



Planning and Development
Land Use Planning Division

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT AN
INITIAL STUDY-NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE
BERKELEY GENERAL PLAN NEW ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT AND DISASTER
PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE**

Date: September 25, 2026
To: Public Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Individuals
From: City of Berkeley, Planning and Development Department
Subject: **Notice of Intent to Adopt an Initial Study-Negative Declaration**

Pursuant to the *State of California Public Resources Code* and the *Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act*, this notice is to advise that the City of Berkeley has prepared an Initial Study to evaluate the environmental effects of the project identified below:

Project Title: General Plan New Environmental Justice Element and Disaster Preparedness and Safety Element Update

Project Applicant: City of Berkeley

Project Location: The project site encompasses the city of Berkeley, which is bordered by the city of Albany and the unincorporated Contra Costa County community of Kensington to the north, by unincorporated Contra Costa County and the city of Oakland to the east, the cities of Oakland and Emeryville to the south, and San Francisco Bay to the west. The project area encompasses the city of Berkeley; therefore, the project area includes parcels on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

Project Description: The proposed project consists of a focused update to the City of Berkeley General Plan to update the Disaster Preparedness and Safety Element and add a new Environmental Justice (EJ) Element. The purpose of the Disaster Preparedness and Safety Element is to protect Berkeley's residents, businesses, and natural environment from the impacts of natural and human-caused hazards while building long-term resilience to climate change. It establishes a clear framework for reducing risk, safeguarding critical infrastructure, and ensuring that emergency preparedness and recovery efforts are equitable and effective. The proposed project involves an update to the Disaster Preparedness and Safety Element that incorporates new data, hazard mapping, scientific findings, and community priorities.

The purpose of the EJ Element is to fulfill the City's obligation under Senate Bill 1000 and to incorporate EJ goals, policies, and programs into its General Plan. The EJ Element identifies six focus areas as policy topics necessary for reducing the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities, which includes pollution exposure and air quality, public facilities, food access, housing stability, physical activity and active transportation, and civic and community engagement.

The proposed project is a policy level action that establishes goals, policies, and implementation measures. Adoption of, or updates to, these elements does not approve or commit the City to specific physical developments, infrastructure projects, or land use changes. The elements provide a framework that may inform or influence future discretionary actions, and future activities undertaken to implement these policies would be subject to separate environmental review under CEQA, if necessary.

Public Review Period: A 30-day public review period will begin on September 25, 2026. Written comments must be mailed, submitted in person or via email to the contact person below no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 26, 2026.

Contact Person: Alene Pearson

Address: Planning and Development Department, 1947 Center Street, 2nd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704

Telephone: (510) 981-7489

E-mail: apearson@berkeleyca.gov

Project CEQA Status: An Initial Study-Negative Declaration has been prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. The Initial Study determined that the proposed project would no impact for all issue areas, and therefore a Negative Declaration is proposed. The Draft Initial Study-Negative Declaration and additional information about the proposed project are available on the City's website at: <https://berkeleyca.gov/construction-development/land-use-development/general-plan-and-area-plans/prepared-safe-and-healthy>. A physical copy of the Draft Initial Study-Negative Declaration will also be available for in person review at the address shown above.

Public Hearing: A Public Hearing will be held by the Planning Commission to consider recommending the project and Draft Initial Study-Negative Declaration for adoption. The hearing is anticipated to be held on January 20, 2027 at 6:30 pm at the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709. Following the Planning Commission hearing, the City Council will consider the Project. Interested attendees should confirm the date, time, and location of the hearing at: <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/boards-commissions/planning-commission>.