

Berkeley 2026 Local Voter Key

November 3, 2026

Large-Print Plain-Language Local Guide

Extracted from the October 21, 2026 Alameda County Master Key

This guide is for information only. It does not tell you how to vote. It is a smaller extract of the Alameda County master key, made for easier reading, printing, and sharing.

This key contains the regional transit measure, the measures and city or school races associated with Berkeley, and notes about races that may depend on district or trustee-area boundaries.

Statewide propositions are covered in the separate California statewide voter guide.

Important special-district note: Transit, BART, water, park, sanitary, health-care, recreation, and community-college boundaries often cross city lines. Use the separate Special Districts and Community Colleges key for any such races printed on your official ballot. Your own official sample ballot is the final authority for which races apply to you.

Regional measure

Measure RTM - Regional Transit Measure

Where it applies: Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties

In plain English: A 14-year regional sales tax would raise money mainly to keep major Bay Area transit systems operating, with some money for targeted road work and accountability requirements.

What would change

- Sales tax would increase by 0.5 percentage point in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.
- Sales tax would increase by 1 percentage point in San Francisco.
- The measure names BART, AC Transit, Muni, Caltrain, VTA, SamTrans, ferries, and other transit as intended beneficiaries and also allows specified road and pothole work.
- Financial transparency, oversight, and accountability requirements would apply.

Oversight, audits, and decisions made later

Who oversees it: The measure creates an independent regional oversight committee. Each participating county Board of Supervisors appoints its county representative or representatives. Separate SB 63 accountability systems also include an independent financial-efficiency review process and

a process for counties to challenge certain funding or service-compliance decisions.

What the oversight can and cannot do: The regional committee can review whether money is distributed and spent consistently with the measure and can request records from the regional district. It does not operate BART, AC Transit, Muni, Caltrain, or the other transit agencies. Under a separate SB 63 dispute process, an ad hoc county committee can make a binding determination and, in specified circumstances, withhold up to 7 percent of an affected transit agency's measure funding. MTC also administers maintenance-of-effort rules intended to keep existing local transit support from simply being replaced by the new tax.

What is decided later, and by whom: County Boards of Supervisors make the oversight appointments after passage. Transit operators still adopt their own budgets and service plans, and annual distributions can change under the measure's formulas and actual tax collections. MTC and the regional district administer the regional requirements; the oversight committee checks compliance rather than choosing individual bus routes or train schedules.

If you vote YES: The regional tax and spending program would take effect for 14 years.

If you vote NO: The new regional sales tax would not take effect.

Money and practical effects: The ballot estimate is about \$980 million per year regionwide. The tax is collected in five counties, not just Alameda County. The official regional impartial analysis gives one Alameda County example: 64.70%

of revenue generated in Alameda County would be allocated to BART for transit operating expenses. Other Alameda County shares go to AC Transit, smaller operators, the ferry, county transportation purposes, fare and accessibility programs, mapping and wayfinding, administration, and other uses specified in the measure.

Approval threshold: A majority of the votes cast on RTM throughout the entire five-county Public Transit Revenue Measure District. This is one regionwide total, not a separate county-by-county approval test. Alameda County's summary page currently displays N/A, but the official regional impartial analysis resolves the threshold.

What is not settled or needs context: Exact annual dollar amounts can vary with actual tax collections and the measure's formulas. Revenue generated in each county is divided among specified recipients and purposes, and the mix differs by county.

Berkeley measures

Measure U - Berkeley general obligation bond

Where it applies: City of Berkeley

In plain English: Berkeley could borrow \$300 million for fire stations, emergency-response facilities, parks and recreation, other public infrastructure, and climate resilience.

What would change

- The bond includes independent oversight and audits.

Oversight, audits, and decisions made later

Who oversees it: Berkeley Measure U does not rely on one new generic citizens' committee. The City Manager must give the City Council a comprehensive annual report. The Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission reviews and reports on bond projects in its subject area, and the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission does the same for transportation and other public infrastructure. The City Auditor must audit bond expenditures at least once every three years.

What the oversight can and cannot do: The commissions review spending for consistency with the bond purposes and make recommendations. The City Auditor independently tests whether expenditures match the measure's intent. These bodies provide review and public reporting, but they do not have the final power to appropriate bond money or award city contracts.

What is decided later, and by whom: The City Council makes the final budget and project decisions. Measure U contains a broad, non-exclusive project list, so the Council can select eligible projects within the measure's purposes. Final project costs, designs, timing, purchases, and contracts are determined later through planning and bidding. The Council can also grant specified exceptions to the measure's all-electric requirements.

If you vote YES: The city could issue the bonds and levy property taxes to repay them.

If you vote NO: The bond authorization would not take effect.

Money and practical effects: The ballot estimates about \$22.14 per \$100,000 of assessed property value per year over a projected 40 years, generating about \$15.2 million per year.

Approval threshold: Two-thirds.

What is not settled or needs context: Exact annual tax rates and project timing depend on bond issuance and future city project decisions.

Measure V - Berkeley half-cent sales tax

Where it applies: City of Berkeley

In plain English: Berkeley would add a 0.5 percentage-point general sales tax for city services.

What would change

- The city sales-tax rate would become 10.75% based on the ballot wording.
- Revenue goes to the General Fund and can support fire, police, 911 dispatch, youth and senior services, community programs, and other lawful general uses.
- Independent audits are required.

Oversight, audits, and decisions made later

Who oversees it: There is no separate Measure V citizens' oversight committee in the measure text. Because this is a general sales tax, the revenue goes into Berkeley's General Fund and is subject to the same independent annual financial-audit requirements that apply to other General Fund revenue. The state tax administration system collects and administers the sales tax.

What the oversight can and cannot do: The audit checks the city's financial reporting and handling of General Fund money. It does not turn the ballot's examples - fire, police, 911, youth and senior services, and community programs - into legally fixed percentages or earmarks.

What is decided later, and by whom: The City Council decides each year, through the public budget process, how General Fund revenue is divided among lawful city purposes. That means the exact amount Measure V ultimately supports in any named service is a later Council budget decision, not something the audit or the ballot language fixes in advance.

If you vote YES: The 0.5% city sales tax would take effect until ended by voters.

If you vote NO: The city sales tax would not increase under Measure V.

Money and practical effects: Estimated city revenue: \$9 million to \$10 million per year.

Approval threshold: 50% plus one.

What is not settled or needs context: If RTM also passes, Alameda County would separately add another 0.5 percentage point regional transit sales tax. Berkeley shoppers would therefore feel both increases.

Measure W - Berkeley charter election-process amendments

Where it applies: City of Berkeley

In plain English: This measure changes several city election rules, including candidate filing, initiative/referendum/recall

procedures, vacancy-election timing, and administration of public campaign financing.

What would change

- Reduces candidate filing fees.
- Eliminates signatures in lieu of the filing fee.
- Removes certain personal information from candidate statements.
- Changes initiative, referendum, recall, and vacancy timelines.
- Raises the four-year-cycle cap for public campaign-financing administration and enforcement from \$250,000 to \$400,000.

If you vote YES: The package of charter election changes would take effect.

If you vote NO: Current charter rules would remain.

Money and practical effects: The measure changes an administrative spending cap; it does not itself impose a new tax.

Approval threshold: 50% plus one.

What is not settled or needs context: Because many election rules are bundled together, voters may want the full charter comparison if one procedural detail is especially important to them.

Measure X - Berkeley rent ordinance amendments

Where it applies: City of Berkeley

In plain English: This measure changes several rent-control and tenant-association rules.

What would change

- Most exemptions would no longer newly attach to a unit after a tenancy has already begun.
- Fees could be modified or waived for some subsidized nonprofit units.
- The annual registration deadline changes.
- Annual individual rent increases would be capped at 10%.
- Tenant associations could qualify in properties with as few as five units rather than 10.

If you vote YES: The rent ordinance amendments would take effect.

If you vote NO: Existing rent ordinance rules would remain.

Money and practical effects: No direct tax is created.

Approval threshold: 50% plus one.

What is not settled or needs context: How the rules affect a particular rental property can depend on the property's exemption history, subsidy status, and tenancy.

Measure Y - Berkeley arts parcel tax initiative

Where it applies: City of Berkeley

In plain English: Berkeley would create a 12-year special parcel tax to fund performing arts organizations, arts projects and operations, capital projects, community festivals, and administration.

What would change

- Rate: \$0.07 per square foot of improvements.
- Oversight would involve the city's Civic Arts Commission.

Oversight, audits, and decisions made later

Who oversees it: Measure Y gives Berkeley's Civic Arts Commission a formal oversight and grant-review role. The Finance Director must report annually to the City Council on tax collections, expenditures, and project status. The measure also requires an annual audit by an independent or elected auditor using administrative funds.

What the oversight can and cannot do: The Civic Arts Commission develops grant procedures and reviews grant applications. It can use public grant-review panels of at least three people with relevant knowledge or experience, and a Commission grants subcommittee and then the full Commission can review, modify, approve, or reject recommendations. The audit checks whether grant money was spent consistently with the ordinance and implementing rules.

What is decided later, and by whom: The Commission develops detailed regulations and procedures, but the City Council approves the regulations and has final review of grant awards; it can approve the awards or send them back. The identities of future panelists, yearly grant recipients, award amounts, and many administrative details therefore are decided after the election in public city processes.

If you vote YES: The arts parcel tax and grant program would take effect for 12 years.

If you vote NO: The new arts tax would not take effect.

Money and practical effects: Estimated revenue: about \$6.3 million per year and \$84.8 million over 12 years.

Approval threshold: 50% plus one, according to the Alameda County Registrar's current measure page.

What is not settled or needs context: Individual grants and annual allocations would be made later through the program's governing process.

Measure Z - Berkeley public-bank capitalization parcel tax initiative

Where it applies: City of Berkeley

In plain English: Berkeley would create a six-year special parcel tax intended to capitalize and support a public bank for affordable housing, green energy/infrastructure, and small-business investment.

What would change

- Rate: \$0.06 per square foot of residential improvements and \$0.09 per square foot of non-residential improvements.
- Funds would be reviewed, allocated, and approved by the City Council and regularly audited.

Oversight, audits, and decisions made later

Who oversees it: Measure Z puts the City Council, rather than a separate citizens' committee, at the center of accountability. Tax proceeds must be kept in a special fund. The City Manager must provide an annual report describing collections, spending, performance, accomplishments, and progress toward public-bank capitalization and authorization. The City Auditor must conduct an independent performance audit at least once every three years.

What the oversight can and cannot do: The City Auditor checks whether expenditures and city reports are accurate and consistent with the measure. The City Council reviews, allocates, and approves use of the money. This means the auditor checks and reports; the auditor does not decide which investments or loans the city makes.

What is decided later, and by whom: A public bank still must satisfy state authorization, charter, capitalization, and regulatory requirements before it can operate. If the bank is not authorized by June 30, 2033, the measure allows the special fund to support specified loans for affordable housing, green infrastructure and energy, and small businesses until authorization is obtained. The City Manager develops low-income exemption procedures, subject to Council review, and the Council also makes future allocation decisions and may make authorized annual rate adjustments within the measure's limits.

If you vote YES: The parcel tax would take effect and create a funding source for the proposed public-bank effort.

If you vote NO: The new parcel tax would not take effect.

Money and practical effects: Estimated revenue: about \$9.2 million in the first year and \$58.3 million over six years.

Approval threshold: 50% plus one, according to the Alameda County Registrar's current measure page.

What is not settled or needs context: Passing the tax does not by itself guarantee that a public bank opens. A public bank must still satisfy state-law feasibility, regulatory, capitalization, and approval requirements.

Measure AA - Berkeley sugar-sweetened beverage tax initiative

Where it applies: City of Berkeley

In plain English: Berkeley would replace its current one-cent-per-fluid-ounce general tax on distribution of sugar-sweetened beverages with a two-cent-per-fluid-ounce special tax dedicated to health, nutrition, and drinking-water-access programs.

What would change

- Retains listed exemptions for small retailers, milk products, baby formula, alcoholic beverages, and medical and weight-loss products.
- Money could support qualifying nonprofits, the city, or Berkeley Unified School District programs.

If you vote YES: The current one-cent general tax would be replaced by the two-cent special tax.

If you vote NO: The replacement would not occur; the existing tax would remain unless changed separately.

Money and practical effects: Estimated revenue: about \$2.2 million per year.

Approval threshold: 50% plus one, according to the Alameda County Registrar's current measure page.

What is not settled or needs context: The ballot estimate is revenue, not a promise that beverage prices will rise by an identical amount; businesses can respond to distributor taxes in different ways.

Berkeley races

Berkeley uses ranked-choice voting in city elections where the ballot instructs voters to rank candidates. Ranking more than one candidate is different from voting for more than one person in a conventional vote-for-one race.

City Council District 1

What this office controls: City mayors and councils generally set local policy, adopt budgets, approve land-use and housing rules, and oversee or set policy for city services. The exact split between mayor, council, and professional city administration differs by city.

- Laura Babitt - Auditor/Operations Director
- Ross Bernet - Environmental Program Manager
- Moni Gangopadhyay - Consumer Protection Investigator
- Steve Kromer - Energy Efficiency Engineer
- Daria Wrubel - Youth Therapist

City Council District 4

What this office controls: City mayors and councils generally set local policy, adopt budgets, approve land-use and housing rules, and oversee or set policy for city services. The exact split between mayor, council, and professional city administration differs by city.

- Majdi 'Gaith' Abuhamdieh - Entrepreneur/Technologist/Parent
- Igor A. Tregub - Berkeley City Councilmember District 4

City Council District 7

What this office controls: City mayors and councils generally set local policy, adopt budgets, approve land-use and housing rules, and oversee or set policy for city services. The exact split between mayor, council, and professional city administration differs by city.

- Aidan Hill - Medical Case Manager
- Syrak Micael - Community Engagement Liaison

City Council District 8

What this office controls: City mayors and councils generally set local policy, adopt budgets, approve land-use and housing rules, and oversee or set policy for city services. The exact split between mayor, council, and professional city administration differs by city.

- Fred M. Feller - Attorney
- Mark Humbert - City Councilmember
- Mari Mendonca - No Ballot Designation
- Michael Wallman - Systems Engineer

City Auditor

What this office controls: The City Auditor independently audits city programs, finances, controls, and performance and reports findings to the public and city government.

- Jenny Wong - City Auditor

Jenny Wong is the only candidate in the county candidate list used for this edition.

Rent Stabilization Board - vote for 5

What this office controls: The Rent Stabilization Board administers Berkeley's rent stabilization and eviction-control program, including regulations, petitions, registration, and program budgets.

- Avery Arbaugh - Tenant Union Organizer
- Carole Marasovic - Attorney/City Commissioner
- Ida Martinac - Rent Stabilization Board Commissioner
- Nathan Mizell - Rent Stabilization Board Commissioner
- Vylma Ortiz - Attorney/Meditation Teacher
- Derek Rodriguez - Student/National Guardsman

Berkeley Unified School District - vote for 3

What this office controls: School boards adopt district budgets and policies, hire and evaluate the superintendent, approve curriculum and facilities decisions within state law, and oversee district operations. Trustee-area candidates represent only the listed area even though the board governs the whole district.

- Ka'Dijah A. Brown - Incumbent
- Reichi Lee - Qualified write-in candidate
- Sandy Park - Education Consultant
- Jennifer Shanoski - Incumbent

Four qualified candidates are now listed for three seats. Reichi Lee is a qualified write-in candidate, so her name is not preprinted on the ballot; a voter choosing her must write in her name and mark the write-in voting space as directed.

City measures: U, V, W, X, Y, Z, and AA. Regional measure: RTM.

Sources and checking

The Alameda County Registrar of Voters is the controlling source in this extract for the local measure list and current candidate roster. The October 21 master also cross-checks responsible cities, school districts, regional agencies, and local reporting where useful. If your official ballot differs from this extract, use your official ballot.

Alameda County election information:

<https://acvote.alamedacountyca.gov/election-information/elections?id=260>

Alameda County local measures:

https://www.alamedacountyca.gov/rov_app/measures/election/260

Alameda County candidate list:

https://alamedacountyca.gov/rov_app/candidatelist?electionid=260

Regional Transit Measure district materials:

<https://mtc.ca.gov/about-mtc/authorities/public-transit-revenue-measure-district>

Additional local source: <https://www.berkeleyscanner.com/>