

## **APPENDIX B. GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AND WRITING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS**

These guidelines are derived from the requirements for Agenda items listed in the Berkeley City Council Rules of Procedure and Order, Chapter III, Sections B(1) and (2), reproduced below. In addition, Chapter III Section C(1)(a) of the Rules of Procedure and Order allows the Agenda & Rules Committee to request that the Primary Author of an item provide “additional analysis” if the item as submitted evidences a “significant lack of background or supporting information” or “significant grammatical or readability issues.”

These guidelines provide a more detailed and comprehensive overview of elements of a complete Council item. While not all elements would be applicable to every type of Agenda item, they are intended to prompt Authors to consider presenting items with as much relevant information and analysis as possible.

Chapter III, Sections (B)(1) and (2) of Council Rules of Procedure and Order:

2. Agenda items shall contain all relevant documentation, including the following as Applicable:
  - a. A descriptive title that adequately informs the public of the subject matter and general nature of the item or report and action requested;
  - b. Whether the matter is to be presented on the Consent Calendar or the Action Calendar or as a Report for Information;
  - c. Recommendation of the City Manager, if applicable (these provisions shall not apply to Mayor and Council items.);
  - d. Fiscal impacts of the recommendation;
  - e. A description of the current situation and its effects;
  - f. Background information as needed;
  - g. Rationale for recommendation;
  - h. Alternative actions considered;
  - i. For awards of contracts; the abstract of bids and the Affirmative Action Program of the low bidder in those cases where such is required (these provisions shall not apply to Mayor and Council items.);
  - j. Person or persons to contact for further information, with telephone number. If the Primary Author of any report believes additional background information, beyond the basic report, is necessary to Council understanding of the subject, a separate compilation of such background information may be developed and copies will be available for Council and for public review in the City Clerk Department, and the City Clerk shall provide limited distribution of such background information depending upon quantity of pages to be duplicated. In such case the agenda item distributed with the packet shall so indicate.

Guidelines for City Council Items:

1. Title
2. Consent/Action/Information Calendar
3. Recommendation
4. Summary Statement/Current situation and its effects
5. Background
6. Review of Existing Plans, Programs, Policies and Laws
7. Actions/Alternatives Considered
8. Consultation/Outreach Overview and Results
9. Rationale for Recommendation
10. Implementation, Administration and Enforcement
11. Environmental Sustainability
12. Fiscal Impacts
13. Outcomes and Evaluation
14. Contact Information
15. Attachments/Supporting Materials

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**1. Title**

A descriptive title that adequately informs the public of the subject matter and general nature of the item or report and action requested.

**2. Consent/Action/Information Calendar**

Whether the matter is to be presented on the Consent Calendar or the Action Calendar or as a Report for Information.

**3. Recommendation**

Clear, succinct statement of action(s) to be taken. Recommendations can be further detailed within the item, by specific reference.

Common action options include:

- Adopt first reading of ordinance
- Adopt a resolution
- Referral to the City Manager (City Manager decides if it is a short term referral or is placed on the RRV ranking list)
- Direction to the City Manager (City Manager is directed to execute the recommendation right away, it is not placed on any referral list)
- Referral to a Commission or to a Standing or Ad Hoc Council Committee
- Referral to the budget process
- Send letter of support
- Accept, Approve, Modify or Reject a recommendation from a Commission or Committee
- Designate members of the Council to perform some action

**4. Summary Statement/ “Current situation and its effects”**

A short resume of the circumstances that give rise to the need for the recommended action(s).

- Briefly state the opportunity/problem/concern that has been identified, and the proposed solution.
- Example (fictional):  
*Winter rains are lasting longer than expected. Berkeley’s winter shelters are poised to close in three weeks, but forecasts suggest rain for another two months. If they do not remain open until the end of the rainy season, hundreds of people will be left in the rain 24/7. Therefore, this item seeks authorization to keep Berkeley’s winter shelters open until the end of April, and refers to the Budget Process \$40,000 to cover costs of an additional two months of shelter operations.*

**5. Background**

A full discussion of the history, circumstances and concerns to be addressed by the item.

- For the above fictional example, Background would include *information and data about the number and needs of homeless individuals in Berkeley, the number and availability of permanent shelter beds that meet their needs, the number of winter shelter beds that would be lost with closure, the impacts of such closure on this population, the weather forecasts, etc.*

**6. Review of Existing Plans, Programs, Policies and Laws**

Review, identify and discuss relevant/applicable Plans, Programs, Policies and Laws, and how the proposed actions conform with, compliment, are supported by, differ from or run contrary to them. What gaps were found that need to be filled? What existing policies, programs, plans and laws need to be changed/supplemented/improved/repealed? What is missing altogether that needs to be addressed?

Review of all pertinent/applicable sections of:

- The City Charter
- Berkeley Municipal Code
- Administrative Regulations
- Council Resolutions
- Staff training manuals

Review of all applicable City Plans:

- The General Plan
- Area Plans
- The Climate Action Plan
- Resilience Plan
- Equity Plan

- Capital Improvements Plan
- Zero Waste Plan
- Bike Plan
- Pedestrian Plan
- Other relevant precedents and plans

Review of the City's Strategic Plan

Review of similar legislation previously introduced/passed by Council

Review of County, State and Federal laws/policies/programs/plans, if applicable

#### **7. Actions/Alternatives Considered**

- What solutions/measures have **other jurisdictions** adopted that serve as models/cautionary tales?
- What solutions/measures are recommended by **advocates, experts, organizations**?
- What is the range of actions considered, and what are some of their major pros and cons?
- Why were other solutions not as feasible/advisable?

#### **8. Consultation/Outreach Overview and Results**

- Review/list external and internal stakeholders that were consulted
  - **External:** constituents, communities, neighborhood organizations, businesses and not for profits, advocates, people with lived experience, faith organizations, industry groups, people/groups that might have concerns about the item, etc.
  - **Internal:** staff who would implement policies, the City Manager and/or deputy CM, Department Heads, City Attorney, Clerk, etc.
- What reports, articles, books, websites and other materials were consulted?
- What was learned from these sources?
- What changes or approaches did they advocate for that were accepted or rejected?

#### **9. Rationale for Recommendation**

A clear and concise statement as to whether the item proposes actions that:

- Conform to, clarify or extend existing Plans, Programs, Policies and Laws
- Change/Amend existing Plans, Programs, Policies and Laws in **minor** ways
- Change/Amend existing Plans, Programs, Policies and Laws in **major** ways
- Create an exception to existing Plans, Programs, Policies and Laws
- Reverse/go contrary to or against existing Plans, Programs, Policies and Laws

Argument/summary of argument in support of recommended actions. The argument likely has already been made via the information and analysis already presented,

but should be presented/restated/summarized. Plus, further elaboration of terms for recommendations, if any.

**10. Implementation, Administration and Enforcement**

Discuss how the recommended action(s) would be implemented, administered and enforced. What staffing (internal or via contractors/consultants) and materials/facilities are likely required for implementation?

**11. Environmental Sustainability**

Discuss the impacts of the recommended action(s), if any, on the environment and the recommendation's positive and/or negative implications with respect to the City's Climate Action, Resilience, and other sustainability goals.

**12. Fiscal Impacts**

Review the recommended action's potential to generate funds or savings for the City in the short and long-term, as well as the potential direct and indirect costs.

**13. Outcomes and Evaluation**

State the specific outcomes expected, if any (i.e., *"it is expected that 100 homeless people will be referred to housing every year"*) and what reporting or evaluation is recommended.

**14. Contact Information**

**15. Attachments/Supporting Materials**