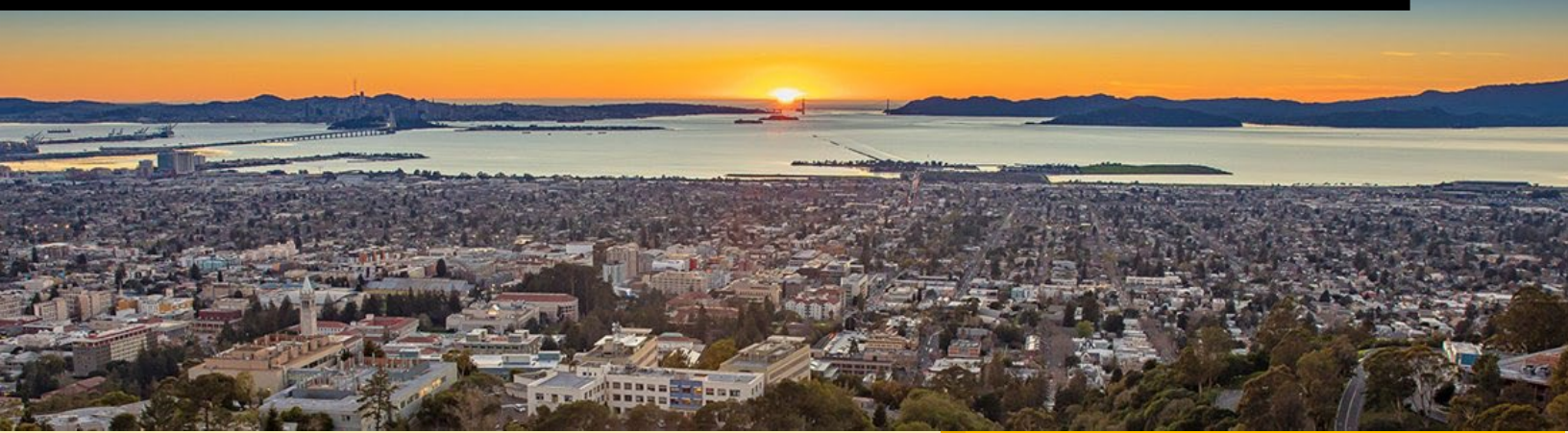


REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY



Status Update and Report Out

City Manager's Office

Summer 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section provides an overview of Berkeley's work towards Reimagining Public Safety, highlighting key milestones and the City's commitment to creating an equitable and effective model for all residents.

Introduction

Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) in the City of Berkeley is a multi-phase initiative aimed at advancing a more equitable, inclusive, and community-responsive approach to safety. The initiative seeks to shift from an enforcement-centered model toward one that prioritizes prevention, wellness, and coordinated service delivery. Through cross-departmental collaboration, community engagement, and data-informed planning, RPS works to align City systems with the needs of all residents, particularly those historically underserved by conventional public safety structures.

The initiative is structured around a phased implementation process:

- ***Phase 1 (2020-2022) Community Process and Research***

In July 2020, the City Council adopted resolutions to initiate a comprehensive public safety transformation process. Phase 1 focused on research and extensive community engagement, supported by the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) and the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. This foundational phase involved broad-based dialogue and cross-sector partnerships, culminating in a set of recommendations to guide structural reform. The reports developed during this phase emphasized the principles of “Reimagine, Improve, and Reinvest” and provided a roadmap for shifting Berkeley’s public safety system toward a more community-centered model.s.

- ***Phase 2 (2022-2024) Continued Analysis and Implementation***

Phase 2 focused on translating the recommendations from Phase 1 into operational strategies. This included targeted staffing investments, consultant-led assessments, and new community-based programs addressing violence prevention, mental health, and gender-based harm. Departments worked collaboratively to implement Council direction and ensure alignment across City systems. This phase reinforced the City’s commitment to data-driven decision-making, cross-departmental coordination, and inclusive service delivery.

- ***Phase 3 (2024-2026) Continued Implementation and Expansion***

Now underway, Phase 3 is focused on embedding reforms into City operations, expanding care-based models, and establishing long-term sustainability. This includes continued investments in staffing, technical support, and community initiatives, as well as alignment with County systems where appropriate. Phase 3 also incorporates adjustments in response to fiscal conditions, while maintaining the City’s core commitment to a responsive, equitable, and well-coordinated public safety framework that reflects the diversity and needs of the Berkeley community.

Timeline

Timeline of Events		
Date	Milestone Description	References
June 16, 2020	"Urgency Item: Safety for All" introduced, initiating Berkeley's public safety reform process.	• Annotated Agenda
July 14, 2020	City Council approved the Omnibus motion, launching the Reimagining Public Safety initiative.	• See Action Calendar: Items 18a-18e • Annotated Agenda
December 15, 2020	City Council authorized a contract with the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR).	• See Consent Calendar: Item 7 • Annotated Agenda
January 19, 2021	RPS Task Force established to guide recommendations through community and stakeholder engagement.	• See Consent Calendar: Item 18 • Annotated Agenda
March 10, 2022	NICJR, the Task Force, and consultants presented final reports and recommendations.	• See Action Calendar: Item 1-2 • Annotated Agenda
April 21, 2022	City Manager presented a roadmap synthesizing Phase I efforts.	• See Action Calendar: Item 1 • Annotated Agenda
May 5, 2022	Council adopted the Mayor's phased implementation plan and referred \$5.3 million for FY 2023–24.	• See Action Calendar: Item 1a-1c • Annotated Agenda
June 28, 2022	Fiscal Year 2023–24 Biennial Budget adopted, incorporating RPS priorities.	• See Action Calendar: Item 44 • Annotated Agenda
January 23, 2024	Staff presented the Fall 2023 RPS Status Report; Council adopted the GVIPP framework.	• See Action Calendar: Item 1 • Annotated Agenda
May 14, 2024	Staff presented the Spring 2024 RPS Status Report and FY 2025–26 budget recommendations.	• See Action Calendar: Item 27 • Annotated Agenda
June 25, 2024	Fiscal Year 2025–26 Biennial Budget adopted, including multi-tiered RPS funding allocations.	• See Action Calendar: Item 53 • Annotated Agenda
October 29, 2024	Staff presented the Fall 2024 RPS Status Report, highlighting the Police Department Workload Study and Dispatch Needs Assessment.	• See Action Calendar: Item 1 • Annotated Agenda

Phased Deliverables & Status Updates

City Manager's Office-led Deliverables		
Deliverable	Recommendation	Status Update
Assistant to the City Manager RPS Coordinator	Establish a dedicated senior-level position (NTE 3 years) to manage cross-departmental implementation and ensure continuity across Reimagining efforts.	Complete – Ongoing Work. ¹ Initiated in Phase 2. The Assistant to the City Manager position was filled in August 2023 and continues to support implementation, coordination, and reporting for the RPS initiative.
Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI)	Advance DEI infrastructure and integrate equity considerations across RPS priorities.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. The DEI Officer was onboarded in November 2023 and is supporting broader City equity goals (e.g., environmental justice, BINDEX, LGBTQIA+) and alignment with RPS principles.
Grant Assistance	Increase capacity to secure external funding in support of RPS-related programs.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. The City continues to partner with California Consulting to pursue grants supporting violence prevention, crisis response, and system improvements. City staff are also coordinating multiple competitive state and federal applications.
Language Equity	Translate victim resources and other public safety materials into multiple languages.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. Efforts related to Language Equity are ongoing, with research and evaluation to identify community language needs currently underway. The team is working to complete the translation of key resources, including the survivor resources, by the end of Summer.
Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention	Fully implement the Ceasefire violence intervention program.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. Berkeley launched the GVIPP soft rollout in Fall 2024. The program includes outreach, reentry support, custom notifications, and monthly CVI Collaborative meetings. Regional coordination is underway. Vendor performance and data-sharing protocols continue to evolve.
Fine and Fees Analysis	Review Municipal Code for proposed changes to increase equity and racial justice in City's transportation fines and fees, and explore the civilianization of the municipal code.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. The City partnered with the Goldman School of Public Policy to complete a preliminary analysis in Spring 2025. Recommendations include centralizing fines administration, modernizing communications, and advancing payment alternatives. Implementation planning is underway, guided by the RPS and Care First, Jails Last frameworks.
Alternative Response Implementation Plan	Expand use of non-police responders for lower-risk calls.	In Progress. Initiated in Phase 2. Work is underway to align CSO roles, explore new response options beyond SCU, and refine dispatch protocols. This effort is closely tied to CAD reforms and analysis of call types and responder fit.
Department of Community Safety	Support an organizational design process to create an umbrella Department of Community Safety.	Paused – Funding Deferred. Deferred to Phase 4. Efforts related to Department of Community Safety design are on hold.
Recommendations on Public Safety/Crime Prevention for Women and Older Persons	To support phased roll out of recommendations addressing public safety/crime prevention for women and older persons.	Paused – Funding Deferred. Initiated in Phase 2. Staff completed a preliminary cost analysis and presented early findings to the Commission on the Status of Women. Staff continue to assess alignment opportunities and analyze local data to inform future rollout.

¹ For items marked as "Complete – Ongoing Work," the initial implementation, assessment, or directive has been completed. However, ongoing work refers to continued activities that build on this foundation. This may include advancing the next phase of implementation, conducting follow-up actions, or sustaining efforts to ensure long-term impact and alignment with broader goals.

Phased Deliverables & Status Updates

City Attorney-led Deliverable

Deliverable	Recommendation	Status Update
Litigation Analysis	Analyzing litigation outcomes and exposure for city departments in order to guide the creation of City policy to reduce the impact of settlements on the General Fund.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase I . The City Attorney's Offices continues to partner with departments on all Reimagining Public Safety-related efforts.

City Auditor-led Deliverable

Deliverable	Recommendation	Status Update
City Auditor Analysis	Having the City Auditor perform an analysis of City's emergency 9-1-1 calls-for service and responses, as well as analysis of the Berkeley Police Department's (BPD) budget.	Complete. Initiated in Phase I. The City Auditor Completed their report, Data Analysis of the City of Berkeley's Police Response , July 2, 2021.

Police-led Deliverables

Deliverable	Recommendation	Status Update
Fair and Impartial Policing Implementation	Recommendation to implement and prioritize FIP and continue to support employee training and professional development.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase I. The Police Department has implemented all 14 Reimagining Public Safety Task Force recommendations related to FIP. Ongoing efforts include integrating FIP principles into professional development and annual training requirements.
Auditor Recommendations	Complete Auditor Recommendations on overtime and calls for service.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase I. BPD began implementation following the Auditor's report. Progress updates have been shared through memos and reports, with final outcomes addressed in the Citygate Workload Study.
Staffing Assessment	Analysis of BPD Staffing and Beat Structure.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. The City contracted with Citygate Associates to conduct the analysis; the final report was published in September 2024. Findings are being used to inform ongoing staffing strategy and resource alignment.
Wellness Funding	Continue to support employee health and wellness.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. The Department continues to promote officer wellness through existing partnerships and internal initiatives. Additional efforts are being explored to expand access and normalize mental health care.
Staffing (CSO & Dispatcher)	Launch a pilot Community Services Officer unit.	In Progress. Initiated in Phase 2. The CSO program has transitioned from a limited-term pilot to a full-time staffing model. Recruitment and assessment of new applicants are currently underway, with operational data to inform longer-term program placement and sustainability.

Phased Deliverables & Status Updates

Fire-led Deliverable		
Deliverable	Recommendation	Status Update
Dispatch Needs Assessment (DNA)	Continue development and implementation of prioritized dispatch, request staff return with a recommended plan.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase I. The Berkeley Fire Department completed the Dispatch Needs Assessment and a validation study. An implementation plan is currently in progress, focusing on triage protocol development, software upgrades, and Emergency Communications Center capacity planning.

Health, Housing, and Community Services-led Deliverables		
Deliverable	Recommendation	Status Update
Specialized Care Unit (SCU)	Adopt the report, “City of Berkeley Specialized Care Unit Crisis Response Recommendations by Resource Development Associates” and implement the pilot SCU.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase I. The SCU was launched in partnership with Bonita House, RDA, and community stakeholders in Fall 2023 and has responded to over 2,400 calls. Informed by a retrospective evaluation and aligned with CalAIM, the City is sunsetting the pilot and transitioning crisis response services to Alameda County’s Medi-Cal-funded Mobile Crisis Response System.
Crisis Needs Assessment	Behavioral Health, Crisis Response, and Crisis-related Services Needs and Capacity Assessments.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. The Crisis Needs Assessment, led by RDA, analyzed 911 CAD data, dispatcher narratives, and field observations to assess crisis-related call handling and response alignment. The final CAD Assessment was delivered in Spring 2025 and will inform improvements to triage protocols, coordination, and stabilization services. HHCS is reviewing findings in conjunction with the SCU evaluation to guide future policy and operational changes.
Respite from Gender Violence	Implement recommendations related to Gender Violence, LGBTQIA+ needs, and peer-led services; work with county and CBO partners to map systems and identify service gaps.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. HHCS hired a temporary Community Services Specialist II to lead implementation. Staff have conducted stakeholder engagement and are developed an action framework based on identified gaps in gender-based violence support systems.
Violence Prevention and Youth Services	Support violence prevention and youth service programs, including McGee Ave. Baptist Church, Berkeley Youth Alternatives, and Berkeley Junior Jackets.	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. Contracts were renewed for FY 2025–26, and staff continue to provide technical assistance, monitoring, and impact evaluation as part of biannual RPS reporting.
Youth Mental Health	Support a youth-led mental health response model through partnership with Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD).	Complete – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. Contract with BUSD was executed, and the Berkeley High School Wellness Center officially launched in Winter 2024. Ongoing monitoring and student engagement activities are in place to ensure responsive support.

Phased Deliverables & Status Updates

Public Works-led Deliverables		
Deliverable	Recommendation	Status Update
Berkeley Department of Transportation (BerkDOT)	Pursue creation of a Berkeley Department of Transportation (BerkDOT) to integrate a racial justice lens into traffic enforcement, policy, and infrastructure development. Identify strategies to reduce pretextual stops based on minor traffic violations.	Paused – Funding Deferred. Initiated in Phase 1. Due to state legislative setbacks (e.g., SB 50's failure in 2023) and local budget constraints, BerkDOT development has been deprioritized and is on hold. Transportation equity goals continue through Vision Zero and staffing investments.
Vision Zero Coordinator (Collision Analysis)	Approve a Vision Zero staff position (NTE 3 years) in Public Works to enhance collision data analysis capacity.	In Progress – Ongoing Work. Initiated in Phase 2. The Vision Zero Program Coordinator (Associate Planner) position became vacant in November 2024 and remains unfilled due to citywide resource constraints. The Vision Zero Program Manager (Senior Planner) was hired in January 2025, restoring program leadership. Despite staffing gaps, consultant support and interdepartmental collaboration have sustained progress. Construction on several high-injury corridor projects is scheduled for 2025–2026. Continued staffing and funding are essential to achieving Berkeley's Vision Zero goal by 2028.
Expand Downtown Streets Teams (DST)	Expand DST as placement for <i>low-level violations</i> (e.g. vehicular camping/parking and sidewalk ordinance infractions).	Paused – Funding Deferred. Initiated in Phase 2. In FY 2024, the City allocated \$50,000 in one-time funds to expand the DST Clean Cities Program, supporting litter removal, graffiti abatement, and neighborhood maintenance. A new contract was executed in June 2023. While the original referral included exploring DST as a diversion for low-level violations, the City's Fines and Fees Assessment determined that a community service model was not viable due to cost, equity, and infrastructure barriers. The \$50,000 in allocated funds were not carried forward during the Annual Appropriations Ordinance (AAO) process, and are therefore currently unavailable.
Alternatives to Sanctions/Fines Hearing Officer	Expand hearing officer resources in the City Manager's Office to provide alternative referrals to community service and social services for <i>parking and other infractions</i> .	Paused – Funding Deferred. Deferred to Phase 4. Hearing officer resources have been expanded, but the implementation of alternatives to sanctions and fines is pending the results of the Fines & Fees analysis.

Considerations

As the City continues to advance its Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) initiative, several intersecting challenges and operational realities shape ongoing implementation. Addressing these considerations will be critical to sustaining progress, maintaining alignment with community needs, and supporting long-term system transformation.

Fiscal Conditions and Resource Allocation

The current budget landscape has required a phased approach to implementation, with some initiatives deferred based on funding availability. Departments are prioritizing core services and high-impact deliverables while seeking external funding to support future expansion. Continued alignment between fiscal strategy and program planning will be essential to ensure long-term viability.

Infrastructure and Implementation Capacity

Achieving the goals of RPS depends not only on funding but also on the systems and staffing required to support effective delivery. Gaps in administrative infrastructure, technology systems, and data coordination have presented challenges in several areas. Addressing these needs through phased planning and capacity-building will remain a focus moving forward.

Staffing and Workforce Retention

Citywide staffing constraints continue to impact the pace and scale of implementation. While the City has taken steps to stabilize key functions and fill essential roles, the hiring freeze that City's structural deficit and hiring freeze has limits the City's ability to hire additional staff for this initiative. Exceptions to the freeze are being considered for critical positions, but the broader constraints reinforce the need for retention strategies, succession planning, and operational resilience.

Interdepartmental Coordination

The scope and interdependence of RPS work require sustained collaboration across City departments, community-based partners, and County agencies. As the City works to embed reforms into standard practice, maintaining clear communication, shared ownership, and coordinated timelines will be necessary to ensure alignment, minimize duplication, and achieve equitable outcomes.

Sustainability and Strategic Planning

Many Phase 2 efforts were supported through pilot funding or short-term grants. As programs mature, the City is evaluating long-term delivery strategies and exploring transitions to County or regional systems where appropriate—such as in the area of mobile crisis response. These decisions are being guided by service impact, fiscal sustainability, and alignment with system-level planning efforts.



Next Steps

As the Reimagining Public Safety initiative progresses through Phase 3, the City remains focused on sustaining momentum, institutionalizing successful reforms, and strategically planning for future phases of work. Building on community engagement, consultant analyses, and recent program evaluations, staff are identifying areas for targeted improvement and long-term investment.

In the near term, the City will continue to support core RPS efforts while refining implementation strategies based on operational needs, fiscal realities, and service delivery goals. Staff are also developing a roadmap for deferred or longer-term items to ensure that sequencing is achievable and aligned with available resources.

Internal coordination and system improvements remain key priorities. While the City works to address its structural deficit, a citywide hiring freeze has been put in place with the understanding that strategic exceptions are being considered where positions are essential to the sustainability of mandated programs and core services.

In parallel, staff are exploring external funding opportunities—including grants and regional partnerships—to reduce reliance on the General Fund and support financial sustainability. This includes evaluating when it may be appropriate to transition City-operated pilots into County-operated programs.

Looking ahead, Phase 4 planning will be grounded in lessons learned, performance data, and Council and community feedback. This next phase will further Berkeley's commitment to a more equitable, coordinated, and sustainable public safety system, aligned with long-term strategic goals.



Overview

Building on the summaries provided in earlier sections, this part of the report offers a more comprehensive view of the City's efforts. It details the unique challenges and considerations for each deliverable, outlining future steps and associated timelines. Additional details can be found in the report's Companion Appendix.

As noted in the Executive Summary, the City continues to navigate challenges, including staffing shortages, the redirection of resources, legislative hurdles, and legal complexities, which have caused delays in some initiatives. The City is dedicated to ensuring transparency and maintaining clear communication regarding all aspects of this initiative, covering both accomplishments and challenges encountered.

It is essential to recognize that, although there are more milestones to achieve, real change is an ongoing process. The City of Berkeley is deeply committed to this important work and the significant journey ahead. Rooted in community engagement, this effort is not just a duty but a privilege and remains at the heart of Berkeley's shared vision for a safer, more inclusive City.



Priority Reimagining Public Safety Initiatives

This section offers a concise overview of Berkeley's work towards Reimagining Public Safety, highlighting key milestones and the city's commitment to creating an equitable and effective model for all residents.

STAFFING INVESTMENTS

REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY PROJECT COORDINATOR

Department Lead: City Manager’s Office

Status Update: *Initial Hiring Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

In Phase 2 of the Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) initiative, the City of Berkeley created the Assistant to the City Manager (AtoCM) position to serve as the RPS Project Coordinator. This role has been central in fostering cross-departmental collaboration—engaging Police, Fire, Health, Housing and Community Services, Public Works, and the City Attorney’s Office—to develop a strategic Coordination Plan that improves resource allocation, interdepartmental communication, and overall project direction. Beyond coordination, the AtoCM is responsible for tracking and reporting on initiative progress and driving key deliverables from the City Manager’s Office, including efforts related to Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention, Grant Assistance, Fines & Fees Analysis, Language Equity, and foundational work for a potential Department of Community Safety. As the City progresses through Phase 3, the AtoCM is amplifying efforts to leverage grant opportunities to ensure the sustainability of the initiative in a fiscally responsible and balanced way. Additional priorities include securing Council approval for Tier I funding, requesting carryforward of unused funds during the Annual Appropriations Ordinance process, and completing the revamp of the public-facing RPS webpage.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	August 2023	Assistant to the City Manager hired.
	December 2023	Reimagining Public Safety Fall 2023 Status Report published.
	January 2024	Reimagining Public Safety Fall 2023 Presentation to City Council.
	May 2024	Reimagining Public Safety Spring 2024 Report Published & Presentation to City Council.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	October 2024	Reimagining Public Safety Fall 2024 Report Published & Presentation to City Council.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Ongoing:** The Assistant to the City Manager will continue to lead cross-departmental coordination while finalizing the public-facing RPS webpage to enhance transparency and community engagement. Focus will also center on securing long-term funding and leveraging grant opportunities to sustain and expand key public safety initiatives beyond FY 2025–2026.

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (ODEI)

Department Lead: City Manager’s Office

Status Update: *Initial Hiring Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

As part of Phase 2 of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative, the City of Berkeley established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer position within the City Manager’s Office to help embed anti-racism, equity, and inclusion into City operations. The DEI Officer leads efforts to align City policies, practices, and programs with the values of equity, justice, and community accountability. Since onboarding in late 2023, the DEI Officer has focused on internal assessment and external engagement, collaborating with departments, boards, commissions, and community organizations to strengthen inclusive governance. This includes aligning equity efforts with municipal legislation, Citywide survey data, and the recommendations from the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. The DEI Officer’s scope includes strategic planning, cross-departmental coordination, and LGBTQ+ community liaison work. Current efforts include collaboration with the Police Department on its LGBTQ+ liaison initiatives, support for inclusive community training, and participation in environmental justice. Due to the City’s ongoing deficit, previously proposed DEI staffing roles were not funded, the office continues to explore alternative funding and partnership opportunities with the San Francisco Foundation and Partnership for the Bays Future.

DEI and the City Manager’s Office Special Projects division are experiencing vacancy and in light of the challenging financial landscape that the City faces, we are exploring integration of operations in areas of overlap to address support in both offices. ODEI will begin the UBI/Reentry study investment process, with a report on initial findings by Winter 2025. ODEI plans to coordinate with external partners and grant writers to identify matching funds and evaluation support by Spring 2026. The City of Berkeley will employ race neutral measures like outreach to eliminate any unnecessary barriers in public works procurements and contracts identified in the Mason Tillman report recommended by the BINDEX steps to increase business inclusion opportunities for small minority- and women-owned businesses and to improve the diversity culture framework within the organization.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	November 2023	DEI Officer Hired.
	Fall 2023 – ongoing	Strategic planning, engagement with internal and external stakeholders.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Fall 2024–	- Strengthen support for formerly incarcerated adults by identifying gaps in existing reentry programs. - Launch a Guaranteed Income (GI) Pilot to test the impact of direct cash assistance on financial stability and recidivism with a clear evaluation processes and metrics. - Align E4BB with the work plan established by the DEI Officer. - Assess BINDEX Metrics and adjust for impact in utilization based on identified firms.

	Ongoing	Continued partnerships, LGBTQ+ inclusion, environmental justice, and trainings centering Belonging.
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Considerations:

- Institutional Readiness and Sustainability:** Continued implementation of DEI priorities requires strong cross-departmental coordination, sufficient staff capacity, and compliance with changing federal mandates. Establishing shared protocols for data collection and maintaining continuity in equity-related work will be essential. Sustaining progress depends on clear governance, adequate resources, and consistent stakeholder engagement.

Next Steps & Timelines:

- Ongoing:** The DEI Officer will continue developing a citywide DEI strategic workplan, engage in interdepartmental and community partnerships, and support inclusive policy implementation. Updates LGBTQ+ programs, and community outreach will be shared in future Reimagining Public Safety reports.



GRANT ASSISTANCE

Department Lead: City Manager’s Office

Status Update: *Contract Initiated, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

In Phase 2 of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative, the City allocated funding to enhance grant-seeking capacity and partnered with California Consulting, LLC to pursue state and federal funding aligned with public safety, equity, and resilience goals. In response to the current fiscal landscape, the City has expanded the scope of its critical focus areas—including crisis response, police wellness, climate equity, and economic stability—to increase competitiveness for both public and private grant opportunities. As Phase 3 progresses, the City has applied for major grants that could potentially support Reimagining Public Safety efforts and continues to identify new opportunities to support long-term sustainability.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Summer – Fall 2023	Contract with California Consulting, LLC initiated.
	Spring 2024	Contract with California Consulting, LLC amended to fully allocate grant assistance funds.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Ongoing	The Reimagining Public Safety AtoCM will continue to lead efforts in identifying, applying for, and managing grants.

Considerations:

- Grant Alignment and Strategic Coordination:** The City’s grant strategy prioritizes alignment with Reimagining Public Safety goals while fostering effective interdepartmental collaboration. To optimize resources and minimize fiscal impact, the team focuses on pursuing no-match grants, though it remains open to opportunities that require matching funds when they support high-priority initiatives.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- Ongoing:** The Assistant to the City Manager will continue collaborating across departments to identify grant opportunities that align with the Reimagining Public Safety initiative’s objectives. The team will report on successfully obtained grants and seek additional funding opportunities to further advance public safety goals.

SPECIALIZED CARE UNIT IMPLEMENTATION

Department Lead: Health, Housing and Community Services Department

Status Update: *Initial Implementation Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

In Phase 1, the SCU model was developed through extensive community engagement, expert consultation, and research facilitated by Resource Development Associates (RDA) and the SCU Steering Committee. This work culminated in a model tailored to Berkeley's needs and grounded in trauma-informed, equity-centered care. The Specialized Care Unit (SCU) was established as a core component of the City's Reimagining Public Safety initiative, offering a non-police, community-based response to behavioral health and substance use crises. Each SCU team includes a licensed clinician, a peer specialist, and an EMT. Together, they respond to calls involving individuals in crisis, working to stabilize situations through de-escalation and support—without involving law enforcement unless absolutely necessary.

By Phase 2, the City contracted with Bonita House, Inc. to launch the SCU, which began operations in September 2023. Since its launch, the SCU has responded to approximately 2,445 calls, with 1,376 resulting in an in-person field response. The majority of these calls were resolved without police involvement—underscoring the promise of care-based responses. However, over time, several structural challenges emerged that limited the program's sustainability. These included difficulties maintaining 24/7 staffing, extended response times, and the SCU's separation from the City's 911 dispatch system. To better understand these limitations and guide future planning, the City commissioned a retrospective evaluation by Resource Development Associates (RDA), completed in Spring 2025. The evaluation affirmed the SCU's value in offering compassionate, community-centered crisis care. At the same time, it highlighted critical barriers that made the current city-operated model difficult to sustain—particularly the lack of dedicated long-term funding², staffing constraints, and operational isolation from broader emergency response infrastructure. The SCU was initially funded through one-time CCMU and ARPA grants, both of which have now been exhausted. Continuing the program under the City's structure would require substantial and ongoing investment, which is not feasible given Berkeley's structural deficit, rising personnel costs, and broader fiscal constraints—challenges faced by many Bay Area jurisdictions.

Based on these findings and in alignment with statewide policy shifts under CalAIM, the City is now transitioning the SCU into Alameda County's Medi-Cal-funded Mobile Crisis Response system. This transition represents the most viable long-term sustainability strategy, addressing both funding limitations and structural barriers encountered during local implementation and ensures that Berkeley residents will continue to have access to high-quality, non-police crisis care through a regional system designed for long-term viability. Alameda County is building out ten mobile response teams to meet state-mandated standards, including a 60-minute maximum response time, and will be positioned to

² The SCU was funded by one-time CCMU and ARPA grants, which have now been exhausted. Per the SCU Evaluation and RDA's recommendations, transitioning the program to Alameda County is the most sustainable option. This would address structural barriers faced during Berkeley's implementation and align the SCU with the County's Medi-Cal billing and behavioral health systems amid ongoing City fiscal constraints.

support broader coverage and integration across jurisdictions. This next chapter for the SCU represents a strategic shift toward regional sustainability. Rather than building a duplicative system within the City, the transition allows Berkeley to leverage County infrastructure and Medi-Cal billing capacity while continuing to shape local priorities and preserve the SCU's core values. HHCS, in partnership with Bonita House and Alameda County Behavioral Health, is actively managing the transition, with full-service integration targeted for the end of Summer 2025. As the SCU evolves into a County-operated program, the City will continue to coordinate closely with all partners and provide updates to the City Council, ensuring that care-first principles remain at the center of crisis response.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 1 (2020-2022)	December 2020	SCU Steering Committee Formed.
	January 2021	Contract with RDA Initiated.
	March 2022	RDA Completes Report & Presents to Council.
	May 2022	City Council informed of Reimagining Public Safety Framework for SCU design.
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	October 2023 – Summer 2024	Program continues to expand staffing and build infrastructure toward 24/7 operations. Conversations begin around long-term Medi-Cal billing pathways.
	March 2024	SCU vans are deployed to improve mobile response capability.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	September 2024	SCU Steering Committee and monthly SCU updates transitioned to Berkeley Mental Health Commission.
	Fall 2024 – Spring 2025	RDA finalizes SCU Retrospective Evaluation. Findings inform County transition and validate system-level integration strategy.
	Summer 2025	Alameda County's Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Response System to be completed.

Considerations:

- **Transition Readiness and Program Sustainability:** Transitioning the SCU to Alameda County reflects a thoughtful shift toward long-term sustainability, system integration, and alignment with state policy. While Berkeley's pilot demonstrated the effectiveness of a non-police, care-first crisis response, the RDA evaluation confirmed key limitations, including limited 911 integration, staffing constraints, and the expiration of one-time funding, that challenge the City's capacity to maintain the program independently. By moving into the County's Medi-Cal-funded Mobile Crisis Response system, Berkeley ensures continued access to timely, community-based care while avoiding duplication of services. Importantly, RDA's findings offer valuable insight that Alameda County can use to strengthen and evolve its own crisis response efforts, building on Berkeley's lessons to shape a more responsive and equitable regional system.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** HHCS will work closely with Alameda County Behavioral Health and Bonita House to manage service handoff, including communications, continuity planning, and coordination infrastructure.

STAFFING AND OPERATIONS (COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICERS, DISPATCH, AND DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT)

Department Lead: Police

Status Update: *Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

The Berkeley Police Department (BPD) is actively implementing staffing and structural improvements to strengthen its capacity, reduce overtime, and deliver more responsive, community-oriented services.

In February, BPD launched a new CSO deployment model that includes support to patrol and investigations functions. This model is designed to improve community responsiveness and operational efficiency while addressing long-standing staffing shortages. From February 1- April 24, 2025, the City’s three patrol CSOs have handled 466 calls for service and completed 228 reports. Their ability to manage non-emergency calls has helped our sworn officers remain focused on priority incidents.

The City’s external consultant completed a workload and staffing study in Fall 2024, identifying 74 findings and 54 actionable recommendations related to organizational health, staffing levels, resource deployment, beat structure, and CSO integration. Department leadership has reviewed the recommendations and developed a phased implementation plan in alignment with departmental priorities and available resources.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Summer 2022 – Fall 2024	Ongoing BPD Recruitment Cycle.
	July 2024	CSO positions converted to full-time permanent status.
	Summer 2024	CSO patrol and investigations track initiated; continued Dispatcher recruitment.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Fall 2024	Final staffing report released with 54 recommendations.
	Spring 2025 – ongoing	BPD to provide updates on staffing progress and implementation of study recommendations.

Next Steps & Timelines:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** The Berkeley Police Department will continue to advance the implementation of staffing improvements and organizational recommendations as outlined in the recent consultant study. This includes refining CSO deployment in patrol and investigations, increasing recruitment outreach for both dispatcher and CSO positions, and further integrating CSOs into non-emergency response workflows.

FAIR AND IMPARTIAL POLICING

Department Lead: Police

Status Update: *Implementation Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

The core principles of fair and impartial policing have been fundamentally integrated into the Department's ongoing policies, training, and operational practices. Key actions include implementing all 14 recommendations from the Mayor's Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) Task Force, which led to department-wide "KIND" (Constitutional, Humane, Impartial, Neighborhood-focused, and DEI-aligned) training. BPD also adopted the Active Bystander for Law Enforcement (ABLE) training to promote peer intervention and accountability. These internal reforms are supported by community engagement with organizations like Dorothy Day House and the Center for Food, Faith, and Justice.

Phase 2 of the initiative saw a \$100,000 allocation for expanded training to deepen organizational capacity in line with FIP values. Looking forward, Phase 3 includes a continued \$100,000 training investment for Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026. A significant development in Phase 3 is the implementation of an improved Early Intervention System (EIS) through a two-year contract with Benchmark Analytics. This data-driven system, selected with input from the Police Accountability Board and the Berkeley Police Association, aims to analyze officer performance, identify early warning indicators, and apply targeted interventions to strengthen professional development, reduce risk, and enhance public trust (See Appendix G for FIP Update).

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 1 (2020-2022)	February 2021	Mayor and the City Council pass FIP Recommendations
	August 2021 – ongoing	Department launches ongoing FIP-aligned officer training.
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Summer 2022 – ongoing	Continued training inclusive of FIP tenets. KIND and ABLE training expanded.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Ongoing	- Continued training inclusive of FIP tenets. - Leveraging grant opportunities.
	Fall 2024	RFP Process Conducted for EIS and Benchmark Analytics selected.
	Spring 2025	Contract begins; system onboarding and training initiated.
	Summer 2025 – ongoing	Initial deployment, analysis, and integration of EIS into departmental workflows.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** BPD will lead the implementation of the new EIS platform, including staff training, performance analytics integration, and regular evaluation. The department will continue to deliver FIP-aligned trainings and explore funding opportunities to expand its programming.

WELLNESS PRACTICES (CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS, PEER SUPPORT TEAM, AND EMERGING WELLNESS NEEDS)

Department Lead: Police

Status Update: *Implementation Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

The Police Department continues to advance staff wellness as a core operational priority. Recognizing the connection between employee well-being, retention, and high-quality service delivery, the City Council allocated \$50,000 during Phase 3 to support the continued development of comprehensive wellness infrastructure. These initial investments included facility improvements, the introduction of immersive group therapy programming, and the launch of a confidential wellness mobile application offering 24/7 access to behavioral health resources. These resources are designed to support both routine stress management and recovery from exposure to critical incidents. This includes the continuation of peer support services, enhanced access to Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) specialists, and targeted wellness training. In parallel, the Assistant to the City Manager is working with the Police Department to identify and pursue external grant opportunities to further institutionalize wellness supports across the department.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	July 2022 – ongoing	Wellness initiatives included counseling, critical incident stress training, gym upgrades, and immersive group therapy. By FY 2024, partnerships such as O2X and wellness apps for first responders were integrated.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	July 2024 – ongoing	Expansion of wellness programs, leveraging grant opportunities to enhance support services, wellness training, and retention initiatives.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** BPD will continue to advance its wellness strategy by refining support systems, evaluating program outcomes, and exploring new partnerships. Additional funding opportunities and outcome data will be incorporated into future Reimagining Public Safety reports.

VISION ZERO PROGRAM

Department Lead: Public Works Department

Status Update: *Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

The City of Berkeley continues its commitment to Vision Zero—eliminating all fatal and serious injury traffic crashes by 2028. The Vision Zero Action Plan, developed in Phase 2, identifies eleven high-priority actions that guide data-informed interventions focused on high-injury corridors. These actions emphasize street design, infrastructure improvements, and system-wide safety strategies grounded in equity and public health, rather than enforcement-based approaches.

Throughout 2024, the Vision Zero Program contributed to the advancement of major safety initiatives, including the Southside Complete Streets Project and the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Quick Build. In response to multiple serious and fatal collisions, the City activated its Vision Zero Rapid Response Protocol and began developing a scalable Quick Build program to more rapidly implement safety solutions. Staff also collaborated with the Berkeley Police Department to improve traffic injury data transparency through the Police Transparency Hub. As of Spring 2025, the City has filled the Vision Zero Program Manager (Senior Planner) position, marking a critical milestone in restoring internal leadership and planning capacity. However, the Vision Zero Program Coordinator (Associate Planner) position has remained vacant since November 2024, and recruitment is paused due to citywide resource constraints. This vacancy has delayed several programmatic initiatives, including the update of the Vision Zero Action Plan, developing and delivering the Vision Zero Quick Build Program, and the reactivation of the Vision Zero Coordinating Committee. Fully staffing the program remains a high priority to ensure continuity of service and timely project delivery. The Vision Zero Program Manager position remained vacant for 17 months (August 2023-January 2025), creating leadership and continuity challenges. The Program has operated with significant staffing gaps, hindering the City's ability to fully implement the program's goals of achieving zero traffic fatalities by 2028. With the position now filled, Public Works is better equipped to lead interdepartmental coordination, advance grant-funded capital projects, consultant-supported Quick Build designs, and the Rapid Response Protocol—key steps toward achieving the City's data-driven, equity-centered safety goals.

Rising construction costs and limited availability of Measure BB funding for staffing and planning have constrained the City's ability to fully resource Vision Zero program activities. These financial challenges may delay the delivery of key safety initiatives, including Quick Build implementation, planning efforts, and the update of the Vision Zero Action Plan. With the passage of Measure FF, the Public Works Department will leverage this funding to help address current resource gaps and support Vision Zero priorities. Strategic coordination between City staff, consultants, and external partners will remain essential to sustaining progress and scaling the program's impact in Phase 3.

As part of the City's commitment to eliminating fatal and severe traffic crashes by 2028, construction will begin in 2025–2026 on several key safety and mobility projects. These include the Sacramento Street Pedestrian Safety Project, Woolsey–Fulton Bicycle Boulevard, Parker–Addison Mobility and Safety

Improvements, Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements, Sixth Street/Addison Street Intersection Enhancements, and Adeline Street Quick Build Projects. Each of these projects is strategically located on, across, or as an alternative to a Vision Zero High Injury Street, addressing known safety concerns and improving conditions for people walking, biking, and driving. These infrastructure improvements reflect the City's data-driven approach to reducing traffic related crashes and enhancing equitable access to safe streets. Moreover, our Traffic Maintenance teams have successfully implemented daylighting at over 190 high-injury corridor intersections citywide and working urgently to implement more.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	October 2023	Vision Zero Program Coordinator (Associate Planner) Hired.
	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025	Construction progressed on MLK Jr. Way Quick Build, Southside Complete Streets, AC Transit's Durant Ave Quick Build Projects
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	November 2024	Vision Zero Program Coordinator (Associate Planner) Vacancy. Led to no staff on Vision Zero Program
	January 2025	Vision Zero Program Manager (Senior Planner) hired.
	Spring – Summer 2025	Recruitment for replacement Vision Zero Program Coordinator ongoing; consultant-led Quick Build development and Rapid Response Protocol work continues.
	Fall 2024 – December 2025	Telegraph Multi-modal Corridor Study (concept design expected December 2025).
	Spring 2025 – TBD	Implementing Daylighting through contractor services, with priority given to intersections with meters and blue zones on high injury streets; and on/near high injury streets, schools, and senior centers.
	Spring 2025 – December 2026	Adeline Street Transportation Improvements Corridor Study (concept design expected December 2026).
	2025 – 2026	Construction begins on Sacramento St Pedestrian Safety, Woolsey – Fulton Bicycle Blvd, Parker – Addison Mobility and Safety Improvements, Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements, Sixth St/ Addison St Intersection, Adeline St Quick Build Projects.

Considerations:

- **Rebuilding Program Capacity to Sustain Momentum:** Staffing remains the most significant factor shaping the near-term trajectory of the Vision Zero Program. The City continues to explore options to augment capacity for Vision Zero with other staffing, where possible, to ensure that program deliverables move ahead. In addition, consultant resources are currently bridging gaps, until budgets rebound and a fully staffed internal team is restored.

Next Steps & Timelines:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** Vision Zero efforts will focus on grant-funded capital project delivery related to the Vision Zero High Injury Streets, consultant-supported Quick Build design, execution of the Rapid Response Protocol. The city will also continue to explore and leverage Measure BB, grant resources, and Measure FF to support ongoing staffing and consultant needs.

CONSULTANT COSTS

BERKELEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT

Department Lead: Public Works Department

Status Update: **Paused** (funding deferred)

Overview:

As part of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative, the Berkeley Department of Transportation (BerkDOT) remains a long-term vision focused on restructuring transportation services to prioritize equity, sustainability, and safety. While early groundwork began during Phase I—including the transition of crossing guards to Public Works and initial discussions around transportation consolidation—progress on full implementation has been delayed due to funding deferrals, staffing vacancies, and organizational shifts within the Public Works Department. Though BerkDOT development remains on hold, the City continues to advance key transportation safety priorities through existing Vision Zero efforts and quick-build projects. These projects reflect a tactical shift to focus on what is implementable now while laying the foundation for longer-term structural transformation. Staff continue to monitor regional legislative activity and internal capacity, with plans to revisit BerkDOT development once key dependencies are resolved and the City is better positioned to address this work.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 1 (2020-2022)	June 2020 – Ongoing	Community Process for BerkDOT Development
	Fall 2022	Transition of crossing guards from the Police Department to Public Works' Transportation Division.
	Fall 2022 – 2023	Public Works issued staffing vacancy updates to City Council and the community.
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Summer 2023	Funding for several Reimagining Public Safety project initiatives, including BerkDOT deferred.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Fall 2024 – Ongoing	Staff continue to monitor state policy shifts and advance near-term transportation safety initiatives. BerkDOT is classified as a Tier 3 priority pending resolution of key planning dependencies.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** The City will continue to prioritize transportation safety projects. Staff will revisit BerkDOT development as capacity improves and as legislative or funding opportunities emerge.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, CRISIS RESPONSE, AND CRISIS-RELATED SERVICES NEEDS AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS

Department Lead: Health, Housing and Community Services Department

Status Update: *Assessment Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

As part of Phase 2 of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative, the City of Berkeley allocated \$100,000 to assess service needs related to behavioral health and homelessness by analyzing 911 and non-911 call data. In May 2023, the City Council authorized additional funding to expand this work through a Crisis Needs Assessment conducted by Resource Development Associates (RDA).

The CAD analysis focused on the City's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and how crisis-related calls are categorized and routed. RDA's methodology included a review of CAD records from March 2020 onward, qualitative analysis of dispatcher call narratives, observations from sit-alongs in the Communications Center, and field shadowing of Berkeley Police Department responses. The goal was to identify opportunities to improve classification accuracy, response alignment, and system-wide integration for behavioral health emergencies.

The assessment reviewed how crisis-related calls are currently handled across dispatch, police, and mental health systems. It revealed limitations in how behavioral health emergencies are classified and routed, which are a nationwide limitation with dispatch. The findings reinforce the City's decision to sunsetting the operation of the Specialized Care Unit (SCU) and utilizing Alameda County Behavioral Health services, where the County will be better positioned for long-term success through deeper integration with county-level services, Medi-Cal reimbursement, and regional coordination efforts.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Summer 2023	SCU evaluation scope expanded to include RDA's Crisis Needs Assessment; CAD data analysis initiated; Community Services Specialist II hired to support assessment coordination.
	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025	RDA refined CAD data requests and conducted analysis through data review, dispatch center observations, and police ride-alongs. Final CAD Assessment delivered to HHCS in Spring 2025.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025	HHCS reviewing CAD Assessment findings alongside the upcoming SCU evaluation; Crisis Needs Assessment recommendations to inform policy and operational adjustments across crisis response services.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – Ongoing:** HHCS will coordinate with internal departments, Alameda County Behavioral Health, and community stakeholders to consider how the findings from both RDA reports, the CAD Assessment and SCU Retrospective Evaluation, can inform improvements to triage protocols, crisis response coordination, and stabilization services.

FINES & FEES ANALYSIS

Department Lead: City Manager's Office

Status Update: *Initial Analysis Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

In Phase 2 of the Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) initiative, the City Council allocated funding to assess Berkeley's system of municipal fines and fees, with a focus on equity, racial justice, and exploring alternatives to traditional enforcement. Though implementation was initially delayed due to budgetary constraints, funds were released in January 2024, enabling an internal steering committee—led by the Assistant to the City Manager and composed of cross-departmental staff—to initiate the project. The scope was subsequently expanded to include a comprehensive review of all fines and fees with the potential to disproportionately impact low-income residents.

In Phase 3, in partnership with a graduate policy analyst from the Goldman School of Public Policy, the City conducted an in-depth assessment of current policies and practices, with attention to affordability, administrative efficiency, and long-term sustainability (See Appendix C for Preliminary Fines & Fees Assessment). The methodology included staff interviews, departmental schedule reviews, and benchmarking against peer jurisdictions, including insights from San Francisco's Financial Justice Project. Findings were evaluated using a five-part criteria matrix assessing political feasibility, cost, effectiveness, sustainability, and externalities.

The final report identifies six priority recommendations, presented in order of implementation feasibility based on the matrix scoring:

- **Develop a clear fines and fees communication strategy**, including a multilingual, plain-language online portal, QR-coded citations, and a Council-adopted Master Fee Schedule to improve access and standardize information.
- **Amend BMC 14.40.100 to align with federal and state disability parking standards**, allowing caregivers to use placards when transporting disabled individuals.
- **Amend BMC 14.68 to eliminate mandatory bicycle registration**, which disproportionately impacts youth and low-income residents, and is not enforceable under state law.
- **Evaluate and implement centralized fines and fees administration software**, including enhancements to the City's ERP system and potential use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to improve data integration and reduce manual workload.
- **Expand the Indigent Payment Plan (IPP) beyond parking citations** to cover other fines and fees across the Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC), aligning obligations with residents' financial capacity.
- **Embed automatic installment payment options for all citations**, enabling residents to pay fines over time without requiring income verification, reducing defaults and enforcement costs.

The report underscores that many proposed reforms—particularly those involving communication, legal updates, and policy clarity—are low-cost and immediately actionable. Others, such as technology upgrades and universal installment plans, will require phased implementation, staff training, and interdepartmental coordination.

The City will continue to evaluate implementation strategies through interdepartmental collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and fiscal analysis. Progress updates will be reported regularly to ensure reforms remain accountable, effective, and responsive to the community’s needs.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	June 2023	City Council referred several Reimagining Tier I requests to the Annual Appropriations Ordinance process.
	January 2024	Funding for the Fines & Fees Analysis was released following AAO approval.
	Spring – Fall 2024	A staff steering committee explored the project scope and evaluated approaches, ultimately deciding to engage a Goldman School of Public Policy (GSPP) intern as a Policy Consultant.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	January – May 2025	The GSPP intern conducted a comprehensive study, including a literature review, departmental interviews, and analysis of fines and fees impacting low-income Berkeley residents.

Considerations:

- **Sustainable Reform with Long-Term Benefits:** The City is taking a balanced, long-term approach to fines and fees reform that ensures legal compliance while prioritizing sustainable, equity-centered outcomes. Recommendations must be both fiscally responsible and socially just—delivering net positive impacts for low-income residents without undermining core city operations. To ensure successful implementation, some strategies may be phased in over time, allowing the City to evaluate impacts, adjust policies as needed, and build public trust through transparent, measured progress.

Next Steps & Timelines:

- **Summer 2025 – ongoing:** Findings will be reviewed by the steering committee to identify priority recommendations and explore phased implementation strategies, including potential Municipal Code amendments and administrative reforms that support long-term equity and sustainability.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

Department Lead: City Manager's Office

Status Update: **Paused** (funding deferred)

Overview:

As part of Phase 2 of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative, the City allocated \$250,000 in FY 2024 to begin design work for a new Department of Community Safety. However, due to competing citywide priorities and resource constraints, the initiative was deferred during the Annual Appropriations Ordinance process in January 2024. This decision was based on staff's recommendation to sequence investments more strategically across the multi-year initiative, with a focus on ensuring assessments, pilot programs, and interdepartmental structures are in place before launching a new department. The City continues to prioritize immediate public safety reforms and system evaluations. The design of a standalone department will be re-evaluated in Phase 4 (FY 2026–2028), following additional implementation of core Reimagining programs and stabilization of staffing and funding capacity. This approach ensures that the development of a Department of Community Safety can be undertaken with clear operational goals, strong interdepartmental alignment, and community-informed design principles.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	June 2023	Council referred several Reimagining Tier I requests to the Annual Appropriations Ordinance process.
	January 2024	Funding for the Department of Community Safety deferred.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	June 2024	Funding for the Department of Community Safety deferred to align with Phase 4, Fiscal Year 27-28.

Considerations:

- Phased Planning for Sustainable Implementation:** The decision to defer funding for the Department of Community Safety underscores the City's commitment to responsible sequencing and sustainable public safety transformation. Rather than initiate new structures prematurely, staff are focused on ensuring foundational reforms—such as dispatch modernization, alternative response programs, and community-led evaluations—are stabilized first. Revisiting this department concept in Phase 4 will allow the City to incorporate learnings from current efforts, align staffing needs, and evaluate long-term fiscal viability.

Next Steps & Timelines:

- Spring 2025 – ongoing:** Staff will revisit the concept and funding proposal for the Department of Community Safety as part of Phase 4 and future planning as resources become available.

DISPATCH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Department Lead: Fire Department

Status Update: *Assessment Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

As part of the City of Berkeley's Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) initiative, modernizing the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) is a critical investment in the city's long-term capacity to deliver responsive, equitable, and efficient emergency services. The ECC serves as the central hub for dispatching police, fire, EMS, and emerging alternative response units—but current limitations in infrastructure, staffing, and protocols have constrained its ability to meet growing and evolving community needs.

Phases 1 and 2 of the initiative laid the foundation through a comprehensive Dispatch Needs Assessment (DNA), followed by a validation study that confirmed urgent areas for improvement. These findings provided a roadmap to align Berkeley's dispatch operations with national best practices, including triage-based response, integration of behavioral health alternatives, and enhanced public safety outcomes. With foundational assessments complete and internal coordination in progress, the City is well-positioned to transition from planning to phased implementation.

Now in Phase 3, with the police and fire departments meeting weekly to map interdepartmental dependencies, evaluating funding scenarios, and sequencing key upgrades to minimize disruption and maximize impact. The goal is to establish a clear, phased implementation plan spanning the next 5 to 10 years. Priority enhancements include:

Project 1: Enhance Staffing and Operations

The staffing enhancement project addresses critical operational challenges through the implementation of a Public Safety Dispatcher I (PSDI) position focused on call-taking and records management. This restructuring creates a more manageable career progression that improves immediate and long-term staff retention while maintaining service quality standards and serves as a backstop to a 65% vacancy rate that is yet to increase in the coming months.

The Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) will ensure essential emergency services remain functional during staffing transitions or crises. These combined improvements work together to ensure sustainable staffing levels, reduce training pressure, and maintain essential emergency communications capabilities for our community.

Key Tasks:

- **Establish call taker position**
Status: Approved by personnel board and implementation initiated.
- **Develop a dispatcher longevity plan**
Status: Consultant kickoff complete; site visit completed. Deliverable expected late Summer 2025.

- **Design and implement COOP**
Status: Initiated
- **Revise onboarding and training protocols; launch structured exit interviews**
Status: In progress

Project 2: Advanced Dispatch Triage and Technology Integration

Implement protocol software that standardizes emergency dispatch that improves consistency, accuracy, and efficiency in handling emergency calls as well as allows for triaging. This has resulted in increased community confidence, reduced complaints, lower staff turnover, and enhanced dispatcher professionalism, reduced attrition, increased training success in 153 of the 200 largest US cities that develop a structured training approach, implementing exit interview protocols, and deploying AWS technology to handle administrative calls assists management in improving processes use it.

Key Tasks:

- **Implement AWS to route non-emergency/admin calls**
Status: In progress following policy alignment; 30-day pilot upcoming.
- **Procure and implement ProQA protocol software**
Status: Preparing materials to initiate next review phase.

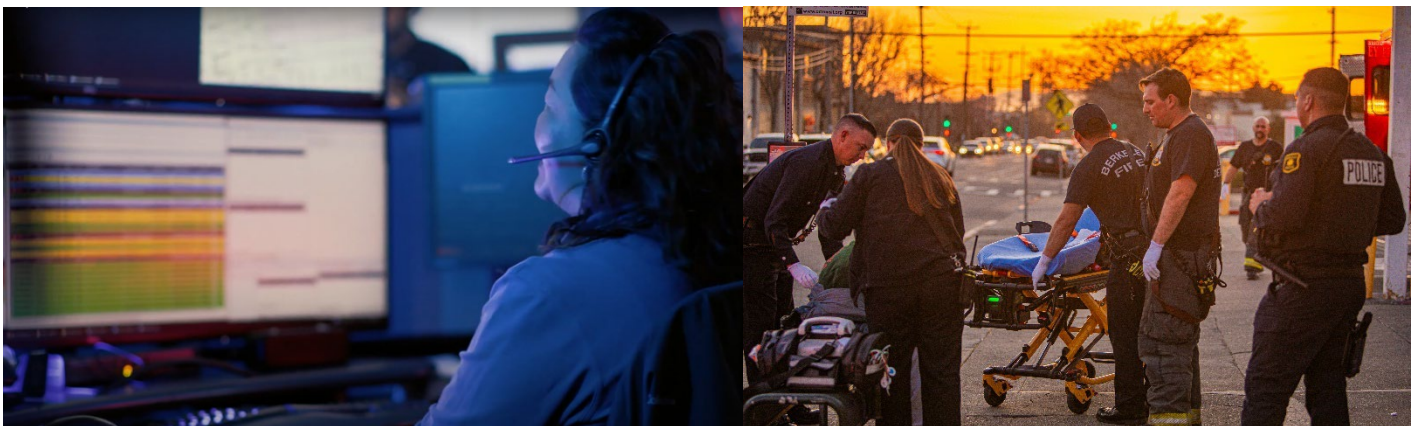
Project 3: Upgrade ECC Facilities

To support projected staffing and technology growth, the City is assessing expansion options for ECC workspace within the Public Safety Building. With the Fire Department relocating to the Gilman District, adjacent space may become available for retrofit and use—though funding and design considerations remain in early stages.

Key Tasks:

- **Review proposals to repair or replace dispatch consoles**
Status: Quotes completed
- **Evaluate ECC space expansion scenarios**
Status: Consultant presentation and budget delivered

As Phase 3 progresses, success will hinge on securing the necessary resources and making strategic, data-informed investments that ensure both immediate improvements and long-term system sustainability.



Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 1 (2020-2022)	Winter 2021 – Fall 2022	Completion of the RFP process and Stage One of the DNA.
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Spring 2023	Completion of the Initial Needs Assessment.
	Spring 2024	Completion of the Assessment Validation Report.
	Spring 2024 – Fall 2024	Discussions with City stakeholders to decide on next steps for the DNA.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Fall 2024	Contract for ongoing consultant support related to DNA.
	Ongoing	Sequencing of ECC enhancements begins; focus on staffing, technology, and triage-based dispatch.

Considerations:

- Strategic Investment Across Staffing, Infrastructure, and Funding:** Upgrading the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) will require coordinated action across multiple domains. Addressing the City’s long-standing dispatcher vacancy rate—now exceeding 65%—is foundational, as staffing shortages limit implementation capacity and may trigger labor negotiations when protocols change. Simultaneously, the Public Safety Building’s current space constraints pose a challenge to facility expansion. With the Fire Department’s upcoming relocation to the Gilman District, adjacent space may become available for ECC use, though design and construction costs remain unfunded. Full implementation—including technology procurement, infrastructure upgrades, staffing, and operations—will require sustained funding. As the Police Department assumes lead oversight of the ECC, strategic resource alignment will be essential to advancing system-wide improvements that meet national standards and support alternative response models.
- Fiscal Impacts:** The fiscal impact of addressing the ECC crisis in the City of Berkeley is significant but necessary to ensure public safety and operational stability. Persistent understaffing and outdated technology have forced the city to spend nearly \$1 million annually on overtime, while high turnover and vacancies cost approximately \$200,000 per lost dispatcher due to recruitment, training, and overtime leading to burnout. Delaying investments in staffing, facility upgrades, and technology not only drives up long-term costs—potentially reaching up to \$1.3 million in immediate needs. Proactive investment will reduce additional ongoing overtime, recruitment, and liability costs, ultimately saving money compared to the escalating expenses and operational risks associated with continued vacancies and deferred upgrades.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- Ongoing:** The City is partnering with a consultant to develop a phased, multi-year implementation roadmap that prioritizes ECC upgrades based on feasibility, operational readiness, and funding availability. Long-term success will require sustained investment, staffing stability, and close coordination between the Police and Fire Departments to ensure that system enhancements are delivered effectively and equitably.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND YOUTH SERVICES

Department Lead: Health, Housing and Community Services Department

Status Update: *Initial Implementation Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

As part of the City of Berkeley's Reimagining Public Safety initiative, the City continues to invest in community-rooted strategies to prevent youth violence and promote long-term wellbeing. In FY 2025, funding was provided to three key community-based organizations to support programming focused on mentorship, mental health, leadership development, and positive youth engagement. The funding supports trusted partners that have deep connections with Berkeley's youth and families, offering culturally responsive programs in safe, supportive environments. This section provides a summary of each organization's program goals and serves as a placeholder for updates on how FY 2025 funds were utilized.

Voices Against Violence (VAV) – McGee Avenue Baptist Church.

Led by Reverend Dr. Michael A. Smith and supported by Community Peace Ambassadors, the *Voices Against Violence* program works to interrupt cycles of violence and promote healing among high-risk youth in South and West Berkeley. The program provides mentoring, life-skills training, leadership development, and culturally affirming violence prevention workshops for middle and high school students. In FY 2025, the program continued to build trust with participants through healing-centered events and engagement with partner organizations like Live Free USA.

VAV FY2025 Activities:

- Partnered with Live Free USA, City of Berkeley Parks and Recreation, Berkeley Junior Jackets Football and cheer, along with vulnerable youth from South and West Berkeley in mentoring, violence prevention training, and interventions.
- Served 30 middle and high school youth through trainings in their violence prevention curriculum
- Engaged with vulnerable youth, young adults and families at-risk for gun or community violence through listening sessions and presentations, including:
- December 11, 2024 – 2 Community Peace Ambassadors presented to the VAV Mentoring Program to 32 middle and high school youth. Several youth in attendance shared how they had been impacted by recent gun violence and ongoing fights on school campuses and recreation centers.
- 2 Follow-up Sessions to the VAV Mentoring Program were conducted by the Community Peace Ambassadors in January and February 2025.
- Seven (7) Violence Prevention Training sessions conducted between December 2024 and March 2025 and additional sessions planned through the end of June 2025, led by Pastor Smith and

joined by additional staff in the funded program. Sessions include addressing: (1) the emotional and financial costs of gun violence; (2) reflection on how violence has personally impacted young people's lives and the life of their communities; and (3) providing opportunities for expression of their thoughts and experiences through poetry, spoken word, art, and journaling.

VAV Youth Development

- **ART PROJECTS:** All of the participants in the program are now engaged in art projects that can support healing from the pain of violence in its many forms. Gun violence in particular is one of the projects that participants are proposing is a quilting project which will be youth lead and inspired by the most vulnerable young people in our community artists and community activist. This is an activity being worked on this year and will continue past June.
- **URBAN GARDENING:** All of the participants in the program are engaged in urban gardening as a strategy for healing, and environmental/food justice. It has been a therapeutic practice for the young people have helped maintain the garden at Grove Park and in planting the spring garden at McGee.
- **COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP:** As part of April Earth Day activities, VAV staff worked with youth participants to plant out the garden spaces at Grove Park as well as McGee Avenue Baptist Church while participating in a community clean-up in South Berkeley. The community clean-up concluded with a discussion of how blight, environmental injustice and food insecurity create conditions that may escalate feelings of trauma and even lead to apathy and violence in urban communities.

Berkeley Youth Alternatives (BYA).

BYA continues to serve as a critical resource for Berkeley's youth and families, offering year-round counseling services and summer enrichment programs. The *Summer Jam Day Camp* fosters social-emotional growth through arts, literacy, recreation, and expressive therapy. Meanwhile, BYA's *Counseling Center* provides individual and group therapy, case management, and support for transition-age youth navigating school, employment, or personal challenges.

Counseling

The BYA Counseling Program served a total of 84 clients, including both Berkeley and non-Berkeley residents. Of these, 58 clients are either residents of Berkeley or attend a Berkeley school. Among the 58 clients, the demographic breakdown is as follows: 5% are Asian, 43% are Black/African American, 9% are White, and 10% are White with Hispanic ethnicity. Additionally, 9% belong to combined race categories, and 24% are from other combined race categories that also include Hispanic ethnicity. In terms of the ages among these 58 counseling clients, 41% are aged 5-12, 36% are aged 13-17, 21% are aged 18-24, and 2% are aged 25-34. Overall, the clients participated in 1,450 individual counseling sessions and 299 group counseling sessions.

The counseling clients participated in weekly Boys' and Girls' group sessions, which provided a space for open discussions and helped participants learn coping techniques and strategies to manage stress. BYA's counselors collaborate with clients' Student Support Teams (SSTs) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) Case Managers to deliver school-based counseling and socio-emotional support during the school day. BYA's counselors maintained and strengthened their ongoing partnership with after-school teachers

and staff, focusing on providing a combination of academic and socio-emotional support for counseling clients. This effort included regular meetings to identify participants' strengths and areas for development, ensuring a comprehensive approach to their growth and well-being. BYA's counselors also assisted with BYA's Food Distribution events to further support the community.

Summer Jam Day Camp

The next session of BYA's Summer Jam program will begin in June 2025, with an anticipated 30 participants. This year's program will offer a wide range of fun and enriching activities, including beach days, indoor games, art and activity centers, Creations dance classes, city walks, cooking classes with 18 Reasons, LEGO building, Social Lab, therapeutic and creative writing groups, group games like kickball, soccer, and dodgeball, pool days, art classes, sports activities, hikes at Tilden Park, therapy groups, and field trip days every Friday.

The final two weeks will focus on BYA's media program, Lights, Camera, Action. Each week will feature a themed field trip: a visit to Angel Island with a "Time Travelers" theme, a movie outing at Jack London Square with a "Hollywood" theme, a trip to Lake Chabot with a "Sports" theme, an excursion to LEGOLAND with a "LEGO" theme, a day at the Exploratorium with a "Science" theme, and visits to both the USS Hornet Museum and Scandia, both highlighting the "Lights, Camera, Action" theme.

Berkeley Junior Jackets Violence Prevention Program.

The Berkeley Junior Jackets, operating under the YLM Foundation, concluded their eighth season with meaningful progress across strategic goals, program impact, and financial stewardship ([See Appendix B for Berkeley Junior Jackets FY 25 Report](#)). Serving 148 youth—107 from Berkeley, the majority of whom are Black or African American—the program provided both football and cheerleading opportunities while advancing leadership development, mental wellness, and violence prevention. With \$150,000 in City of Berkeley funding, they maintained equitable access by awarding scholarships to 75% of participants, provided coaches with stipends and training, and enhanced team culture through events like an annual banquet and quarterly staff meetings. The organization invested significantly in field rentals, game fees, and equipment to support a high-quality sports experience, while also delivering staff training and strategic capacity-building to reinforce infrastructure and sustainability.

The Junior Jackets met 12 goals spanning coaching, equity, transparency, and community engagement. Notable achievements included launching an operational strategic plan, tracking participation metrics, and expanding their impact through enriched youth development experiences. Their standout "Girl Power, Boys to Men" summit was so well-received it catalyzed the launch of Berkeley's Leaders of Today & Tomorrow (BL2T)—a new, grant-funded initiative in partnership with the UC Berkeley Cameron Institute and Live Free USA. Backed by a \$15,000 UC Chancellor's Grant, BL2T will integrate athletics, mentorship, and violence prevention to serve over 200 youth annually through monthly leadership tables and an expanded youth summit. Looking forward, the Junior Jackets are beginning conversations around securing a turf, lined field to ensure safe, year-round access to high-quality athletic space for Berkeley's underserved youth—cementing their role as a key partner in the city's Reimagining Public Safety agenda and broader community wellness landscape.

The City will continue to work with all program partners to evaluate outcomes and align efforts with the broader Reimagining Public Safety goals. These updates will inform future investments and ensure

that violence prevention efforts remain responsive, community-driven, and youth-centered. Program and financial reporting for FY 2026 will be reflected in the next status report cycle.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	July 2022 – June 2024	Funds allocated to CBOs for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Impact reporting via RPS status updates.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	July 2024 – June 2026	Funds allocated to CBOs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Impact reporting via RPS status updates.

Next Steps & Timelines:

- **Spring 2025 – Summer 2026:** The City will continue funding McGee Avenue Baptist Church, Berkeley Youth Alternatives, and the Berkeley Junior Jackets through Fiscal Year 2026. Program updates and outcomes will be reported through the Reimagining Public Safety status reports, ensuring transparency and accountability in tracking the effectiveness of these violence prevention and youth services initiatives.



GUN VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

Department Lead: City Manager's Office

Status Update: *Initial Implementation Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

In Phase 2 of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative, the City of Berkeley allocated \$2 million to address the growing impact of gun violence, resulting in the development and adoption of a four-pronged strategy: place-based interventions, direct engagement through custom notifications, street outreach, and robust social services. A key milestone was the completion of the Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) Report in Summer 2023, followed by the launch of an RFP in Spring 2024. By early Summer 2024, a contract was awarded to Live Free USA, subcontracting with the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR), with partnerships formed with McGee Avenue Baptist Church's Center for Food, Faith and Justice and Voices Against Violence, and the YLM Foundation also known as Berkeley Junior Jackets (See Appendix A for LIVE FREE USA Impact Report).

Entering Phase 3, the City initiated the soft launch of GVIPP with significant on-the-ground progress. LIVE FREE has staffed a CVI Field Coordinator and CVI Implementation Specialist, deployed a Street Outreach Team of two full time local community-based practitioners, in which three of them are providing life coaching. The street outreach and life coach training were provided by the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform. Additionally, they have brought on, trained and compensated nine Credible Messengers—individuals with lived experience who are trusted within the community—to begin engagement efforts. Staff and partners have participated in foundational training to ensure alignment with evidence-based, trauma-informed practices. Currently, this program has launched initiatives and key partnerships across City departments, BPD, Berkeley CBO's, BUSD, the county juvenile detention center and Santa Rita jail. LIVE FREE has also provided subgrants and capacity building to local Berkeley CBOs.

Additionally, we have launched our focused deterrence strategy with NICJR guiding the process in partnership with the Berkeley Police Department and LIVE FREE. The GVPA, shooting review and custom notification kick-off trainings took place in Phase 2 and 3. The GVPA process is being completed by BPD with deep support and guidance from NICJR's data team. Once that is complete, we will have a clear series of risk factors and indicators for BPD and Live Free to work from in regards to who in the city is likely to be at the greatest risk for gun violence. We have now drafted our data sharing agreement which will now allow us to pilot the shooting reviews, coordination meetings, and custom notifications. This will greatly strengthen our efforts.

To foster coordination and shared ownership, we hosted two community town halls during the program design phase in late 2024, then launched a monthly Community Violence Intervention (CVI) Collaborative in February 2025 focused on priorities identified through these listening sessions. These gatherings unite community-based organization leaders, advocates, and community members most impacted by violence to share resources, receive updates, and strengthen collaboration across the ecosystem. Additionally, regional coordination efforts facilitated by NICJR and LIVE FREE are aligning

Berkeley's strategy with broader Bay Area violence prevention initiatives in partnership with Oakland, Richmond, Antioch, Vallejo, and San Francisco—connecting both city governments and community leadership on the ground.

The City is also actively pursuing new public and private grant opportunities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the program. These efforts, combined with ongoing implementation and evaluation activities, are designed to reduce gun violence and violence crime, mitigating conflicts, while building community capacity and trust in a durable, equity-driven framework.

Impact:

The first five months of 2025 have shown remarkable progress in community safety initiatives, with non-fatal shootings dropping from 3 incidents in early 2024 to zero this year—a 100% reduction. While fatal shootings remained at zero for both periods, incidents involving shots fired decreased by 50%, from 8 to 4 cases between January and May. These improvements build upon consistent communication and collaboration with the city partnership, schools, law enforcement, and community organizations.

The year-over-year comparison reveals even more significant gains: incidents involving shots fired dropped from 21 to 4 (an 81% reduction), while both non-fatal and fatal shootings were eliminated entirely in 2025 thus far. While these outcomes align with the timing of this program's expanded street outreach, life coaching, and crisis response efforts, it's important to recognize that the downward trend began prior to the program's full implementation. The partnership's approach remains focused on building long-term trust and relationships, and early signs point to its value in reinforcing and sustaining citywide safety efforts. Additionally, we've observed a reduction in school-based conflicts through collaboration with BUSD, though a formal MOU has not yet been established to support comprehensive data sharing and evaluation.

Notably, these local trends mirror a broader national shift. According to data aggregated from hundreds of U.S. jurisdictions, violent crime—including murder and shootings—has fallen significantly across the country in early 2025, continuing the downward trajectory that began in 2023. While it's important to interpret year-to-date data with caution, especially early in the year, the consistency of this trend across multiple sources—including the [Real-Time Crime Index](#) and [FBI reporting](#)—suggests that these declines are meaningful. Still, experts emphasize that such improvements are influenced by a complex set of local, regional, and national factors.

As we head into the summer months, we remain mindful of the seasonal risks for increased violence and are actively preparing to respond. Sustaining and building upon recent gains will require ongoing coordination, continued investment, and community-centered approaches and evaluation to better understand the program's role within the broader safety landscape.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 1 (2020-2022)	Spring/Summer 2022	Community Process and Budget Allocation.
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Summer 2023	GVP Report complete. Assistant to the City Manager – Reimagining Public Safety Project Coordinator hired.
	January 2024	Comprehensive RPS update to City Council. Research and stakeholder engagement for next steps and RFP process.
	Summer 2024	Completion of the RFP process, contract finalized with Live Free USA, including subcontracting with NICJR, and partnerships established with McGee Avenue Baptist Church's Voices Against Violence and Berkeley Junior Jackets Violence Prevention efforts.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Fall 2024	Soft launch of the Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention program, including ongoing data collection, community engagement, and training.
	December 2024 – Ongoing	Implementation, data collection, CVI Collaborative meetings, regional coordination, and sustainability planning for funding.

Considerations:

- **Legal Compliance:** The program must operate within a strong legal framework that governs data privacy, public funding, and service delivery. Proactive collaboration with legal advisors will be critical to ensuring all program components—custom notifications, outreach, and service coordination—adhere to local, state, and federal laws while protecting individual rights.
- **Financial Sustainability and Strategic Growth:** To ensure long-term success, GVIPP must diversify its funding portfolio. While initial General Fund investments laid a strong foundation, sustained impact will require pursuing competitive grants and leveraging regional partnerships to expand services, build local capacity, and institutionalize successful practices.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Ongoing:** GVIPP will continue building momentum through a phased implementation strategy focused on impact, coordination, and sustainability. Immediate priorities include deepening community engagement through monthly CVI Collaborative meetings and refining intervention protocols. Training and capacity-building for staff and partners will continue to ensure alignment with trauma-informed, evidence-based practices. The City will also expand regional coordination through NICJR and pursue competitive public and private grant opportunities to secure long-term funding.

PUBLIC SAFETY/CRIME PREVENTION FOR WOMEN AND OLDER PERSONS

Department Lead: City Manager’s Office

Status Update: **Paused** (funding deferred)

Overview:

The City Council adopted the recommendation on public safety and crime prevention for women in February 2024. The strategy includes a data-informed partnership with BPD to identify high-risk areas and times for escorts; a citywide safety forum focused on women and older persons; deployment of community ambassadors in commercial and residential areas; a safety escort program modeled after the 2003 Respect-BART initiative; and potential expansion of the Go-Go Grandparent ride-share program, pending budget approval.

In Spring 2024, staff presented early crime data to COSOW to help identify priority areas and shape a phased implementation strategy. A preliminary cost-benefit analysis of similar Bay Area programs informed the \$250,000 cost estimate, but the funding was not approved in the FY 2025 AAO.

Staff are exploring alternative grant opportunities and assessing alignment with existing City programs. In parallel, they are analyzing local safety data to identify high-risk areas and times for women, informing a phased rollout. This is complemented by insights from the Reimagining Public Safety survey, ensuring the program remains grounded in lived experience and responsive to community needs.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	February 2024	Recommendation approved by City Council.
	March 2024	Preliminary research and data. Presentation to the Commission on the Status of Women. Staff conducted a preliminary cost-benefit analysis of comparable safety escort and ambassador models to estimate feasibility and refine the proposed \$250,000 program budget.
	Spring 2024	Ongoing research and stakeholder engagement to refine the scope, timeline, and budget, leveraging grants, and prioritizing actions based on data-driven needs analysis.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Fall 2024	Staff continue exploring grant opportunities and aligning the initiative with existing public safety efforts until funds are available. Staff are analyzing local data and survey insights to identify high-priority locations and times for program rollout.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** Pending funding availability, continue refining the program's scope, timeline, and budget through ongoing research and stakeholder engagement. Focus on leveraging grants and external funding opportunities, and prioritize actions based on a comprehensive needs analysis driven by data.

ALTERNATIVES TO SANCTIONS/FINES

HEARING OFFICER-ALTERNATIVES TO SANCTIONS/FINES

Department Lead: Public Works Department

Status Update: **Paused** (funding deferred)

Overview:

The City has explored non-punitive approaches to minor infractions by assessing the feasibility of expanding hearing officer resources. These resources are intended to offer restorative alternatives to traditional sanctions, such as referring individuals with low-level violations—including parking and administrative offenses—to community and social services. Under Phase 2, the City allocated \$150,000 in FY 2024 to support this initiative. However, funding was deferred as staff prioritized alignment with the Fines & Fees Analysis. In Phase 3, progress remains contingent on the completion of the Fines & Fees recommendations and subsequent City Council direction. To ensure strategic alignment with long-term public safety and fiscal justice goals, staff have recommended shifting this initiative to Phase 4. This adjustment allows for coordinated planning and resource deployment once the analysis and policy recommendations are finalized.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	June 2023	Council referred several Reimagining Tier I requests to the Annual Appropriations Ordinance process.
	January 2024	Funding for Expanding Hearing Officer Resources/Alternative to Sanctions/Fines deferred.
	May 2024	Staff recommended funding for the next bi-annual fiscal year, pending council direction on the Fines & Fees recommendations.
Phase 3 (2025-2026)	Fall 2024	Continued deferral of funding for Expanding Hearing Officer Resources/Alternatives to Sanctions/Fines to better align with broader public safety goals.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- Fall 2024 – ongoing:** Given the deferral and reallocation of funds, staff recommend revisiting this item in Phase 4 for potential future funding and implementation, once the outcomes of the Fines & Fees Analysis and council direction are determined.

EXPAND DOWNTOWN STREETS TEAMS

Department Lead: Public Works Department

Status Update: **Paused** (funding deferred)

Overview:

As part of Phase 2 of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative, the City allocated \$50,000 in FY 2024 to support an expansion of the Downtown Streets Team (DST) contract. This one-time funding, allowed the City to enhance DST's Clean Cities Program—encompassing litter removal, leaf sweeping, graffiti abatement, and poster removal in commercial districts—and begin scoping an expanded role for DST in the City's public safety ecosystem. In June 2023, Public Works executed a new contract with DST, leveraging the funds to formalize an expanded scope of work. The current contract continues to support neighborhood maintenance. In 2024, DST reported substantial impact in Berkeley through its service-based model:

- **3,895** hours volunteered
- **50** team members served
- **13** leads hired
- **100,745** gallons of debris were removed

This demonstrates DST's continued value in providing both environmental maintenance and meaningful pathways toward stability and employment for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

In Phase 3, the City conducted a comprehensive Fines and Fees Assessment, which evaluated alternatives to monetary penalties, including community service programs. The report concluded that community service is not a viable alternative at this time due to several key factors:

- **Equity and Accessibility Concerns:** The traditional community service model, often focused on manual labor, may not be appropriate or accessible for all individuals. Newer models—like those seen in Texas and New Mexico—offer broader service options (e.g., counseling, vocational training), but would require substantial redesign and investment to be feasible in Berkeley.
- **High Administrative and Supervision Costs:** Previous efforts in Berkeley to offer community service in lieu of fines were found to be financially unsustainable. The program required overtime to supervise participants, significantly increasing operational costs without a proportional benefit in compliance or revenue.
- **Lack of Programmatic Infrastructure:** The City currently lacks a staffed and centralized infrastructure to manage and verify a community service system. This gap creates concerns about implementation feasibility, consistency, and equity in administration.

Given these limitations—and in the context of ongoing revenue challenges and limited Measure P funding—Public Works is unable to utilize the originally allocated \$50,000, as the funds were not carried

forward during the AAO process. As a result, the City is not pursuing a pilot community service referral program and will instead focus on sustaining existing DST services with available resources.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	June 2023	City Council referred several Reimagining Tier I requests to the Annual Appropriations Ordinance process.
	January 2024	Funding for the Transportation Fines & Fees Analysis was released.
	Summer 2024	Needs assessment and initial steps for fines and fees analysis.
Phase 3 (2025-2026)	Spring 2025	Fines and fees analysis complete.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** Based on the findings of the Fines and Fees Assessment, which determined that a traditional community service referral program is not currently viable due to equity, cost, and infrastructure barriers, the City will not pursue this component of the original referral.



COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH, BEHAVIORAL, AND CRISIS RESPONSE

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Department Lead: Health, Housing and Community Services Department

Status Update: *Initial Implementation Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

As part of the City of Berkeley's Reimagining Public Safety initiative, Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD), in collaboration with the City's Mental Health Division, launched the Berkeley High School Wellness Center to address the growing need for school-based mental and behavioral health supports. Guided by a 2023 Mental Health Needs Assessment conducted by Resource Development Associates (RDA), the Center was designed to promote emotional resilience, prevent escalation of mental health crises, and strengthen the culture of care across the Berkeley High School campus.

The Center held a soft opening in Fall 2023, followed by a formal grand opening in December. Since then, it has served as a vital access point for students seeking support for a variety of concerns including academic stress, anxiety, grief, depression, and social-emotional challenges. While individual visits may vary, common themes among early Center usage include the need for low-barrier access to quiet space, the importance of peer validation and trusted adult connections, and increased demand for non-clinical coping tools. The Center also serves as a key referral hub for students in need of more acute services, with coordination support from the BHS Health Center and other campus-based programs.

The program is staffed by a full-time Mental Health & Wellbeing Coordinator, funded through a \$350,000 investment over two years from the City of Berkeley's Reimagining Public Safety Initiative. In addition to the Wellbeing Coordination, the Center's staff includes two Restorative Justice Counselors and a Wellness Counselor. Although the Wellness Coordinator position experienced a personnel transition in 2024, the Center successfully maintained services with support from school and City partners. Additional infrastructure established in its first year includes the formation of a school-based Care Response Team, a Mental Health Handbook to guide staff protocols, and a student-led substance use survey to inform future programming.

Now completing in its second year, the Center is focusing on:

- Onboarding counseling department to data collection that complements the Wellness Center Work Plan
- Systematizing Mental Health reentries and safety plans; and
- Articulating and developing Tier 2 supports (targeted and group interventions), which are complemented by existing Tier 3 supports (intensive, individualized interventions) provided at the Health Center

BUSD plans to implement relevant components of the RDA Needs Assessment, further systematize counseling and wellness coordination at the Center, and conduct a self-assessment of the Center through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) lens to ensure that all students are being referred and served in the most efficient and effective way possible and that no students are falling through the cracks.

Data indicates that the Center is widely used by students. Between August - December 2024, the Center received 1,395 student visits from 425 unduplicated students. These figures are up from 1,120 student visits between January - May 2024 from 380 unduplicated students. For more impact information, please see the [Mental Health & Wellbeing Coordinator Impact Report](#) (March 2, 2025) in the Companion Appendix ([See Appendix E for Mental Health & Wellbeing Coordinator Impact Report](#)).

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Summer 2023	Soft opening of Wellness Center at Berkeley High School.
	Winter 2023	BHS Wellness Center Grand Opening.
	December 2023 – May 2024	- Over 1,120 student visits by 380 individual students and implementation of key wellness supports. - Created mental health infrastructure for BHS: - Established a Care Response Team (to support educators and staff deal with behavioral/emotional crises on campus). - Developed a Mental Health Handbook to strengthen and systematize BHS response to MH issues on campus. - Conducted a student substance abuse survey which will inform next steps.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Fall 2024 – March 2025	- Over 1,395 student visits by 425 individual students. - Stronger collaboration with BHS Health Center and BHS Counseling Program. - Refinement of data indicators and collection.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** The Wellness Center will continue refining its services based on student and staff feedback, aligning with RDA's recommendations. Priorities include securing FY 2025–2026 funding, expanding outreach, and adapting programming to emerging needs. Efforts are also underway to establish a long-term vision for the Center's role in campus mental health and well-being.

RESPITE FROM GENDER VIOLENCE

RESPITE FROM GENDER VIOLENCE

Department Lead: Health, Housing and Community Services Department

Status Update: *Initial Gap-Analysis Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

As part of the City of Berkeley's Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) initiative, the Health, Housing, and Community Services Department (HHCS) conducted a gap-analysis to address domestic, intimate partner, and gender-based violence through a care-first, survivor-informed framework. This research aims to create accessible, trauma-informed, and non-carceral interventions that center the lived experiences of survivors, particularly those from historically marginalized communities. The following work below, provides an executive summary of the analysis conducted:

HHCS hired a Temporary Community Services Specialist II to coordinate this work and launched a community-driven needs assessment process. Outreach methods included direct engagement with survivors, service providers, shelter staff, youth advocates, and field outreach in encampments and transitional housing sites. HHCS also reviewed best practices from peer municipalities and national "Care First, Jails Last" initiatives, applying a four-part evaluative lens:

- **Harm Reduction:** Does this recommendation reduce the number of people who cycle through crisis & carceral systems? Does this recommendation reduce the harm and trauma caused by an abuser, as well as the trauma caused by the systems that sought to provide the survivor with respite?
- **Transformation:** Does this recommendation reinforce the status quo, or would its implementation meaningfully create new pathways/investments in public safety (crisis diversion & stabilization)? Does this recommendation support the healing and long-term positive change for everyone involved in or proximate to a violent relationship?
- **Political Feasibility:** Is this recommendation responsive to the needs and priorities of the Berkeley community?
- **Financial Feasibility:** Is the implementation of this recommendation financially possible, given current budgetary constraints?

This work led to the identification of seven ***draft*** recommendations designed to address gaps in Berkeley's response to gender violence:

1. **Restorative Justice & Circle Work** – Establish a pilot restorative justice program with trained community-based practitioners to provide healing pathways for survivors and those who have caused harm, outside of the traditional court system.
2. **Financial Stabilization & Independence** – Improve survivor access to coordinated job training, social services, and emergency financial supports to build long-term safety and independence.
3. **Language Access for Survivors of Violence** – Ensure information and resources are translated and available in plain language across Berkeley's most commonly spoken languages.

4. **Support for Emergency Shelter Beds** – Assess and expand emergency shelter capacity for survivors, prioritizing non-congregate options and culturally responsive care.
5. **Young People’s Involvement in Community Violence Survey** – Engage youth through surveys and focus groups to better understand the impact of domestic and gender-based violence in their lives and communities.
6. **Trauma-Informed, Non-Carceral Crisis Response** – Strengthen coordination between BPD and the crisis teams for non-violent domestic disturbance calls, expanding trauma-informed care options.
7. **Law Enforcement Protocol on Occupational Survival Crimes** – Develop care-based alternatives to arrest for sex work-related interactions, particularly for LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC community members engaged in survival economies.

In overseeing a range of housing, physical and mental health services, HHCS identified that clients experiencing domestic, intimate partner and gender-based violence were accessing a range of city services -- beyond care offered specifically by domestic-violence focused CBOs.

HHCS is refining these recommendations through continued collaboration with city departments, commissions, and community partners (See Appendix F for Draft Recommendations presented to COSOW). In light of the City’s current fiscal constraints and evolving federal grant priorities, HHCS will work with partners to identify priority recommendations and explore available resources and implementation opportunities.

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	August 2023	Temporary Community Services Specialist II hired to lead gender violence respite analysis.
	Fall 2023 – Fall 2024	Stakeholder engagement launched; best practice review conducted; draft policy recommendations developed with COSOW, Mental Health Commission, and City departments. HHCS engaged community members, clients, and service providers on priority policy areas in line with a “care-first” model of social service provision. Stakeholder input and feedback collected through one-on-one meetings with community leaders, community field outreach at encampments, shelters and service centers as well as via commission and community forum information reports.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Spring – Summer 2025	Recommendation refinement underway, including development of the City’s Care First, Jails Last Policy. Recommendations are non-exhaustive and are a part of a phased process.

Next Steps & Timelines:

- **Spring 2025 – Ongoing:** HHCS will finalize the draft recommendations based on continued community engagement, commission feedback, and policy alignment and will incorporate them into the Care First, Jails Last Policy and staff report.

LANGUAGE EQUITY

LANGUAGE EQUITY

Department Lead: City Manager’s Office

Status Update: *Initial Implementation Complete, Activities In-Progress*

Overview:

The City of Berkeley continues to advance language equity to ensure that public safety information is accessible to all residents. In Phase 2, the City Council allocated \$15,000 to support the translation and publication of survivor-focused resources in multiple languages and plain language formats. Guided by Census data and public health analysis indicating that 4% of Berkeley households have limited English proficiency, staff initiated an interdepartmental effort—led by HHCS and the City Manager’s Office—to identify and prioritize key materials for translation. The City began translating materials, such as SCU outreach materials, into Berkeley’s most commonly spoken non-English languages. This includes the translation and upcoming launch of a domestic, intimate partner, and gender-based violence resource, as well as other public safety materials, into Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. Smaller print batches in other languages such as Arabic, Russian, Farsi, and Hindi will also be available upon request.

These efforts reflect a broader commitment to expanding language equity across City services. As part of Phase 3, staff will continue to explore new opportunities to build on this progress—including evaluating translation gaps, assessing community language access needs, and identifying additional materials that would benefit from translation (See Appendix H for Translated DV Brochure Samples).

Key Accomplishments and Next Steps:

RPS Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Phase 2 (2022-2024)	Fall 2023 – Ongoing	Research and evaluation to identify resources available based on the needs of the community; coordination to identify usage for language equity funds.
	Spring – Summer 2024	Interdepartmental coordination began; translation of materials initiated.
Phase 3 (2024-2026)	Spring 2025	Launch of translated gender-based violence in top non-English languages.

Next Steps & Timeline:

- **Spring 2025 – ongoing:** Complete translation and distribution of key public safety resources, including gender-based violence materials. Staff will continue identifying high-priority materials and explore expanded language access efforts in coordination with city departments.

APPENDIX

Please refer to the Reimagining Public Safety Status Update Summer 2025 Companion Appendix