



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
April 30, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager
Submitted by: Michael Caplan, Manager, Office of Economic Development
Subject: Adopt the 'Open for Business' Pledge of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution adopting the 'Open for Business' Pledge that has been created and promoted by the East Bay Economic Development Alliance.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

There are no direct fiscal impacts. To the extent that the local business climate is improved and Berkeley is perceived to be a friendly place to do business there could be some marginal benefit to the City's economy in the form of new investment and taxes.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Over the last year, the East Bay Economic Development Alliance (EDA) has asked all cities in Alameda and Contra Costa County to adopt the 'Open for Business' Pledge, a statement designed to reflect a local commitment to a positive business climate in the region. With Berkeley formally adopting the Pledge, every city in Alameda County will have signed on. The EDA has already begun using the Pledge to help in its marketing of the region as a business-friendly place. These efforts will continue into the future in a variety of forums, in EDA marketing materials and on its website. Berkeley's participation is a no cost way of marketing the City's positive business climate through a popular regional initiative.

BACKGROUND

To improve the region's regulatory environment, East Bay EDA and its members developed a 9-point "Open for Business" Pledge that cities, counties, and other regulatory bodies can adopt as a commitment to excellent customer service with respect to business investment and expansion. The committee, chaired by John McManus of Cushman & Wakefield, has undertaken a campaign to get as many East Bay entities as possible to adopt the Pledge. So far, 22 East Bay cities have adopted it. With Berkeley's action, every City in Alameda County will have signed on.

Adoption of the Pledge would be a way for the City of Berkeley to signal to both the business community and the public that it is aware of the impact that customer service

has on the business climate. The City already operates in a way that reflects most aspects of the principles but the public commitment to a regional standard will provide an important guidepost for City staff and enhance Berkeley's position as a great place to do business.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Adopting the Open for Business Pledge will enhance Berkeley's image as a business-friendly community, support the East Bay EDA's effort to market our region and promote new economic development activity.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None

CONTACT PERSON

Michael Caplan, Economic Development Manager, 981-2490

Attachments:

1: Resolution

Exhibit A: Open for Business Pledge

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

ADOPTION OF THE EAST BAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE'S "OPEN FOR BUSINESS" PLEDGE

WHEREAS, the East Bay Economic Development Alliance and its members developed a 9-point "Open for Business" Pledge for cities, counties, and other regulatory bodies to adopt to demonstrate their commitment to excellent customer service with respect to business investment and expansion (Exhibit A); and

WHEREAS, the initiative has become quite successful and 22 East Bay cities have already adopted the Pledge; and

WHEREAS, with Berkeley's action, every City in Alameda County will have adopted the Pledge; and

WHEREAS, adoption of the pledge is a signal to businesses and the public that the City of Berkeley and the region as a whole is genuinely committed to excellent customer service and building a strong business climate; and

WHEREAS, the Pledge signals the public commitment to a regional standard that can provide an important guidepost for City staff and enhance Berkeley's position as a great place to do business improving competitiveness and potentially creating more jobs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City of Berkeley adopts the "Open for Business" Pledge

Exhibit:

A: Open for Business Pledge

“OPEN FOR BUSINESS” PLEDGE

Because we recognize and understand the critical importance of providing excellent customer service to all our customers – particularly the business community – and because we recognize that our policies and practices have a direct impact on the East Bay’s business climate and the ability of companies in the region to create jobs, the City of Berkeley officially endorses the East Bay’s *Open for Business* Pledge.

We Pledge:

- *To provide senior management leadership and support for permit streamlining and empower the staff to act administratively to the extent allowed by Code.*
- *To conduct periodic reviews of our practices to ensure that we are current with changes in regulations, technology, and codes – including green building codes.*
- *To proactively seek customer feedback regularly, positive and negative, and to respond appropriately.*
- *To provide transparent, easy to understand fee schedules and applications online.*
- *To provide staff with training in order to achieve high levels of consistency related to permitting.*
- *To provide clear guidance on project schedules and milestones early in the process and to strive to meet that schedule.*
- *To respond to all communication, whether phone, email, written or in-person, within 2 business days.*
- *To share best practices amongst East Bay Economic Development Alliance’s localities.*
- *To recognize exemplary operations and staff, both internally and externally, to the organization.*