

Municipal Green Economic Recovery Act

We are in a climate crisis. We are in an economic crisis. Recognizing the urgency of climate change and understanding the need for transitioning to a Green economy, municipalities will help lead the economy of the future.

With smart policies creating job growth and sustainability, municipalities will emerge stronger out of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will maintain our region's leadership of innovation and prosperity, with focused planning and investments on the municipal and county level.

Structural transformation requires us to direct resources to previously disinvested neighborhoods, lifting up front-line voices, and restoring a safe and healthy environment for all to enjoy.

Municipalities must take bold action to shape a more just and sustainable future.

A recovery from the pandemic requires leadership to set a collective vision grounded in community. Now is a time for the creativity, community empowerment, and positive impact that can only come from a level of government most closely connected to the people.

When municipalities lead, we can transform society, setting the agenda and driving momentum for larger legislative change.

We will use the following direct levers of power and within municipal control:

- **Inclusive mixed-use zoning and land use integrated with transportation planning** – Guarantee vibrant and resilient communities through zoning and land use decisions.
- **Green municipal purchasing, procurement and contracting** – Use shared wealth to enhance local green economy and jobs, source sustainably, and shape industry standards.
- **Public employment benefits and economic stability** – Ensure fair hiring standards, racial justice training, employment programs to anchor shared prosperity and economic mobility.
- **Municipal assets and public infrastructure** – Invest in resilient public infrastructure (e.g. parks, schools, public housing, city vehicles, roads and sidewalks, and utilities)
- **Participatory budgeting and investments** – Bring affected communities into deciding what to fund and how to invest city assets, support creation of public banks for fair funding access.
- **Local regulation fees** – Generate resources to address harmful market externalities (e.g. vacant units, excessive waste or water use, predatory short-term rentals, traffic congestion).
- **Local legislation and regulations** – Enact local ordinances to protect public health and welfare (e.g. living wage ordinances, wetlands protection ordinances).
- **Financial, permitting and land use incentives** – Examples include tax abatements or fast-tracked permits, e.g. onsite resiliency measures, local hiring, affordable commercial spaces.
- **Advocacy for state and federal action** – Reform and shape the direction of state and federal plans through a unified agenda set by regional city partners representing community interests.

The **Municipal Green Economic Recovery Act** consists of the following policy areas and action items:

1. **Accelerating decarbonization:** reach citywide carbon neutrality by 2040, 100% percent sustainable electricity by 2035, and net-zero municipal buildings by 2030.
 - Increase the adoption of renewable heating and cooling technologies.
 - Require all new buildings to be net-zero carbon.
 - Advocate through a California Climate Mayors' Purchasing Collaborative to ensure funds are earmarked for electrification of public transportation systems.
 - Revisit Community Choice Aggregation during periodic electricity contract negotiations with the utility to increase the default percent coming from renewables. When feasible, consider making the default 100 percent renewable, with an "opt-out" option.
 - Enact a ban on construction of new natural gas infrastructure to protect resident health.
 - Advocate for statewide legislation promoting 100 percent renewable energy and the creation of funding pools to help cities achieve that goal.
2. **Comprehensive Justice Audit and Framework:** analyze municipal processes (hiring, decision-making, leadership, budgets, communications), and receive community feedback on access to government services and barriers to justice.
 - Resources to support language access and assistive technology for people with a communications disability must be timely and expanded.
 - Institute racial and social justice training for city employees and ensure employees have a safe and accountable office to raise concerns.
 - Set up a Racial and Social Justice Policy Review Committee to analyze municipal legislation, executive orders, and budget allocations for their justice impacts.
 - Formalize interdepartmental communications to ensure city processes, policies and plans align and work towards shared justice goals.
 - Create a visible online platform and mechanisms for real-time feedback on how the City can adapt its operations, policies and programs to equitably serve the community.
 - Advocate at the state level for the passage of environmental and racial justice legislation to enshrine the proactive protection of communities under state law.
3. **Clean Energy Financing:** issue Green Municipal Bonds earmarked to accelerate the installation of solar and efficiency measures, and ease upfront costs for private property owners to install energy efficiency upgrades or convert to renewable energy by opting into the state Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program.
 - Research the potential for municipal utilities, which removes the profit incentive to restrict the availability of more affordable, renewable energy services.
 - Pass an ordinance requiring medium and large buildings to publicly post their energy efficiency "grade", a program similar to publicly posted inspection grades.

- Build a coalition of large institutions and facilities (e.g. hospitals, business parks) within the city and region to discuss ways to enhance implementation of decarbonized district energy solutions, renewable procurement and energy efficiency upgrades.
4. **Green Workforce Development:** ensure local green jobs with good wages and benefits, worker protection, and accessible workforce development pathways. Design programs with active engagement of organized labor and workers centers. Collaborate and learn from existing jobs training programs, and local green companies and industries.
 - Implement hire-local requirements for city climate resiliency, sustainability and energy efficiency projects.
 - Create a jobs training program to foster collaboration between youth and local nonprofits or businesses that implement resiliency projects.
 - Pass an ordinance to ban use of Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) records to determine eligibility for local jobs programs, educational training, licensing, and housing.
 - Institute Community Workforce Agreements for municipal resiliency projects to ensure more residents benefit from work experience in sustainable construction and planning.
 5. **Divest or Reinvest in a Climate-Just Future:** reflect long-term prosperity and sustainability values for public investments and use municipal power to shift investments away from harmful industries to companies that help create a more socially and climate-just city.
 - Screen municipal insurance policyholders for fossil fuel and other investments not meeting socially responsible standards and divest when these standards are not met.
 - Explore creation of a municipal bank which will provide low-interest loans to local small businesses and community-based resilience projects.
 6. **City Climate Workforce:** provide year-round employment and training to address important climate infrastructure needs. This Workforce will work to improve the quality of open spaces, climate resilience, weatherization of older buildings, zero waste infrastructure such as composting and reuse, and community engagement.
 - Expand a city arts program that trains residents in interactive art, murals, sculpture and public beautification.
 - Partner with social justice and community-based organizations to pilot eco-districts.
 - Provide technical and logistical assistance to local garden exchange and reuse programs.
 - Plant native species and raise native pollinators to restore local ecosystems while ensuring the preservation of local species that are best adapted to this area.
 7. **Renters' Right to Counsel:** Establishing legal representation for renters would protect against unwarranted or potentially illegal evictions. Such programs have been shown to double the number of families who retain occupancy while saving public dollars overall.
 - Advocate for state legislation to implement municipal rent stabilization policies.

- Institute an Empty Homes tax for units left vacant more than six months.
 - Revisit Just Cause Eviction legislation to curb no-fault evictions.
 - Advocate for a Tenant's Bill of Rights at the state level.
8. **Just and Resilient Development:** Aligning private development with equity and resiliency goals and designate zoning overlay districts for affordability with anti-displacement protections to support sustainable development of healthy and accessible housing.
- Implement structural changes to the Zoning Board of Appeals to require expertise in climate change and environmental protection, and urban planning.
 - Create an independent planning board and city departments subject to oversight and accountability, charging the city planning department with undertaking a true citywide master planning process to update the zoning code to match community needs.
 - Mandate that any private development receiving tax breaks or other public incentives detail the environmental and climate justice costs and benefits of the proposed project, including pollution, affordability and transit impacts.
9. **Climate Resilient Infrastructure:** Investment in low and zero-carbon infrastructure projects.
- Collaborate with the US Green City Bonds Coalition to pursue green municipal bonds for large-scale climate resilient infrastructure investments.
 - Institute a local excess waste fee to fund a municipal reuse and recycling center to repurpose construction materials, office items, electronics and household materials.
 - Hire resilience liaisons to propose and coordinate climate-resilient infrastructure and development upgrades across relevant municipal departments.
10. **Transportation Justice – Multimodal Infrastructure & Fare-free Transit:** improve accessibility and reliability of multimodal transportation options through the regulation of street infrastructure and allocation of public space for roadways and sidewalks.
- Institute transit impact fees for new development that are collected in a citywide fund and used to finance equitable, multi-modal transportation improvements across the city.
 - Improve existing bike lanes with protective infrastructure and link up unconnected lanes.
 - Plan for car-free districts and days to promote biking and walking in cultural districts and smaller commercial areas.
 - Determine if congestion pricing can address local and regional transit inequities.
 - Regulate operation of delivery trucks to reduce congestion and emissions.
 - Implement vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fees for ride-hailing services to curb empty ride-hail driving and idling.
 - Expand transit service to include late-night hours, which disproportionately benefits service workers, students, low-income residents and residents of color.

- Advocate at the state level for rapid electrification of public transit vehicles and sustainable financing mechanisms.

11. **Equitable Small Business Recovery:** leverage municipal contracting to anchor local wealth-building by committing to equity and diversity contracting goals supported by technical assistance grants and city staffing.

- Introduce a formula retail ordinance to regulate chain stores in commercial districts.
- Partner with commercial property owners to facilitate the reuse of vacant buildings and business spaces.
- Identify barriers to local procurement and implement a small-business equity procurement strategy for municipal contracts as well as a procure-local requirement for municipal sub-contractors.
- Craft guidelines for sustainable workplace options including transit passes, flexible hours, work-from-home schedules with area business councils and advocacy organizations.

12. **Food justice – Good Food Purchasing & Urban Agriculture:** Universal access to nutritious food is fundamental for public health, and economic opportunity, as well as social resilience in the face of climate change and natural disasters. The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated severe food insecurity among low income residents and some immigrant communities.

- Incentivize creation of urban agriculture and public activation spaces on privately owned land through tax incentives for temporary uses or zoning incentives for permanent uses.
- Contract out to nonprofit organizations that are skilled in connecting local farmers with markets and corner stores to provide an accessible first stop for fresh, local food.
- Expand infrastructure for composting and anaerobic digestion of organic waste.
- Expand zoning permissions and approvals to allow for easier creation of both private and community gardens.
- Conduct outreach and enrollment assistance for SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs at community centers and health centers to increase uptake by residents.

13. **Greening the City:** Encourage the planting of trees in our communities. Create programs for families and young people to make small forestry investments in their city.

- Pass a Heritage Tree ordinance that protects trees above a certain diameter and age. Removal of a Heritage Tree on public or private land can either be subject to a public hearing or, in certain cases, banned outright with commensurate fines for violations.
- Bring together the city's electric utility providers and local nonprofits focused on city greening to scope out the viability of a utility-sponsored planting program on private property to reduce energy (see Sacramento's partnership program).
- Explore mechanisms for incentivizing tree planting and protection on existing business, commercial and industrial properties through programs like City Forest Credits.

- Partner with state agencies and local horticultural and landscaping employers to support creation of a “Roots to Re-Entry” training program for residents transitioning back into their communities from incarceration to gain greenspace management and horticultural skills.
- Consider the benefits and liabilities of planting fruit trees in public spaces, including the increased management such trees would need.