

Peace and Justice Committee Fiscal Year 2023 Work Plan

The Commission emerged from an 18-month pandemic lockdown in the fall of 2021, eager to grapple with the new world that has emerged since mid-2020.

Our landscape in the 2020s is defined by a national racial reckoning and the demand to reimagine public safety, in the midst of an ongoing pandemic, a U.S. body politic figuratively at war with itself, along with a literal war in Europe that makes us fear for our survival, climate destruction even more terrifying, and now with a woman's right to choose under severe attack.

As grim as these challenges are, they can bring out the best of Berkeley's character. This city has a genius for grasping the what the moment calls upon us to do, what role we can play to turn tragedy into triumph.

The big lesson of our times is that the pursuit of human rights, peace and social justice, is one that everyone plays a role in. At the founding of this Commission in 1986, Council declared, "It is the responsibility of one and all to labor hard for peace and justice within forums of appropriate scale."

The mission of the Berkeley Peace and Justice Commission is, firstly, to "advise the Berkeley City Council and the Berkeley Unified School Board on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice." Secondly, it is to "help create citizen awareness around issues of social justice and develop educational programs for implementation by the City Council and the School Board."

These times are very fluid, and it is impossible to entirely predict what fresh challenges to peace and justice will arise in the coming year. Therefore, the Commission can determine its Work Plan in advance only in part, as we must be able to respond to the unfolding crises of our society.

We do expect, however, to focus much of our work on the following issues:

1. Reimagining public safety in Berkeley.
 - The City of Berkeley is committed to the Reimagining rubric of three parts: Reduce, Improve, and Invest. Public (or community) safety is seen in its broadest sense: how can we ensure our collective and individual safety and health?
 - The Commission's mandate calls upon us to "develop ways to resolve conflict which do not involve violence and which may be applied on a local level as well as a national level...Our best protection lies in initiating, devising, and promulgating peaceful and just policy alternatives." Today, we call these restorative practices.
 - From the beginning of the Reimagining process in 2020, the Council elaborated three overall goals. The first two were outcome-focused, envisioning a transformative

approach to public safety and equitable investments in historically marginalized communities. The third envisioned a process shift, “a broad community process that will result in deep and lasting change to support the safety and well-being of Berkeley residents.”

As the City moves into planning and implementation phases, we and other advisory commissions must play our full role in concert with the elected leaders, staff, and public to ensure that the needs of the community are clearly heard.

- City Council has proposed to create an Office of Equity and Diversity, initially to consider the recommendations from the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. As the Commission mandated to advise Council and BUSD on all matters of social justice, Peace and Justice will follow with interest the work of the Office, and support it with community-based input.

2. Fostering world peace and security.

- Promote a just and prompt end to the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia.
- Contribute to the global conversation about international security and how such conflicts can be prevented in the future.
- Defend democracy and freedom in domestic and U.S. foreign policy, including immigration and economic, military, and diplomatic relations.

3. Defending reproductive rights including access to abortion.

- Based on the recent Supreme Court leak, the greatest rollback on access to abortion in a century appears underway.
- Governor Newsom has been working with community organizations from some time in preparation for this moment. The recommendations made by the Governor’s Future of Abortion Council (CA-FAB)¹ focus primarily on supporting women who may travel to California for procedures that will no longer be available in their states. Secondly, they propose broadening support for abortion provision across California, surveying issues preventing access in the most-impacted communities.
- The Peace and Justice Commission has recommended to the City Council that it charter a similar investigation of reproductive care and women’s health in Berkeley. As we move into the expected post-Roe future, it is important to know what disparities in access and affordability of reproductive health services exist in our City.

4. Eliminating racial and other inequities in all realms, including housing, health, law enforcement, education, labor, and the environment.

¹ <https://apnews.com/article/abortion-california-sanctuary-625a118108bcda253196697c83548d5b>

and

https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/uploads/filer_public/d8/e1/d8e17825-72e0-4f6f-9c57-7549bb54261e/ca_fab_council_report_.pdf

- Not only have these manifold disparities been identified and studied for many years, beginning measures to address them have been discussed and adopted. To secure the public’s trust in overcoming inequality, the program of change must be clearly communicated, it must be fully funded and successfully implemented, and it must have full transparency, community oversight, and accountability.
- In early 2021, Council also passed a resolution titled “Declare Racism as a Public Health Crisis, a Threat and Safety Issue in the City of Berkeley” proposal, providing an additional framework for the Department of Equity and a potentially a path for Peace and Justice to collaborate with other commissions and City departments toward a new paradigm in public safety and health.²
- The Commission continues to support and advocate for the African American Holistic Resource Center (AAHRC).

5. Support efforts in the BUSD to provide equitable access to education.

- In the last year, commissioners have reached out to school board members, staff, and other members of the BUSD community to discuss how we can be of help in the District’s social justice initiatives. The commission is studying the BUSD’s African American Success Framework and its new program for K-12 Ethnic Studies. We will continue to look for ways to support such positive initiatives and to build support for them in the community at large.

In addition, several other critical social issues cry out for our attention, including voter suppression, gun violence, and homelessness and affordable housing for all.

Ongoing Projects

Nuclear-Free Berkeley

The Nuclear Free Berkeley Act came into force in 1986 (Chapter 12.90.070 Section 030D). The Peace & Justice Commission established the Subcommittee on The Nuclear Free Berkeley Act (NFBA) to oversee and reinforce compliance with the terms of the Act. The

² The “Declare Racism as a Public Health Crisis, a Threat and Safety Issue in the City of Berkeley” proposal reflects on both the disparate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American communities, and the heightened understanding of structural and institutionalized racism nationally. The proposal commits the City to eliminate all socioeconomic barriers to health equity. Specifically, it calls for a series of town hall meetings throughout the sessions to address the concerns of people of color and marginalized community members and to strengthen the anti-racist capacity building; establishment of a working group to promote racial equity; the City Manager to explore greater health disparities that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 crisis; to propose a Health in All Policies Ordinance; mandatory anti-racist training for City employees; a Strategic Plan for Health Equity; an anti-racism dashboard; work with BUSD to study whether “race-based differential access means that some students have less access to educational opportunities.”

Subcommittee's activities have included:

- recommendation against a waiver for continuation of the Berkeley Public Library's contracts with 3M (2009-2010);
- consideration of a waiver for the City of Berkeley Public Health Division's proposal on medical supplies (2012);
- recommendation of a waiver for the SkyDeck Business Incubator-Accelerator Contract (2012);
- recommendation (February 7, 2013) to the Regents of the University of California that it phase out responsibility for operating the Nuclear Weapons Laboratories in Livermore and Los Alamos;
- a letter from the City of Berkeley to President Obama in 2014 urging support of a ban on nuclear weapons;
- maintenance of opposition to nuclear power.

More recently, in light of the Award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), whose goal is international adherence to and full implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the Treaty), the Peace and Justice Commission will seek to collaborate further with ICAN on activities of mutual concern. We would note that the California State Senate and the California State Assembly voted affirmatively on a bill in September 2018 to urge U.S. Senate adoption of the Treaty. Strong support comes also from the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement; Nuclear Ban US; The City of Los Angeles, California; the City of Takoma Park, Maryland; Physicians for Social Responsibility; and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, among others.

Indigenous Peoples

Between December 2015 and January 2016, the Berkeley City Council, upon the recommendation of the Peace and Justice Commission, adopted five important resolutions supporting the treaty rights of indigenous people in Berkeley. The resolutions included: recognition of the Ohlone people as the original inhabitants of Berkeley and the Bay Area, pledging to work in good faith with Ohlone representatives; implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as municipal policy; endorsing the upgrading of the Declaration to a Convention; honoring the Berkeley Shellmound indigenous site; and urging the East Bay Regional Parks District to protect the Ohlone place of origin sacred site.

The resolution on the Berkeley Shellmound mandated that “free, prior, and informed consent of the Ohlone and other indigenous peoples of the region should be integral to any alteration planning for the Berkeley Shellmound site, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Socially Responsible investment and Procurement Policy (SRIPP) and Sustainable Sweatshop-Free Berkeley

The SRIPP Subcommittee of the Peace and Justice Commission was chartered by resolution of the Berkeley City Council on July 16, 2019. Its immediate charge is to develop a proposed policy to “govern the Commission’s advisory role in socially responsible investing and socially responsible procurement.” Prior to March 2020, the subcommittee held several meetings including one discussion with City Finance Department staff and used those conversations to craft a draft SRIPP ordinance that is responsive to the City Council’s request.

The Sweatshop-Free Berkeley Policy now has a zero-dollar threshold per supplier per year for textile products purchased by the City. This threshold is an improvement over the previous minimum of \$1,000 purchase per supplier for the Policy to apply. However, the policy is complaint-driven, so the burden is on community members to research the supply chain for each supplier. The SRIPP Subcommittee proposes to establish a mechanism for suppliers to show that they are using Sweatshop Free products for City purchases.

The Policy governs textile purchases only. The goal is to identify sweat-free alternatives for technology purchases so tech can be covered as well.

The BUSD, through the School Board Policy Committee, is in the process of establishing a Sweatshop-Free Schools Policy for athletic supplies. The SRIPP Subcommittee and the Commission are supporting the BUSD to ensure the development of an effective policy.