.</p> <p>b. Develop policy briefs and recommendations related to street trauma prevention and response.</p> <p>c. Develop a compilation of research findings and best-practices related to street trauma prevention and response and provide, or arrange for, presentations to the DFSC, and, if warranted, to members of Council.</p> <p>d. Collaborate and communicate with other entities, including other City commissions, on the role of the fire service in preventing, and responding to, street trauma incidents.</p>	<p>a. Assist in the development of written STPP goals, methods, and measurement tools.</p> <p>b. Provide ongoing feedback and recommendations to improve the STPP.</p> <p>c. Memoranda and / or referrals for approval from the DFSC for the City Council.</p> <p>d. Presentations and approved recommendations from DFSC to the City Council.</p> <p>e. Presentations for other entities on the STP program and the role of the fire service in both preventing, and responding to, street trauma incidents.</p> <p>f. Written communications and possible special sessions with relevant City Commissions such as Transportation and Infrastructure, Planning, Aging and others.</p>	<p><u>Wilson</u> Gordon Herzer-Baptiste</p>

2025-2026 DFSC WORK PLAN

Internal

<p>5. Community Outreach</p> <p>BFD Staff Contact: S. Lana / J. Albrecht</p>	<p>a) Regular meeting with staff to monitor and assist in ongoing outreach activities</p> <p>b) Confer with Staff regarding current Communications Plan</p> <p>c) Assist in finding resources to implement unfulfilled activities of the Communications plan or other outreach activities</p>	<p>a) Present reports to DFSC on results of meetings</p> <p>b) Provide recommendations to improve or modify the Communications Plan</p> <p>c) Provide recommendations to implement unfulfilled activities or other outreach activities</p>	<p><u>Bradstreet</u> Herzer- Baptiste TBD</p>
---	---	--	---

* COMMISSIONERS' MANUAL 2019 edition; Amended and officially adopted by Resolution No. 69,063-N.S. (2019)

Alternative Action Considered:

None