

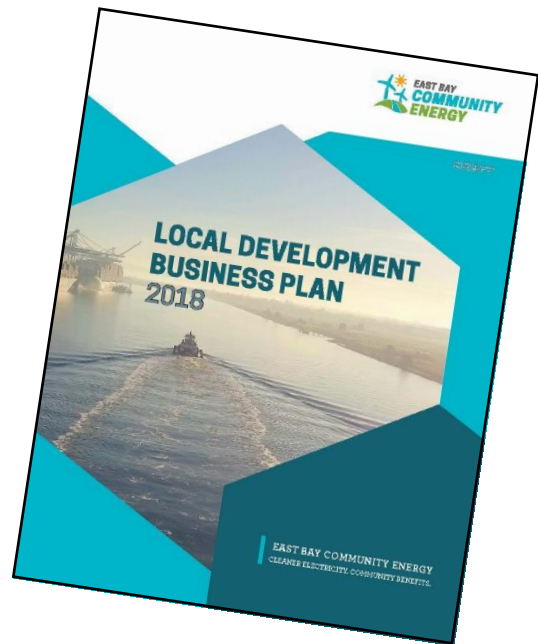
Excerpted from the Local Development Business Plan: Role of Community Engagement



The importance of community involvement in the establishment of East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) and formation of the bold vision embodied by the Local Development Business Plan (LDBP) cannot be overstated. Simply put, without the passion, persistence, and sustained efforts of many dedicated members of the East Bay community over a period of many years, neither EBCE nor the LDBP would exist. The centrality of local energy resource development in the vision that emerged for Community Choice in Alameda County was pivotal to the push for a Local Development Business Plan to guide the new EBCE agency.

A coalition that included many local community organizations, Community Choice advocates, labor and workforce organizations, and dedicated individuals came together to advance the concept of an innovative, locally-focused Community Choice program in the East Bay. A diverse, thirty-five-member Steering Committee was created, with representatives from many community constituencies and interested cities from throughout the Alameda County community. The Steering Committee worked with the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, County staff, and consultants over a period of years, weighing in on the feasibility study that was performed and the priorities that would inform the establishment of EBCE.

In 2016, the coalition of East Bay community organizations, Community Choice advocates, and local labor and workforce organizations joined forces to successfully advocate for language in the founding EBCE Joint Powers Agreement, which mandated the creation of the current Local Development Business Plan as a framework for meeting the community benefit goals of EBCE. The coalition also successfully advocated for a provision in the JPA Agreement that established a Community Advisory Committee to inform the new program and provided for the chair of that committee to serve as a non-voting member of the EBCE governing board.



These two examples of successful community engagement in the EBCE development process—which effectively led to the creation of the LDBP and the Community Advisory Committee role in governance of the agency—are unique, ground-breaking aspects of EBCE, realized through the active and sustained engagement and mobilization of over 60 East Bay community and labor organizations.

With the establishment of EBCE in January 2017, and the subsequent selection of the consulting team to create the LDBP, many community-based advocates and organizations have continued to play a strong role in shaping EBCE—through engagement with EBCE’s Community Advisory Committee, through direct program and policy advocacy at the EBCE Board, and by directly representing community interests in the LDBP process.

In tune with the strong community orientation of EBCE, the LDBP Consultants actively engaged the community in the creation of the LDBP. This began with a series of focus groups organized by the LDBP Consultants in June 2017 to solicit community input. These focus groups attracted more than 100 individuals representing community organizations, businesses, labor, and public officials.

In addition, the LDBP process has involved the publication and public review over the past year of the more than 25 work products and analyses that form the foundation of the recommendations in this LDBP document. This process involved open public review and comment periods and public webinars for each of these work products, as well as an all-day symposium in March 2018 and multiple community review workshops in June 2018. The LDBP work products were also subject to review by industry expert review panels, which included community advocates and local clean energy experts. The community has actively responded to this process of review and commentary, ultimately informing, enhancing, and enriching the work products.

The EBCE Community Advisory Committee has also played a key role in representing community interests in the LDBP process. The Committee participated in all of the LDBP community stakeholder engagement activities, and hosted multiple special meetings dedicated to review and discussion of LDBP work products and community input.

Community engagement has been a unique and intrinsic characteristic of EBCE's identity, and it is a foundational element of many of the LDBP recommendations. This strong community engagement will continue to be crucial as EBCE implements the ongoing, iterative, and inclusive LDBP framework recommended herein.

