



Community Environmental  
Advisory Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR  
December 15, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Community Environmental Advisory Commission  
 Submitted by: Ben Gould, Chairperson, Community Environmental Advisory Commission  
 Subject: Prohibition on the Resale of Used Combustion Vehicles in 2040

RECOMMENDATION

Review and refer to the City Attorney for finalization the attached ordinance prohibiting the resale of used, existing combustion-powered vehicles beginning in 2040.

POLICY COMMITTEE

On November 18, 2020 the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Committee made a positive recommendation to refer to the City Manager for review of the attached ordinance prohibiting the resale of used, existing combustion-powered vehicles beginning in 2040, to the extent legally possible. Vote: Ayes - Davila, Robinson; Noes – None; Abstain – None; Absent – Harrison.

SUMMARY

Prohibiting the resale of used combustion vehicles is likely to increase the availability of non-combustion alternatives. This policy is important to help address environmental inequities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve public health; however, it may also raise the price of used vehicles and programs will be required to ensure that low-income and disadvantaged communities are able to benefit. This is an application of local police power which is not preempted by state or federal law.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Some staff time for review and finalization of the ordinance. Adoption of the ordinance itself may expose the City to potential fiscal impacts, including risk of a lawsuit and, if ultimately enforced, additional fiscal impacts from impacts to sales, property, and other tax or fee revenues.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On June 12, 2018, Berkeley City Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency, which called for “a just citywide emergency mobilization effort to end citywide greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible.” Berkeley also set a goal of being a Fossil Fuel Free city and becoming a net carbon sink, as well as becoming carbon neutral by 2045.

Berkeley's Climate Action Plan also sets the goal of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and Berkeley's Strategic Plan sets the goal of being a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment.

Citywide, transportation powered by internal combustion engines makes up 60% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, this share – and total level of emissions – is only expected to grow. In order to achieve its emission reduction goals, Berkeley needs a strategy that will phase out the use of combustion vehicles, including ensuring a wide availability of used non-combustion vehicles for the broader market which cannot afford new vehicles, while ensuring compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

At a regular meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2019, the Community Environmental Advisory Commission approved a motion to send the *Prohibition of resale of Used Combustion Vehicles on city streets by 2040* recommendation to City Council. (M/S/C) Gould, Hetzel. Ayes: Simmons, Varnhagen, Hetzel, Goldhaber, Gould. Abstained: De Leon. Absent: Ticconi.

### BACKGROUND

Berkeley is home to, and a route for, tens of thousands of combustion-powered automobiles, trucks, and other vehicles which annually emit roughly 360,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases (GHGs). There are an estimated 46,000 vehicles registered within the City of Berkeley, of which only about 1,400 (3%) are electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Berkeley has declared a Climate Emergency, set the goal of becoming a fossil-fuel free city, and aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. City staff are working aggressively to develop a comprehensive action-based Electric Vehicle (EV) roadmap to find opportunities to increase equitable access to EV's within Berkeley's diverse community.

Most local, regional, and state efforts around expanding EV uptake is focused on increasing and enabling purchases of new EVs, whether through incentives and support for consumers (such as tax deductions or public chargers) or state- and federal-level mandates for manufacturers to sell clean vehicles.

Since most vehicles eventually break down and reach a point where it is not economic to continue maintaining them, targeting new vehicles can be expected to ultimately drive an eventual transition to non-combustion vehicles. However, even if no new combustion

vehicles were sold in California, it would take roughly 15 years<sup>1</sup> to transition all remaining, existing vehicles to non-combustion alternatives – likely longer.

Regulations on new vehicle emission and fuel economy standards are set by the federal (and state) government under existing federal law, such as the Clean Air Act (CAA) and the Energy Policy Conservation Act (EPCA). The CAA and EPCA expressly preempt local authorities from enacting regulations on new vehicles. However, they deliberately omit any imposition of regulations on existing vehicles, thereby leaving that application of police power to the states and local jurisdictions.

In California, roughly two-thirds of all vehicle sales are used, existing vehicles<sup>2</sup>. The state has not extensively regulated in this market – used vehicles, as all vehicles, are required to meet smog checks certifying the vehicle meets the emission standards it was manufactured to, but no more. As the Legislature appears to have no intent or interest in further regulating used vehicles, it falls to local governments to address used combustion vehicle sales.

In the face of federal inaction on zero-emission mandates, local jurisdictions can and should act to incentivize a timely, equitable, and just transition to zero-emission transportation. This is a matter of municipal concern, because the continued availability of used combustion vehicles adversely affects city's ability to achieve carbon neutrality and meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Prohibiting the resale of used combustion vehicles creates two incentives that support non-combustion alternatives. Firstly, by making it more difficult for consumers to get rid of an unwanted, used combustion vehicle, individuals will be encouraged to choose non-combustion vehicles when purchasing new vehicles. Consumers often plan to keep vehicles for 5, 10, or even 15 years or longer, enacting this policy as soon as possible will ensure it has the greatest possible impact. Because this acts as an indirect incentive on the purchase of new vehicles, and not as any standard or mandate (consumers can still purchase and use combustion vehicles, sell them before January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2040, resell them outside of Berkeley after January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2040, or scrap them), it complies with the Clean Air Act.

Secondly, removing combustion vehicles from the resale market effectively constrains the supply of used vehicles, and can be expected to drive up the price of the remaining used vehicles – all non-combustion. This would therefore incentivize existing non-

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<sup>1</sup> Based upon DMV data on roughly 30 million registered automobiles and light trucks (<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/wcm/connect/5aa16cd3-39a5-402f-9453-0d353706cc9a/official.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>), and CNCDA data on roughly 2 million new vehicle sales annually (above), the time to replace every vehicle in California is roughly 15 years.

<sup>2</sup> *California Auto Outlook Covering Second Quarter 2019*, California New Car Dealers Association <https://www.cncda.org/wp-content/uploads/Cal-Covering-2Q-19.pdf>. Accessed September 2019.

combustion vehicle owners to sell their vehicles, expanding the supply of available used non-combustion vehicles.

Unfortunately, this latter incentive acts as a double-edged sword from an equity perspective. While expanding the availability of non-combustion vehicles helps ensure low-income and disadvantaged consumers find alternatives to purchase, which may be particularly necessary if other policies (such as a combustion vehicle operation ban) are enacted, raising the price simultaneously makes it more difficult for these consumers to afford the vehicles they need. In addition, low-income and disadvantaged consumers are most likely to still own or be using combustion vehicles by the time any ban or restrictions would take effect, and would therefore be faced with the greatest burden in getting rid of any such vehicle when they chose to do so.

Local, regional, and state governments will likely need to address this equity issue through non-combustion vehicle purchase incentives and subsidies, and potentially combustion vehicle buyback programs, targeted for low-income households. These programs are already beginning to be enacted for low-income individuals to purchase new EVs, and so it is likely they will continue to be further developed and in place in the time frame proposed in this policy.

While these financial inequities are important and must be planned for and addressed, the proposed policy still addresses several other equity issues which cannot be addressed through any means but with technological change. For decades, our low-income communities have disproportionately borne the brunt of air pollution and noise from the operation of combustion vehicles; the fact that these communities have simultaneously relied upon the oldest, cheapest, and therefore dirtiest vehicles only compounds the issue. In the long run, these communities are also the communities most vulnerable to, and threatened by, climate change. Driving an aggressive transition to non-combustion vehicles may create some short-term economic issues that can and must be planned for and addressed. These issues should not obstruct resolving the greater injustice of air pollution and climate change.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Banning the resale of used combustion vehicles will ensure they are phased out and will incentivize businesses to further promote the sale of electric vehicles.

#### CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The proposed policy is categorically exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15307 and 15308.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Berkeley is extremely unlikely to meet its carbon reduction and fossil-free goals without aggressive action on transportation decarbonization. While working to drive EV uptake helps, CEAC believes that setting dates beyond which combustion vehicles will not be supported under City policy will help further.

Prohibiting the resale of used combustion vehicles will doubly incentivize consumers to choose non-combustion alternatives – for those looking to purchase new vehicles, knowing they must go outside of city limits to resell their vehicle adds an additional barrier and is an incentive to choose a non-combustion alternative. For those purchasing used vehicles, removing combustion vehicles from the used market ensures greater availability and choice of non-combustion alternatives. This may, however, drive up prices for used vehicles, and this must be addressed through additional programs as the police comes into force.

The federal government currently lacks the jurisdiction to prohibit the resale of used combustion vehicles, and there is no evidence the state government will choose to do so. As a result, if the sale of used combustion vehicles is to be restricted, Berkeley must take action.

Setting 2040 as a phase-out date for the sale of used combustion vehicles will help ensure vehicle owners in Berkeley can more readily transition to non-combustion alternatives by 2045, when Berkeley aims to be carbon-neutral.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

CEAC considered taking no action, but determined that was not an effective approach to addressing Berkeley's declared Climate Emergency, becoming a fossil fuel free city, or achieving carbon neutrality.

CEAC considered an earlier phase-out date, such as 2030 or 2035, but determined it was unclear that there would be adequate availability of used vehicles by that time. While there may still not be enough in 2040, CEAC determined that there needed to be some transition time to support any 2045 phase-out policies in place.

CEAC considered providing an expanded exemption to allow vehicles which are newer than a certain number of years to be resold. CEAC decided there did not appear to be any compelling reason to do so, and that any potential benefits were likely not to accrue to disadvantaged communities.

#### CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the content and recommendations of the Commission's Report.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Ben Gould, Chair, Community Environmental Advisory Commission, 510-725-9176

Attachments:

1: Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. -N.S.

AMENDING BERKELEY MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 9 TO PROHIBIT THE SALE OF COMBUSTION VEHICLES.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Berkeley as follows:

Section 1. That the Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 9.97 is added to read as follows:

**Chapter 9.97  
RESALE OF USED COMBUSTION VEHICLES**

**Sections:**

<b>9.97.010</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<b>9.97.020</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>9.97.030</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
<b>9.97.040</b>	<b>Prohibition</b>
<b>9.97.050</b>	<b>Exemptions</b>

9.97.010 Findings

A. Berkeley aims to become carbon neutral by 2045, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80%, and become a fossil fuel free city.

B. Over 60% of greenhouse gas emissions in Berkeley result from transportation.

C. Transitioning 100% of new vehicle sales to non-combustion vehicles by 2030 would dramatically improve Berkeley's ability to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

D. The Clean Air Act and the Energy Policy Conservation Act prohibit states and cities from setting emission or fuel economy standards for new vehicles, without restricting their authority to set regulations for used vehicles.

E. Roughly two-thirds of all vehicle sales in California are in the used car market.

F. Disadvantaged and low-income communities disproportionately rely upon the used car market and are disproportionately impacted by air pollution and climate change driven by used combustion vehicles.

G. Berkeley can support availability of used non-combustion vehicles and nourish a used car market for non-combustion vehicles through restricting the resale of used combustion vehicles and developing programs to support low-income residents in transitioning to non-combustion alternatives.

#### 9.97.020 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to promote the health and safety of Berkeley residents and visitors, to address environmental impacts, and to address environmental justice.

#### 9.97.030 Definitions

For the purposes of this chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the meaning respectively ascribed to them by this section:

A. "Combustion vehicle" shall mean any on-road land motor vehicle which uses the combustion or oxidation of any carbon-based fuel to provide power or propulsion.

B. "New motor vehicle" shall have the same definition as set forth under the Clean Air Act, 42 US Code § 7550(3).

#### 9.97.040 Prohibition

Beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2040, it shall be unlawful to sell, resell, trade, or distribute any combustion vehicle with a model year of more than three (3) years old by any means anywhere within the City of Berkeley.

#### 9.97.050 Exemption

This prohibition shall not apply to the sale of new motor vehicles which are subject to regulation under the Clean Air Act.

