



Peace and Justice
Commission

**PEACE & JUSTICE COMMISSION
MEETING**
Monday, January 13, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.
South Berkeley Senior Center
2939 Ellis St. Berkeley Ca, 94703

AGENDA

Mayor Adena Ishii
Andrea Cassidy

Rashi Kersarwani:
Allegra Guarino

Terry Taplin:
Veta Jacquelin

Ben Bartlett:
George Lippman

Igor Tregub
Deborah Fink

Shoshana O’Keefe:
Nimrod Pitskar Elias

Brent Blackaby:
Robin Mencher

Cecilia Lunaparra:
Luke Taylor

Mark Humbert
Ilene Lee

BUSD:

Appel- Grace Morizawa- Chair

Shanoski- Jeannette McNeil

Chang- Sandy Parks

Vasudeo- Sheela Jivan

Babitt- Dwayne Phillips

Student Director- Julio Gonzalez

SECTION A. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Roll Call
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Announcements
4. Comments from the Public (*subject to time limits applicable to all speakers as necessary*)
5. Review and approval of meeting minutes
6. Commission Updates & Chairperson’s Report
7. Secretary’s Report (including status of passed items from previous meetings)

SECTION B. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Meeting Schedule for 2025
2. Sanctuary City Discussion and Action
3. Discussion and Action for the Peace and Justice Commission Work Plan

SECTION D. COMMUNICATIONS

4. No communications received.

SECTION E. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SECTION F. ADJOURNMENT

Attachments:

- A. November 2024 Draft Minutes
- B. Land Acknowledgement
- C. Sanctuary City Letter
- D. Work Plan 2025

 Meeting Access: 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 (3) business days before the meeting date.

Communications Disclaimer

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SB 343 Disclaimer

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 Old City Hall located at 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Commission Contact Information

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Peace and Justice Commission
City of Berkeley
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Berkeley, CA 94704
Ovance-dozier@cityofberkeley.info (email)*

Land Acknowledgement Statement

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.



Peace and Justice
Commission

Peace and Justice Commission
November 18, 2024

DRAFT MINUTES

The meeting convened at 7:00 pm with Grace Morizawa (Chair) presiding. Okeya Vance-Dozier, Secretary.

SECTION A. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. **Roll Call**

Present: Lippman, Morizawa, Elias, Taylor, Guarino, Fink, Phillips, Lee, Gonzalez, Cassidy, Jivan, Parks

Absent:

Excused:

Leave of Absence: Jacquelin, McNeil, Mencher

2. **Announcements**

None

3. **Comments from the Public**

Public Attendance: 50

Public Comments: 50

4. **Review and approval of meeting minutes**

Peace and Justice Commission approved minutes from 9/30/24.

M/S/C: Morizawa, Cassidy

Ayes: Lippman, Morizawa, Elias, Taylor, Guarino, Fink, Phillips, Lee, Gonzalez, Cassidy, Jivan, Parks

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

Excused: Jacquelin, McNeil, Mencher

5. **Commission Updates & Chairperson's Report (No Action Taken):**

6. **Secretary's Report (No Action Taken)**

SECTION B. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

4. Gaza Roundtable Discussion and Action

Commissioner requested to table the item until further notice.

M/S/C:

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

Excused:

5. Discussion and Possible Action in Light of Elections.

No Action

M/S/C:

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

Excused:

6. Discussion and Possible Action for the Peace and Justice Work Plan.

No action taken.

M/S/C:

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

Excused:

7. Meeting Schedule for 2025

January meeting was approved for January 13, 2025 the remainder of the calendar will be discussed at this January meeting.

M/S/C: Morizawa, Lippman

Ayes: Lippman, Morizawa, Elias, Taylor, Guarino, Phillips, Park, Lee, Gonzales, Cassidy, Fink, Jivan

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

Excused: Jacquelin, McNeil, Mencher

SECTION C. COMMUNICATIONS

8. No communications received prior to meeting.

SECTION D. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.

M/S/C:

Ayes: Lippman, Morizawa, Elias, Taylor, Guarino, Phillips, Park, Lee, Gonzales, Cassidy, Fink, Jivan

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

Excused: Jacquilin, McNeil, Mencher

Respectfully Submitted,

Okeya Vance-Dozier, Secretary
Peace and Justice Commission

DRAFT

Letter to Council on Resolution Reaffirming Berkeley as a Sanctuary City

Hon. Mayor Ishii, Members, Berkeley City Council:

The Peace and Justice Commission advises the City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3.68.070).

We write to urge passage of the 2025 Resolution Reaffirming Berkeley as a Sanctuary City in a timely manner as President Trump steps into office. We thank the author, Councilmember Blackaby, and co-sponsors Mayor Ishii, Councilmember Lunaparra, and Councilmember Taplin for bringing this resolution to protect the rights of the over 21 percent of Berkeley residents who are immigrants in the City and the public safety of all residents.

We want to acknowledge the courage and leadership the City of Berkeley has provided to cities and states across the country when it declared itself a City of Refuge in 1971, and that the City continued to clarify the protections for immigrants in subsequent reaffirmations. In that light, we urge the City Council to not only pass this resolution but also **begin a process of codifying this resolution and the past Sanctuary Act Resolutions into a city ordinance**. Such an ordinance would strengthen the commitment to legal and practical protection for immigrants and all Berkeley residents. The Peace and Justice Commission believes this next step would help create an environment where people feel comfortable interacting with local law enforcement and accessing public services such as hospitals, clinics, schools, and public transportation. In this

time of extraordinary danger and hostilities towards immigrants, Berkeley can fortify the City's commitment to the well-being of all residents, including immigrants, DACA, TPS, and other undocumented residents, with an ordinance.

The Commission further suggests that the City Council amend the resolution to urge our Congressional legislators to work to and support the repeal of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 [1] which President Trump invoked as he promised to detain and deport millions of noncitizens. In 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt invoked this law to arrest and detain 120,000 Japanese Americans and over 9,000 Japanese American immigrants who were forbidden as non-Europeans to become naturalized citizens. The law was also used against 11,500 Germans and 3,000 Italian noncitizens. The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 acknowledged that the internment of the 9,000 Japanese American immigrants, Japanese Latin Americans, and the mass incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans was a grave injustice, and cited that "these actions were carried out without adequate security reasons and without any acts of espionage or sabotage, and were motivated largely by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." [2] Let us learn from history the devastating consequences of allowing fear and racism to shape policies. Laws like the Alien Enemies Act must be repealed.

Commented [1]: Should this be "Japanese Latin Americans"? Or maybe this was intentional.

Peace and Justice Commission members have participated in the development of the City's Sanctuary policies throughout the commission's history, and served on a Sanctuary City Task Force during President Trump's first term. With the passage of this resolution, members of the

Commission look forward to joining with the City and other invested community organizations to participate in such a Task Force. Most recently, the commission chair and vice chair met with immigrant rights and services organizations coordinated by the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant. The group consulted with Councilmember Blackaby and several others on wording for the Sanctuary City resolution.

Once again, thank you, Councilmember Blackaby and other Councilmembers, for your efforts to reaffirm Berkeley as a Sanctuary City and for hearing our recommendations.

Yours truly,

Grace Morizawa

Chair, Berkeley Peace and Justice Commission.

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- [1] <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/alien-enemies-act-explained>
[2] <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-102/pdf/STATUTE-102-Pg903.pdf>

1 Proposal for Peace & Justice work plan for 2025
2 Drafted by George Lippman
3

4 This memo proposes a structure for the Peace and Justice Commission to
5 create policy recommendations in 2025 on a variety of issues, from a social
6 justice perspective.
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8 At our last meeting in 2024, commissioners each contributed to a list of eleven
9 issues we would like the body to address this year.
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11 The commission's history suggests that there are four ways an item can come
12 to the agenda. Most often the item is agendized by an individual member or
13 group of members. The item can be developed by a formal commission
14 subcommittee, created by commission vote. The item can be developed within
15 a commission meeting itself. Finally, it can be referred to the commission by
16 the city council or the school board.
17

18 I suggest that most topics would benefit from development in a small-group
19 process, either a subcommittee or informal. A subcommittee may hold public
20 workshop-style meetings. Commissioner attendance at a subcommittee may
21 not exceed half of the serving commission members. Commissioners are also
22 free to talk with community members or groups on their own initiative.
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24 Here is a slightly shorter list of nine topics where I think the commission could
25 likely succeed in proposing an item for the city council's consideration. This
26 list is not exhaustive, nor is it exclusive. It's understood that issues will arise
27 that the commission needs to address, and that the Trump administration's
28 unpredictability will require our urgent reaction.
29

30 Many of these issues are in the domain of other city commissions, but also in
31 ours. Peace and Justice may consult with those commissions in developing
32 its recommendations, but its work is distinguished by the social justice lens
33 with which it views all policy development.
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- 35 1. Immigration: Participate in a proposed City of Berkeley immigrant rights
36 task force. Help to draft an ordinance to codify Berkeley's sanctuary
37 principles into law.
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- 40 2. Affordable Housing: Offer a proposal of how Berkeley can maximize the
41 amount of permanent, accessible, and decent housing for those who
42 need it most.
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- 45 3. Homelessness: Propose a human rights-based approach to short,
46 medium and long-term solutions, based on dignity for all, creating the
47 basis for reduction of tensions with housed neighbors.
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- 50 4. Racial Disparities: Work with Black and other communities of color in
51 Berkeley to illuminate the picture of persistent racial inequity in health,
52 housing, labor, policing, education, and other spheres, and how the City
53 can remediate it.
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- 56 5. Public Safety: Clarify both the successes and the constraints facing the
57 Police Accountability Board, the Specialized Care Unit, the Fair and
58 Impartial Policing program, and other aspects of Reimagining Public
59 Safety. Give integrated oversight of public safety from a social justice
60 perspective.
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- 63 6. Disability Rights: Work with multiple commissions and stakeholders to
64 explore shortcomings in Berkeley's treatment of disability rights and
65 justice movement.
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- 68 7. Public Health: The country's healthcare system will soon be in the
69 hands of the president who gave us Covid-19. In Berkeley, racial
70 disparities in health worsened during the pandemic.

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Berkeley has done ground-breaking work on health disparities, but has not published its Health Status Report, which evaluates these racial disparities, since 2018. It is time for Berkeley and other cities and counties to tell the true story about health outcomes for racial and other marginalized populations.

Peace and Justice can work with community groups, health professionals, city council and staff to report the truth and then take corrective action.

8. Climate: Much needs to be done, and urgently, at all levels of government. One critical issue is how to help residents pay for the electrification of their homes and businesses that will soon be required by regional regulations. This issue demands attention to environmental, economic, and racial justice.

9. Governance/Transparency/Commissions: Propose a path to raise the profile of city commissions, as a lever to encourage community participation in governance. Consider proposing a formal role for the Peace and Justice Commission in advising on the social justice impact of upcoming council action.

Appendix.

Here I will offer background on the thinking behind some of the issue recommendations above.

Immigration: After the November 2024 election and over the winter break, the commission chair and vice-chair met with immigrant rights and services organizations coordinated by the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant. The group

107 consulted with several city council members on wording for a Sanctuary City
108 resolution for the council to consider in January. Two follow-on actions are
109 proposed in the resolution that may include a role for this commission:

- 110 1. Creation of a broad-based immigrant rights task force that would
111 continually assess threats to Berkeley’s immigrant communities. Peace
112 and Justice, given our historic role on sanctuary issues, can request
113 representation in this task force.
- 114 2. The task force concept includes, at community request, the
115 development of an ordinance codifying Berkeley’s sanctuary principles
116 into law. Peace and Justice can play a role in proposing the scope of
117 the ordinance.

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122 *Homelessness:* Short, medium and long-term solutions are needed. The
123 overall principle should be respect for the humanity and dignity of our
124 unhoused neighbors. The City must stop criminalizing the unhoused. Officials
125 should work to create the conditions to reduce civic tensions between
126 businesses, housed residents, and homeless encampments. Enhance
127 transparency and oversight of homeless enforcement, shelter availability and
128 conditions.

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132 *Racial Disparities:* The U.S. has elected a known racist as its president—
133 again. Trump’s lifelong prejudices influenced the policies of his first
134 administration, including the border wall, the Muslim ban, elimination of
135 Obama-era guidelines supporting affirmative action in university admissions
136 and also fair housing and the Civil Rights Act. [Trump’s plans](#) are described in
137 his “Agenda 47” and informed by his supporters’ book, Project 2025. Both call
138 for banning teaching critical views of racism in the U.S. [Project 2025](#) would
139 ban collection of data on race and other demographics and “handcuff” the
140 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. [Agenda 47](#) calls for police
141 agencies that receive DOJ grants to return to discredited racist practices like
142 stop-and-frisk.

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In Berkeley, the NAACP has long urged the city to overturn racial discrimination in both the government and the private sector affecting health, housing, labor, policing, and education. Peace and Justice is the closest Berkeley has to a racial justice commission. It can work with Black and other communities of color in Berkeley to illuminate the picture of persistent racial inequity and how the City can remediate it.

In 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote that “the problem of the twentieth century is the [problem of the color line](#).” A quarter of the way through the twenty-first, we are clearly stuck on this problem at both national and the local levels. We cannot resist MAGA as a community if we do not fight to overturn discriminatory patterns in our city.

Public Safety: Under public pressure in response to multiple killings of Black and Brown people by police, City leaders began a process of reimagining public safety—not just how it is ensured, but what it even means. Using the rubric of “reduce, improve, and invest,” the city council funded programs to analyze how policing dollars are spent, to confront racism, profiling, excessive force, and militarization, and to reduce the police footprint in mental health and violence prevention arenas. Berkeley voters also created a stronger community-based Police Accountability Board (PAB).

However, community voices, particularly in the African American community, continue to point out weaknesses in all of these initiatives. Peace and Justice could play a valuable role in clarifying both the successes and the constraints facing the PAB, the Specialized Care Unit, and the Fair and Impartial Policing program. Public Safety in Berkeley is an area where responsibility for both management and civilian oversight is divided among numerous groups. Peace and Justice is well positioned to give integrated oversight of public safety from a social justice perspective.

179 *Disability Rights:* Berkeley has a storied history in birthing the disability rights
180 and justice movement. It instituted curb cuts and helped inspire the ADA. But
181 concerns remain as well. It took a lawsuit to force the city government to
182 allow disabled commissioners and members of the public to participate in city
183 meetings from home without letting strangers into their intimate living space.

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185 Disabled people report being treated with disdain by City staff, who question
186 their right to reasonable accommodations. The treatment of unhoused
187 individuals with physical or mental challenges, both outdoors and in shelters,
188 has also come under criticism.

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190 What is at stake is the ability of humans at all levels of ability to be fully part of
191 society. This participation runs the gamut from typical activities like work,
192 school, worship, shopping etc., to being part of the decision-making for the
193 city government.

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197 *Public Health:* The country's approach to health is about to turn upside down,
198 or perhaps more accurately, be blown up.

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200 Politico reports that HHS Secretary-designate Robert Kennedy Jr. has "touted
201 the debunked claim that vaccines cause autism, [written a book](#) accusing
202 former NIH official Anthony Fauci of conspiring with tech mogul Bill Gates and
203 drug makers to sell Covid vaccines," and promoted an end to fluoridation of
204 drinking water. Equally disturbing, the Trump administration is expected to
205 propose early, severe cuts to Obamacare marketplace subsidies and
206 Medicaid funding (MediCal in California), which could throw millions of low-
207 income people off health insurance in this state alone.

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209 People can easily lose sight of the deep racial disparities in health, especially
210 between white people and African Americans, Native Americans, and
211 Latino/as. The MAGA movement hates what they call "woke" discussion of
212 racialized health outcomes.

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214 Berkeley has done ground-breaking work, led by groups like Healthy Black
215 Families, to not only document but mitigate issues like the high rate of low-
216 birthweight African American babies. But Berkeley has not published its
217 Health Status Report, which evaluates these racial disparities, since 2018. It is
218 time for Berkeley and other cities and counties to tell the true story about
219 health outcomes for racial and other marginalized populations, and counter
220 the Trump agenda by fighting for health for all.

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222 Peace and Justice can work with community groups, health professionals, city
223 council and staff to achieve these goals.

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227 *Climate:* It is undeniable that our global environment is collapsing around us.
228 The tools to soften the impact are within reach, but humanity has not
229 sufficiently taken them up.

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231 Several strategies have been developed or even adopted in Berkeley to
232 eliminate fossil fuels. Two were targeted by petro-industry and property
233 interests. In the end, one was overturned by a court, another rejected by
234 voters

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236 One bright spot of local government action is the Bay Area Air Quality
237 Management District's ([BAAQMD](#)) [new regulations](#) to ban new methane gas-
238 powered residential water heaters beginning Jan. 1, 2027, and furnaces,
239 beginning Jan. 1, 2029, throughout the region.

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241 But with the November loss of Berkeley's Measure GG, the climate tax on
242 large landowners, there is no financial help for homeowners and small
243 businesses to make the required upgrades. This outcome demonstrates how
244 environmental justice requires both economic and racial justice. And time is
245 running out, both for the planet, and more immediately to prevent a financial
246 shock to local residents.

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248 Nothing less than the survival of humanity is at stake. Trump threatens to
249 reverse all the gains on climate, even the consensus that there is a threat

250 from fossil fuels. Our local action will not be enough to save the planet, but
251 Berkeley and the Bay can once again set an example that will inspire others to
252 take urgent action.

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254 Climate justice is social justice. Peace and Justice can be part of the process
255 of creating solutions.

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259 *Governance/Transparency/Commissions:* The time is overdue for a
260 meaningful conversation about the role of Berkeley's commission in the city
261 government.

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263 Historically, the approximately 35 commissions have been seen as a way to
264 promote public participation, bring diverse perspectives into the discussions,
265 and even assume some of the government's workload with free labor, often
266 bringing lived experience or subject matter expertise.

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268 Some members of a range of commissions, however, express a feeling that
269 the City no longer values their contribution. To some their input seems simply
270 tolerated, not actively sought nor seriously considered. Commissions have
271 been slated for merger, reduction, or outright abolition. Their impact is
272 minimized in other ways as well, including under-appointment and under-
273 staffing.

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275 The Peace and Justice Commission may consider proposing an expanded
276 responsibility in which it advises on the social justice impact of upcoming
277 council action.

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