



**City of Berkeley  
Council Workshop  
Held November 4, 2021**

**November 2021**

**Management  
Partners**



## Table of Contents

---

<b>Workshop Report</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Workshop Overview.....	1
<i>Objectives</i> .....	1
<i>Agenda</i> .....	2
<i>Participants</i> .....	2
<i>Workshop Ground Rules</i> .....	3
<i>Bike Rack</i> .....	3
<i>Workshop Preparation</i> .....	3
Welcome and Opening Comments.....	3
Introduction to Council Priority Setting.....	4
Priority Setting.....	4
Wrap Up and Next Steps.....	7

## Workshop Report

The City of Berkeley held a City Council workshop on Thursday, November 4, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. via Zoom. The workshop provided an opportunity for members of the City Council to identify and agree upon Council priorities for the coming two-year budget, prioritize the legislative agenda with the City lobbyist, and strengthen teamwork. This report contains a summary of the results of the workshop.

Rod Gould (Senior Partner), Jennifer Tonnis (Senior Management Advisor), and Ashley Garcia (Senior Management Analyst) with Management Partners, facilitated the workshop.



### ***Workshop Overview***

#### **Objectives**

- Prioritize legislative agenda with City lobbyist.

**Agenda**

- Welcome and call to order by the Mayor
- Public comments
- Comments from the City Manager
- Introduce priority setting process
- Discuss proposed priorities based on Council interviews
- Create consensus on the priorities
- Discuss operational plans
- Wrap up and next steps
- Provide direction to the City lobbyist

Participants

**Mayor  
Jesse Arreguin**



**Councilmember  
Rashi Kesarwani**



**Councilmember  
Terry Taplin**



**Councilmember  
Ben Bartlett**



**Councilmember  
Kate Harrison**



**Councilmember  
Sophie Hahn**



**Councilmember  
Susan Wengraf**



**Councilmember  
Rigel Robinson**



**Councilmember  
Lori Droste**



*Executive Management Staff*

- City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley
- City Attorney Farimah Faiz Brown
- Senior Management Analyst Melissa McDonough

## Workshop Ground Rules

At the start of the workshop, the facilitator suggested several ground rules to help the group have a successful workshop.



- ✓ Listen to understand
- ✓ Assume good intent
- ✓ Council, City Manager, and City Attorney to keep video on
- ✓ Stay focused

## Bike Rack

The facilitator explained that items that were raised but would not receive immediate attention would be recorded on a “bike rack.” No discussion items were added to the bike rack during the workshop.

## Workshop Preparation

In preparation for the workshop, Rod Gould conducted individual interviews with each Councilmember and held conference calls with the Mayor, City Manager and her staff to discuss the workshop. An agenda and PowerPoint presentation were prepared.



## Welcome and Opening Comments

The workshop began with a welcome and call-to-order by Mayor Arreguin, who thanked everyone for attending the workshop. He emphasized that the purpose of the day’s discussions was to agree upon clear priorities for staff, which will help ensure goals are implemented. City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley then offered comments about the importance of the day’s discussions, and what she hoped the City Council would get out of the workshop. She emphasized the importance of having a clear set of Council priorities, which will set a path for staff and

help make decisions about allocating staff time and other resources. She stated that this clarity would yield the best results for the community.


Following these opening comments, the workshop was opened to public comments. After public comments, Rod reviewed the workshop objectives, suggested ground rules, and explained the purpose of the “bike rack.”

**Introduction to Council Priority Setting**

Rod led the group in a discussion about Council priority setting and why it is important. He clarified the relationship between priority setting and the strategic plan, stating that the strategic plan has nine long-term goals, and the purpose of the workshop was to bring focus to which long term goals should be prioritized during the next two-year budget cycle.

Rod explained staff capacity to focus on Council priorities, the role Council plays to help ensure success, and priority setting best practices. The best practices that were discussed are shown on the slide below. Rod suggested five priorities would be the target. After discussion with Council members and the City Manager, the Mayor stated that if two priorities tied in the rating, six priorities would be acceptable.

**Priority Setting Best Practices**

-  Less is more
-  Tied to staff-suggested projects, programs and Council referrals
-  Alignment with staff capacity and reflected in budget
-  Staff is accountable for progress, based on approved work plans
-  Staff periodically reports progress to Council for course correction
-  If Council adds to priorities mid-period, it agrees to drop or delay others

Management Partners 14 

**Priority Setting**

Councilmembers engaged in a discussion about what is most important to accomplish in the next two years. They reviewed a list of priorities that emerged from the individual interviews with members of the City Council. Rod pointed out that all of the priorities have merit, and some items were grouped into themes. In no particular order, the priorities are listed below.

- **Infrastructure Renewal** – Repaving, sidewalk repair, street cleaning, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, healthy streets, renovate the Marina, civic buildings, maintenance, possible bond issue
- **COVID-19 and Emergency Responses and Recovery** – Adapt, address needs in public health and economic recovery
- **Public Safety** – Enhanced fire safety, pedestrian and bike safety, gun violence, serious crime, reimagining policing, adequate staffing, training, Special Care Unit, cameras and license plate recognition (LPR) tools, readiness, social services, rightsizing, traffic control, earthquake and fire safety, resiliency, and fire dispatch
- **Equity in Core Services** – Redeploy fundamental municipal services to more equitably support underserved areas of City
- **Enhance Legal Services** – Adequate staffing in City Attorney’s Office to meet demands for service
- **Homelessness** – Mental health outreach, addiction treatment, other means to assist the chronically homeless, getting more people off of the streets
- **Climate Action** – greenhouse gas emissions, pollution/toxics, funding for incentives for energy improvements
- **Housing** – Housing Element, zoning, BART Station, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), encouraging housing, enforcement of existing laws and regulation, safety
- **People’s Park** – Prepare to implement housing and services with potential for conflict
- **Transportation** – Bike and pedestrian plan, ferry to Marina, multi-modal corridor, traffic calming
- **Economic Development** – Blight, business assistance, West Berkeley Business Improvement District, help with homeless
- **Health Care Services** – Underserved areas of town

Much of the discussion pertained to whether detailed descriptions should be taken into consideration when Council rated their priorities. The Mayor suggested that everyone focus on the priority categories themselves, and not the descriptors. Mayor Arreguin clarified that the specific descriptions would be discussed more fully at the follow up December 2, 2021 meeting, and the Council agreed that a high rating for a priority does not commit the Council to any particular sub-action for that priority.

Discussion among Councilmembers led to consolidation and restatement of the potential priorities as follows:

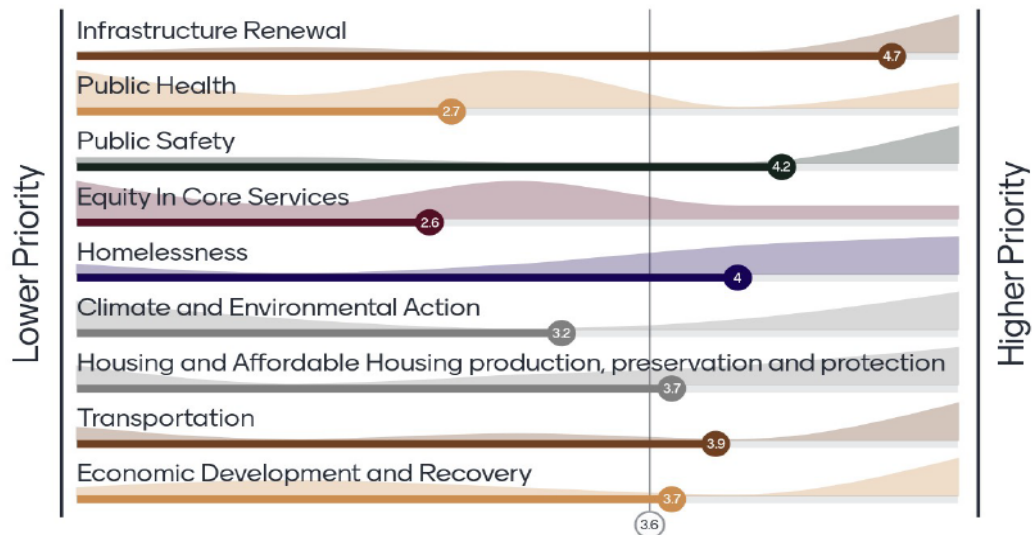
1. Infrastructure Renewal

2. Public Health
3. Public Safety
4. Equity in Core Services
5. Homelessness
6. Climate and Environmental Action
7. Housing and Affordable Housing production, preservation, and protection
8. Transportation
9. Economic Development and Recovery

Following this discussion, Council agreed to rate the nine potential priorities listed above, focusing on the high-level priorities and not the descriptors. Using the Mentimeter rating tool on their mobile devices, Councilmembers identified their preferences for the general priorities which they believe should be a focus during the next two years.

The results of the Council’s ratings are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Mentimeter Rating Results



Based on the rating results, review and discussion of different priorities ensued.

The discussion included observations concerning the priorities that did not rate highly. Several Councilmembers expressed their thoughts about priorities regarding climate action and equity in-core services, saying each should be overriding principles which are incorporated into all City-related activities. The City Manager shared her thoughts of agreement and told Councilmembers that her staff works with the lens of equity and climate impact as standard practice.



### **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

Rod commended the group for the level of civility and courtesy everyone demonstrated throughout the workshop. Rod explained that Management Partners would prepare and submit this report.



The City Manager stated that staff will continue to work on all of the issues that were discussed during the workshop, but that the ratings communicate to staff where extra effort will be made.

Ms. Williams-Ridley further explained that staff would prepare an operational plan that identifies projects, referrals and programs guided by reflection on the ratings exercise. The operation plan will be presented in a follow-up Zoom session on December 2, 2021.

Mayor Arreguin expressed his gratitude for having the rated priorities as a starting point to identify areas of consensus among Councilmembers.

After the workshop facilitated by Management Partners, Councilmembers provided direction on legislative priorities to the City lobbyist, Townsend Public Affairs. Management Partners was not present for this discussion.

