

ORDINANCE NO. 7,636-N.S.

INCREASING THE REAL PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX TO FUND GENERAL
MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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

Section 1. Findings and declarations.

The People of the City of Berkeley find and declare as follows:

A. Berkeley is facing an emergency, with homelessness rising by almost 20% from 2015 to 2017.

B. Approximately 1000 individuals experience homelessness every day in Berkeley, including almost 700 who are without shelter.

C. The growth of homelessness in Berkeley and throughout the State of California, brought about largely due to a national, statewide and regional lack of affordable housing, healthcare, mental health and other supportive services for vulnerable individuals, has provided a new sense of urgency to address this crisis.

D. The crisis of homelessness results in large numbers of people living on Berkeley's sidewalks, in parks and in other public spaces that were not designed for human habitation, creating public health and safety impacts the City must regularly address, requiring increasing expenditures from the General Fund.

E. In 2016, Berkeley declared a Homeless Shelter Crisis (Res. No. 67,357-N.S.), recently extended to January 2020 (Res. No. 68,206-N.S.), which allows the City to explore a wide variety of responses to rising homelessness, and remove obstacles to implementation.

F. The homeless crisis has created an urgent need to pay for additional services to care for and house the homeless including, but not limited to, homeless seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, transition-age youth and the long-term homeless, and for services for homeless people such as emergency shelters, navigation centers, rehousing counseling, rental subsidies, job training, mental health support, emergency transport and crisis response.

G. In April of 2017, to respond to the homeless crisis, the Berkeley City Council unanimously passed the Pathways Project, a comprehensive plan to address homelessness, focused on preventing homelessness, increasing access to permanent and supportive housing and creating an unbroken path from homelessness to housing, and rebuilt lives.

H. Berkeley is now implementing the Pathways Project's two goals: (1) to provide homeless individuals with temporary respite and relief from living on the streets and, to the extent possible given resources, permanent housing, services and support; and (2) to relieve pressure from areas of Berkeley experiencing disproportionate impacts of concentrated homeless populations, and throughout Berkeley.

I. The Pathways Project's Navigation Center, a low-barrier 24-hour shelter with on-site case management and housing counseling, opened in June of 2018 and is already helping chronically homeless individuals to obtain permanent housing.

J. Regionally, Berkeley is working to expand shelter, services and housing resources to address homelessness and reduce displacement, and to ensure sharing of resources and costs equitably among communities.

K. Berkeley is also working to ensure all public funds available to address homelessness and affordable housing are being maximized, from the County, State and Federal governments.

L. Even with the addition of Alameda County, State, and Federal resources, Berkeley is unable to shelter all of its homeless residents, or to meet the complex challenges of providing affordable housing, health and mental health services, job training, housing counseling and other desperately needed services.

M. The increased costs of meeting the challenges of the homeless crisis have impacted Berkeley's General Fund. The City needs new funds to pay for municipal services, including homeless services, and expert advice to determine how best to use the City's limited resources to address the crisis.

Section 2. Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 7.52 Real Property Transfer Tax, Section 7.52.040 is hereby amended to read as follows:

7.52.040 Imposed.

A. There is hereby imposed on all transfers of lands, tenements, or other interests in real property located in the City of Berkeley a real property transfer tax at the rate of one-and one-half percent of the value of consideration, for transfers with a value at or below the threshold established in paragraph (C). Except as set forth in Section 7.52.060, this tax applies regardless of the method by which the transfer is accomplished or the relationship of the parties to the transfer.

B. There is hereby imposed on all transfers of lands, tenements, or other interests in real property located in the City of Berkeley a real property transfer tax at the rate of two-and one-half percent of the value of consideration, for transfers with a value above the threshold established in paragraph (C). Except as set forth in Section 7.52.060, this tax applies regardless of the method by which the transfer is accomplished or the relationship of the parties to the transfer. For purposes of this paragraph, the tax reduction available

under Section 7.52.060.K shall be limited to the rebate that would be available based on the tax rate imposed pursuant to Paragraph A.

C. For purposes of the real property transfer tax imposed by this Section, the threshold is \$1,500,000, adjusted annually by the City of Berkeley on January 1 of every subsequent year to a number equal to the value of consideration for the transaction at the 67th percentile of transactions during the 12 months preceding September 1 of the preceding year, as recorded by the Alameda County Assessor, rounded to the nearest \$100,000 increment, provided that in no case shall any adjustment lower the threshold below \$1,500,000.

D. The two-and-one-half percent rate imposed in Paragraph B of this Section shall expire on January 1, 2029, unless reauthorized by the voters prior to such date.

Section 3. Section 7.52.190 of the Berkeley Municipal Code is hereby added to read as follows:

7.52.190 Homeless Services Panel of Experts.

- A. There shall be established the Homeless Services Panel of Experts to make recommendations on how and to what extent the City should establish and/or fund programs to end or prevent homelessness in Berkeley and provide humane services and support.
- B. An officer or employee of the City designated by the City Manager shall serve as secretary of the Panel.
- C. In accordance with Chapter 2.04, the Panel shall be composed of nine members appointed by the City Council.
- D. Terms shall expire and vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.04.030 through 2.04.145 of this Code.
- E. Each member of the Panel must:
 - 1. Have experience in the development, administration, provision and/or evaluation of homeless programs in a government or non-profit capacity; or
 - 2. Have current or past lived experience with homelessness; or
 - 3. Have experience in researching the causes, impacts and solutions to homelessness; or
 - 4. Have experience with state and/or local homeless policy, funding or programs; or
 - 5. Have experience with federal homeless policy and funding administration such as the Continuum of Care Program; or
 - 6. Have experience in the development and financing of affordable housing for formerly homeless persons; or
 - 7. Have experience in the provision of mental health and/or substance use programs for homeless persons.

F. In accordance with Section 3.02.040, members of the Panel may be reappointed but shall not serve more than eight consecutive years.

G. The Panel shall, by majority vote, do each of the following:

1. Annually appoint one of its members as chair and one of its members as vice-chair;
2. Approve bylaws to facilitate the proper functioning of the Panel;
3. Establish a regular time and place of meeting. All meetings shall be noticed as required by law and shall be scheduled in a way to allow for maximum input from the public. Minutes for each meeting shall be recorded, kept, and maintained; and
4. Publish an annual report that includes the following:
 - a. recommendations on how to allocate the City's general funds to fund homeless services programs in Berkeley;
 - b. information, if available, concerning the impact of funded programs on the residents of the City; and
 - c. any additional information that the Panel deems appropriate.

H. Within 15 days of receipt of the publication of the Panel's annual report, the City Manager shall cause the report to be published on the City's Internet website and to be transmitted to the City Council.

I. The revenue raised by the tax imposed by Section 7.52.040 is available to pay the usual and current expenses of conducting the municipal government of the City, as determined by the City Council. The City Council shall consider, but need not follow, the Panel's recommendations on how and to what extent to use this revenue to establish and/or fund programs to pay for homeless services and shall annually inform the Panel as to the extent to which it has implemented the Panel's recommendations.

Section 4. Severability.

If any word, phrase, sentence, part, section, subsection, or other portion of this ordinance, or any application thereof to any person or circumstance is declared void, unconstitutional, or invalid for any reason, then such word, phrase, sentence, part, section, subsection, or other portion, or the prescribed application thereof, shall be severable, and the remaining provisions of this chapter, and all applications thereof, not having been declared void, unconstitutional or invalid, shall remain in full force and effect. The People of the City of Berkeley hereby declare that they would have passed this ordinance, and each section, subsection, sentence, clause and phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases had been declared invalid or unconstitutional.

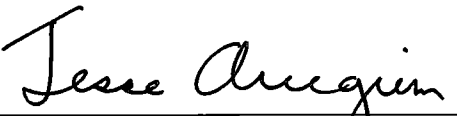
The foregoing is a true and correct copy of Ordinance No. 7,636-N.S., and the same was approved by a vote of the electorate of the City of Berkeley on November 6, 2018.

At a regular meeting of the Council of the City of Berkeley held on December 11, 2018, this Ordinance was adopted by the following vote:

Ayes: Bartlett, Davila, Droste, Hahn, Harrison, Kesarwani, Robinson, Wengraf, and Arreguin.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.



Jesse Arreguin, Mayor

ATTEST: 

Mark Numainville, City Clerk

Date signed: December 17, 2018