

## **City of Berkeley Vision 2050 Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What urgent needs are facing the City of Berkeley?**

Most of Berkeley's streets, sidewalks, sewers, parks, playgrounds and public buildings were built over 75 years ago and are in need of repair. However, local revenues have not kept pace with the need for investments to update aging infrastructure or promote sustainability and housing affordability.

This underinvestment has led to an estimated \$1+ billion in deferred maintenance. However, this figure does not include the significant need for affordable housing, new or improved infrastructure including for bike and pedestrian safety, reducing our environmental footprint, adapting to climate change and the risk of increased flooding and wildfire, and improvements to make the City's infrastructure and public spaces more sustainable and resilient.

### **What is Vision 2050 and how will it address local needs?**

Vision 2050 is a long-term plan to build, upgrade and repair Berkeley's aging infrastructure to be more sustainable and resilient in order to meet the serious challenges of the future, including climate change. Driven by a set of core values: equity, public health and safety, a strong local economy, resiliency and sustainability, the City intends to transition the Vision 2050 framework into reality. In order to do this, additional funding and community input is needed.

### **What steps has the City of Berkeley taken to implement the Vision 2050 Framework?**

After the Vision 2050 Framework was adopted by City Council in September 2020, the City Manager formed an Implementation Team with members from several departments in the City, the Mayor's office, and Berkeley residents with specialized expertise. In the first year, nine of fourteen work tasks were either initiated or completed, including: a) developing a life cycle maintenance program, b) gathering community input, c) evaluating funding options, d) preparing a Program Plan, and e) evaluating our organizational structure to deliver a capital program.

In addition, the City's adopted FY 2022 capital improvement program, demonstrated how the City's capital planning, Vision 2050 framework, and project delivery were aligning. Along the way, input has been gained from 10 commission presentations, 500 residents in a scientific survey, and 25+ stakeholder and neighborhood meetings. Additionally, a public survey resulted in more than 1,000 responses. All of these steps are aimed at ensuring Vision 2050 implementation reflects community priorities.

### **How has public input shaped the Vision 2050 Framework?**

The development of the Vision 2050 Framework was a resident led effort, and the community remains at the center of implementing Vision 2050. Translating this vision into implementation has involved a scientific survey of a representative sample of 500 Berkeley voters, listening to more than 25 local organizations across the community and receiving over 1,000 responses to an online survey on infrastructure, affordable housing and potential funding mechanisms that

was open October 2021 through January 12, 2022. This feedback, along with the Vision 2050 Framework, is being used to develop a program plan that reflects community priorities and underscores local needs.

In the coming months, the City will also be holding large area public meetings for Berkeley residents to share additional feedback on their priorities for addressing our most pressing infrastructure and affordable housing needs. Meetings will begin in late March and include a staff presentation and provide time for general comments and a Q & A session.

### **What about the voter-approved funding from Measures M and T1?**

Recent voter-approved investments, including Measure M in 2012 and Measure T1 in 2016, provided approximately \$130 million to begin the first phase of capital improvements to Berkeley's aging infrastructure.

T1 Phase 1 projects made many community buildings seismically safe and accessible, repaved some of the most neglected streets in the city, built green infrastructure, replaced outdated and non-compliant play structures, increased the City's resilience by reducing water consumption, brought new life to an aging Rose Garden, provided 9 renovated courts and cleaned out the tide tubes in Aquatic Park for greatly improved water quality in the lagoon.

Nevertheless, this size and scale of our infrastructure needs shows the challenge ahead despite the proactive steps taken to address these issues over the last decade. For more information on these projects and the City's unfunded infrastructure needs, please visit [www.cityofberkeley.info/MeasureT1](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/MeasureT1).

### **How is the City of Berkeley planning to address our funding needs?**

To address the next phase of local infrastructure, housing and sustainability needs, the City of Berkeley is considering placing a local funding measure, or multiple measures, on the November 2022 ballot for local voters to consider.

### **Specifically, what projects would a potential November 2022 measure(s) fund?**

While more decisions will be made in the coming months, based on survey data and community feedback received thus far, a preliminary list of community priorities includes:

- Increasing affordable housing for low-income and homeless residents
- Improving climate change resiliency, including protecting against sea level rise, wildfires and drought
- Repairing deteriorating streets
- Improving traffic safety, including for bikes and pedestrians
- Repairing sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety and access for those with disabilities
- Upgrading storm drains, green infrastructure and watersheds to keep pollution from the Bay

### **What are the City of Berkeley's affordable housing needs?**

For too many members of our community, the ability to continue calling Berkeley home is slipping out of reach. Longtime residents, community members and local workers are all being pushed out by our City's high cost of living. Creating an equitable and sustainable city for all residents requires that we increase the affordable housing supply for low-income and homeless residents.

### **Specifically, how does Berkeley plan to address climate change and environmental concerns?**

The City of Berkeley is committed to implementing sustainable solutions to meet the serious challenges of the future, including climate change.

Climate change has increased temperatures, leading to longer and more severe fire seasons. While we cannot eliminate the threat these fires pose, by managing vegetation and undergrounding utilities along our evacuation routes, we can significantly reduce the incidence of wildfires and protect our community if they do occur.

Studies have shown that Berkeley can expect the sea level to increase between 1.1 to 2.7 feet in the next 30 years, and up to 10 feet by 2100. Vision 2050 will help make Berkeley's infrastructure more resilient and protect against sea level rise by upgrading storm drains, sewers and water lines to reduce flooding. By planting and caring for trees and increasing the availability of solar energy, solar batteries and electric vehicles and equipment, we can also reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change.

### **What is infrastructure and what types of projects would be funded with infrastructure investments?**

Infrastructure keeps our city functioning. If approved by voters, dedicated funding would help repair, improve and expand local infrastructure, including but not limited to streets, sidewalks, sewers, piers, playgrounds, parks, storm drains, traffic signals and equipment, green infrastructure, recreation centers, pools, streetlights and public facilities.

### **Specifically, what is Berkeley's plan to repair and improve streets, sidewalks and traffic?**

Transportation networks will have to support everyone — not just cars. A potential funding measure(s) would help repair streets and sidewalks to improve access for pedestrians and people with disabilities, expand bike lanes and improve bike safety, traffic safety and flow.

### **Specifically, how will Vision 2050 improve and repair public facilities?**

Many public buildings in Berkeley were built over 70 years ago and are in need of repairs and upgrades in order to be energy efficient, seismically safe and COVID-safe. Facilities in need of improvement include the historic Civic Center, including Old City Hall and the Veterans Building, senior centers, the marina, waterfront and pier, among others.

Nowhere is the City's deferred maintenance clearer than at the Berkeley marina, waterfront and pier. Included within the scope of Vision 2050 are improvements to the Berkeley waterfront, including docks, pilings, streets, parking lots, pathways, marina dredging and

upgrading our watersheds to keep pollution from the Bay. These improvements will make the Berkeley waterfront safe and accessible for the community.

### **How will Berkeley ensure that improvements from a potential measure(s) are made equitably?**

A core value of Vision 2050 is to ensure that the benefits of improved infrastructure are distributed equitably across our entire community. We understand that equity is understood in different ways by different people, and so the City of Berkeley is engaging the community to find out what an equitable distribution of benefits might look like to you. To ensure that Vision 2050 implementation is reflective of community priorities and needs, input has been gained from 10 commission presentations, 500 residents in a scientific survey, more than 1,000 online survey respondents, and 25+ stakeholder and neighborhood meetings.

### **How do we know the funding will be spent responsibly?**

Any measure to fund Vision 2050 priorities would require a clear system of accountability, including:

- All money raised by a measure(s) would be controlled locally and spent only on local needs in Berkeley
- By law, no funds could be taken away by the State
- Independent citizens' oversight and annual audits would ensure the money is spent as promised

### **What types of property owners would pay for a general obligation bond measure?**

All property owners in the City of Berkeley, including owners of residential, commercial and industrial property would pay the cost of a bond measure. By law, the cost of a general obligation bond must be based on the assessed value of properties. Larger commercial and industrial properties tend to have the highest assessed values and pay the most. Smaller residential and small business properties tend to have lower assessed values and pay the least. Public and nonprofit properties that are generally exempt from property tax do not have to pay for bond measures.

### **Are senior or low-income exemptions available for bond measures?**

No, by law, the cost of a general obligation bond must be applied to all taxable properties with an established assessed value. No exemptions based on age, income or other factors may be offered. However, because of the impact of Prop 13, older homeowners that have lived in their homes the longest tend to have the lowest assessed values and pay the least for bond measures.

### **What types of property owners would pay for a parcel tax measure?**

Parcel taxes may be structured in many different ways but cannot be structured based on the assessed value of properties like bond measures. Some parcel taxes are a simple flat rate per parcel applied to all types of taxable property, including residential, commercial and industrial. Flat rate parcel taxes are regressive as the same amount is paid by all properties without regard to the size or value. Parcel taxes may also be structured on a square footage basis so that larger

properties pay more and different tax rates can be applied to different types of properties, like one rate for residential properties and another for commercial and industrial properties.

**Are senior or low-income exemptions available for parcel tax measures?**

Yes, exemptions based on the age or income level of residential property owners are common for parcel taxes. The criteria and process for qualifying for exemptions is typically spelled out in the language of the measure.

**How can I share feedback and learn more about Vision 2050 and a potential funding measure(s)?**

From the last week of March through late April, the City held four virtual large area public meetings for Berkeley community members to share additional feedback on their priorities for addressing our most pressing infrastructure and affordable housing needs. Meetings were organized by Council District and included a staff presentation, some time for general comments and a Q & A session.

Thank you to all the community members who were able to attend. We have received lots of thoughtful feedback that will serve to inform this process going forward. A detailed report of feedback received over the course of these virtual meetings can be found at [www.BerkeleyVision2050.org](http://www.BerkeleyVision2050.org). This is an ongoing process and even if you were not able to attend, you can still provide feedback on your priorities for the City by emailing us at [Vision2050@CityofBerkeley.info](mailto:Vision2050@CityofBerkeley.info).

**How can I get more information?**

To learn more about efforts to meet infrastructure and sustainable housing needs in Berkeley, visit [BerkeleyVision2050.org](http://BerkeleyVision2050.org).