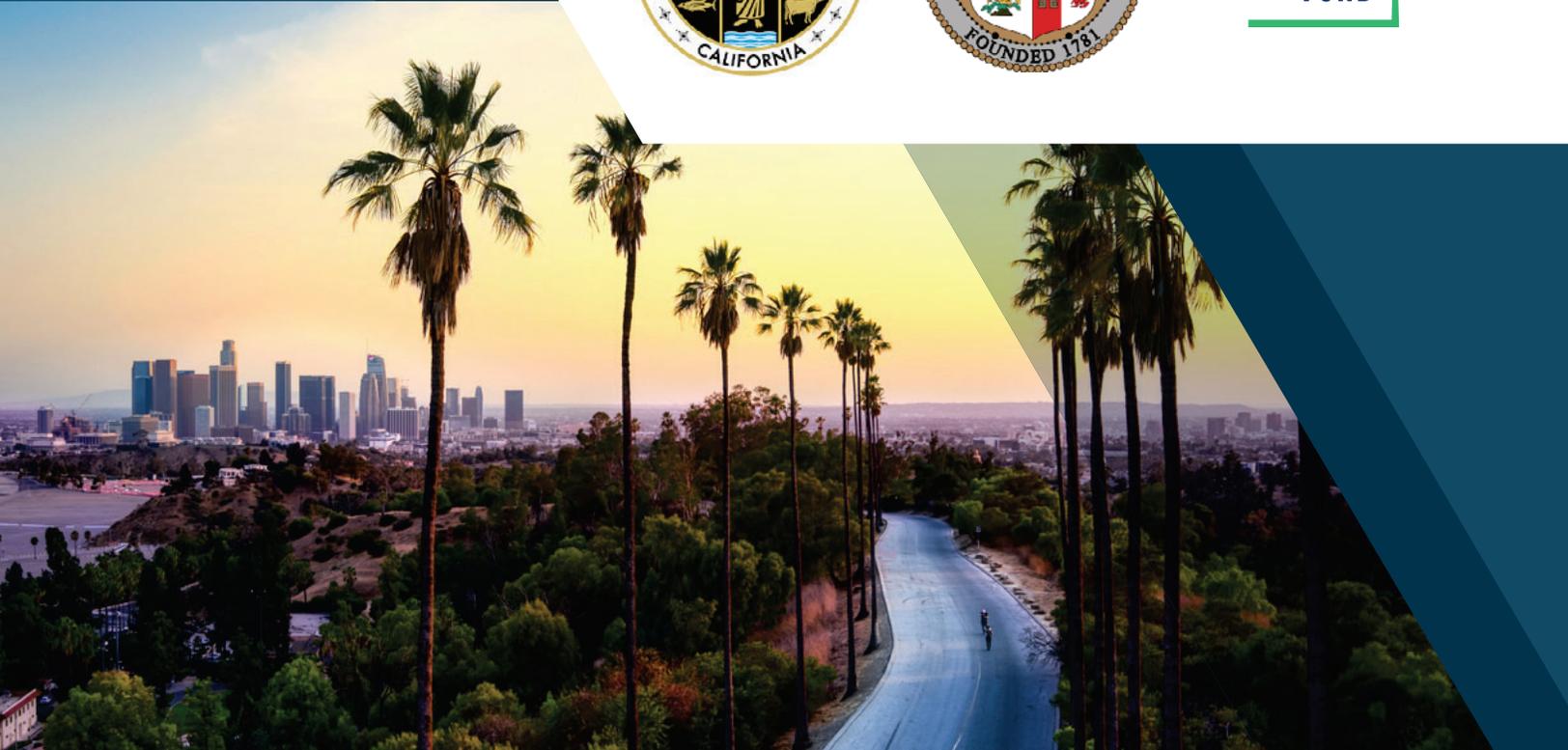


# Los Angeles Just Transition Strategy

*Developed by the LA County-City Just Transition Task Force,  
co-convened by Los Angeles County and the City of Los Angeles  
and facilitated by the Just Transition Fund*



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# Just Transition Strategy

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# Executive Summary

The Just Transition Task Force (Task Force) was established by the City and County of Los Angeles Chief Sustainability Offices in 2021 to develop a Just Transition Strategy for workers and communities impacted by the proposed phase out of oil drilling and extraction activities in the City of Los Angeles and unincorporated areas of L.A. County. Co-led by the County and City and facilitated by the Just Transition Fund, the Task Force and its subgroups met regularly from November 2021-November 2022 to develop Goals and Strategies, together with supporting Actions, to ensure a just transition for workers and communities impacted by the phase out of oil drilling and extraction activities. The Goals, Strategies, and Actions included in this report were developed and approved in a 18-1 vote, with 7 abstentions, by members of the Just Transition Task Force, listed in Appendix A.

## Goal 1

Provide oil workers impacted by the phase-out of drilling and extraction of oil with the necessary support to transition their skills into jobs of comparable, family-sustaining compensation or retirement in ways that promote livelihoods and dignity (Worker Subgroup)

**Strategy W1:** Create a “Workers’ Advisory Council” to provide ongoing input, guidance, and feedback to the City and County as they implement the Strategy and Action recommendations and identify additional needs throughout the phase-out

**Strategy W2:** Develop ongoing oil extraction employer engagement to provide ongoing updates and collaborate on clear communication to workers about job impacts, timelines, and available transition support

**Strategy W3:** Work with existing training institutions and programs to connect dislocated oil extraction workers to jobs with high parity in pay and skill alignment, including but not limited to Solar and Other Renewable Energy Production, Transportation Electrification, Water and Wastewater Management, Oil Well Plugging and Abandonment<sup>1</sup>, and Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach sectors

**Strategy W4:** Develop a pilot Transition Navigators program that provides specialized on-site assistance for oil extraction workers to easily and equitably access the retraining and reemployment programs developed in Strategy W3

**Strategy W5:** Expand and create additional programs to encourage private employers and the County and City to hire dislocated oil extraction workers into existing occupations with high parity in skill alignment and pay

**Strategy W6:** Expand use of labor agreements (such as Project Labor Agreements for construction and collective bargaining agreements for non-construction) and labor standards to create more high-wage job opportunities to reemploy dislocated oil workers at the County and City, including City- and County- funded contracts, in sectors identified to have high parity in skill alignment but not yet parity in pay

<sup>1</sup> Plugged and Abandoned Oil Well—Any well that has been permanently sealed with a cement plug in compliance with current regulations. Note: Some legacy oil wells that were previously abandoned may need to be re-abandoned in order to comply with current regulations. CA Public Resources Code § 3208.

**Strategy W7:** Work with the Workers’ Advisory Council (as described in Strategy W1) to develop a menu of opt-in support options to address additional worker and family support needs—including housing, health and wellness, financial—that are not covered by WIOA

## Goal 2

Properly remediate and monitor impacts of closing oil well sites and integrate co-visioning and input from sovereign Native Nations<sup>2</sup> on whose ancestral homelands Los Angeles is built—Tongva, Tataviam, Serano, Kizh, and Chumash—and frontline communities in community visioning, remediation and land use redevelopment planning processes (Site Remediation and Reuse Subgroup)

**Strategy S1:** City and County Planning Departments collaborate with the Just Transition Task Force<sup>3</sup> to initiate General Plan Amendments that includes policies to guide remediation and redevelopment of former oil sites, triggering community plan updates that abide by State Tribal Consultation Laws<sup>4</sup> and prioritize local and Tribal engagement on a site by site basis<sup>5</sup>

**Strategy S2:** Develop and execute a community engagement and education program to increase understanding and awareness of the existing local remediation and reuse planning processes and increase the ability of community members to be actively involved.

**Strategy S3:** Ensure that the existing standards and processes for complete and timely remediation are properly executed and abide by all State and local laws, including State Tribal Consultation Laws

**Strategy S4:** Work with local Native Nations to develop clear opportunities for engagement and consultation as early as possible in the process of remediation and reuse planning.

## Goal 3

Leverage public and private funds to equitably and sustainably finance and coordinate the successful implementation of Strategy and Action recommendations, with ongoing accountability, transparency and advising from the Just Transition Task Force (Finance Subgroup)

**Strategy F1:** Expand and continue joint County and City collaboration to implement the Strategy and Action recommendations, including coordinating and leading grant application development

**Strategy F2:** Continue the Just Transition Task Force in order to provide ongoing continuity, accountability, transparency, and advisory capacity to the County and City in implementation of the Strategy and Action recommendations

**Strategy F3:** Develop a centralized web platform that can serve as a one stop shop over the lifespan of the phase-out and transition providing updates, resources for the general public, frontline com-

<sup>2</sup> Out of respect for Tribal sovereignty we will use 'Native Nations' throughout this document.

<sup>3</sup> When the Just Transition Task Force is referenced in these Strategy and Action recommendations it refers to the continuation of this group to support and advise on implementation. See Strategies F1 and F2 for detail.

<sup>4</sup> [SB18](#) and [AB52](#)

<sup>5</sup> The General Plan Amendment (GPA) process is one potential way to include City and County-wide general principles of engagement with communities and Native Nations, but will not address every remediation/reuse project, especially sites that may undergo development before the completion of the GPA, which can take up to 3 years.

communities and Native Nations, transitioning workers, oil extraction employers, and employers hiring transitioning workers

**Strategy F4:** Identify and secure sustainable funding to resource Workers Strategies and Actions

**Strategy F5:** Identify and secure sustainable funding to resource Site Remediation and Reuse Strategies and Actions

**Strategy F6:** Share LA County-City Just Transition Task Force lessons learned to inform design and implementation of State's newly-funded Well Capping Workforce Pilot Fund and the Dislocated Worker Pilot Fund

**Strategy F7:** Advocate for a California Just Transition Fund, an expansion and continuation of the Dislocated Workers Fund Pilot, to support workers and communities in the oil extraction transition

**Strategy F8:** Advocate and monitor opportunities for expansion of federal programs that can support oil and gas community transition, and create new jobs in high growth sectors with high parity in pay and skill alignment for transitioning workers

# Introduction

This Just Transition Strategy reflects the work of the Task Force, a body co-convened by the County and City of Los Angeles and facilitated by the Just Transition Fund. The Task Force in its current iteration collaborated from September 2021 to November 2022 to respond to the need to develop a coordinated Just Transition Strategy as the Los Angeles region took intentional steps to phase out oil extraction.

## Background

The City and the County jointly incorporated goals to phase out oil and gas operations in their respective sustainability plans published in 2019. The 2019 OurCounty Sustainability Plan set forth a goal of a “fossil fuel free Los Angeles” based on an equity-centered stakeholder engagement process and also established an action to expand setbacks in unincorporated areas and an action to create a just transition task force and strategy in collaboration with the City of Los Angeles and other stakeholders. L.A.’s Green New Deal (2019) similarly seeks to dramatically reduce exposure to health-harming pollutants in disadvantaged communities, setting out a goal to reduce oil production by 40% below 2013 levels by 2025 and directing the City to coordinate with L.A. County to develop a sunset strategy for oil and gas production operations countywide.

In September 2020, the County Board of Supervisors adopted a [motion](#) that set forth the establishment of a Los Angeles Just Transition Task Force, which included the City of Los Angeles, the City of Culver City, labor, environmental groups, industry and other members. The Task Force examined whether the process of closing oil wells would serve as a potential employment opportunity for the existing fossil fuel workers. The conclusions of that process were captured [here](#).

In 2021, the Los Angeles County (County) Chief Sustainability Office (CSO) and City of Los Angeles (City) Mayor’s Office of Sustainability agreed to co-convene and expand the Task Force. On September 15, 2021, the County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a [motion](#) directing the CSO to work with local jurisdictions, in partnership with the City, to expand the existing Task Force to include frontline and tribal communities, including indigenous communities and representatives of local Native Nations, additional industry representatives, labor organizations and workers, and workforce development partners.

In September 2021, the County and the City identified the Just Transition Fund (JTF), a non-profit organization that has worked on just transition issues throughout the United States and from which the City had secured a commitment to serve as facilitator for the Task Force on a pro bono basis. The County and City identified and invited members for the new expanded Task Force. A roster of 27 Task Force members is included as Appendix A which, as directed by the Board, includes representatives from affected industries, labor unions, frontline communities, environmental and environmental justice organizations, tribal representatives, workforce development, academics, local and state governments, and youth. The Task Force is co-chaired by the County and the City, the meetings are facilitated by JTF, and representatives of County and City agencies participate in the Task Force meetings as support staff. The City and County also contracted with a technical consultant to inform the development of strategies and actions to support workers directly affected by the proposed phase out of oil drilling and extraction activities. The deliverables from the consultant are included as Appendix B-G and referenced throughout this Strategy.

Since then both the City and the County of Los Angeles have passed/proposed ordinances phasing out existing and new oil extraction activities within their jurisdictions (City Council File No. 17-0447 and County Motion dated [September 15, 2021](#), respectively) and will conduct amortization studies to determine the timing for well closures (see “Timeline” below for more details).

## Timeline

Both the City and County’s oil extraction phase out ordinances include the need to undertake amortization studies. These amortization studies will be conducted by outside experts to analyze what amount of time is reasonable to allow the operators/investors sufficient time to recuperate their existing investment, avoiding a “taking” of that investment by the City or County. The current zoning codes default to 20 years. The results of the amortization studies will determine whether an operator has already or will recoup its investments (“amortization”) prior to the 20-year timeline. Therefore, these studies will essentially outline in greater detail the legally enforceable timelines upon which oil extraction will be phased out, which is directly related to the timeline upon which just transition planning is necessary.

The timeline for implementing the Just Transition Strategy will be informed by these amortization studies. The Strategy represents a set of recommended priorities for the County and City to accomplish throughout the transition, understanding that there will need to be actions that are undertaken immediately and some that will need to begin in the years to come. Given this, the Task Force worked under the assumption that 2023 and 2024 should be critical planning years with the goal of being ready to implement the transition strategies as soon as amortization studies are completed. Additionally, these timeline questions are part of what informed the Task Force’s recommendation to continue meeting beyond 2022 to be able to advise the County and City in adapting these strategy recommendations as needed with new clarity in timing and evolving local needs as that becomes apparent.

## Purpose & Goals

The purpose of the Task Force was to develop a set of recommendations for the County and City of LA to ensure a just transition for workers and communities impacted by the passed/proposed ordinances to phase out oil drilling and extraction activities. Recommendations included strategies to meet the following long-term goals identified by the Task Force:

**Goal 1:** Provide oil workers impacted by the phase out of oil drilling and extraction with the necessary support to provide for their families and transition their skills into jobs of comparable compensation or retirement in ways that promote livelihoods and dignity through supplemental benefits and services (Worker Subgroup)

**Goal 2:** Properly remediate and monitor impacts of closing oil well sites and integrate co-visioning and input from sovereign Native Nations on whose ancestral homelands Los Angeles is built – Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash – and frontline communities in community visioning, remediation and land use redevelopment planning processes (Site Remediation and Reuse Subgroup)

**Goal 3:** Leverage public and private funds to equitably and sustainably finance and coordinate the successful implementation of Strategy Recommendations, with ongoing accountability and advising from the Just Transition Task Force (Finance Subgroup)

# Task Force Structure and Process

The structure of the Task Force included the Task Force, Subgroups, Subgroup Co-Leads, and the Planning Team.

## Task Force

Task Force Members informed and provided feedback to the Subgroups, and made final decisions on what is included in the set of recommendations for the City and County. Members interacted in a variety of ways from serving on Subgroups, attending Task Force meetings, connecting Task Force and Subgroups with other stakeholder groups, and partnering with other members on identified action items between meetings to inform development of recommendations. All Task Force members were encouraged to attend and contribute to Subgroup meetings. Full Task Force meetings were held approximately every other month in coordination with the Subgroup meeting schedule.

## Subgroups

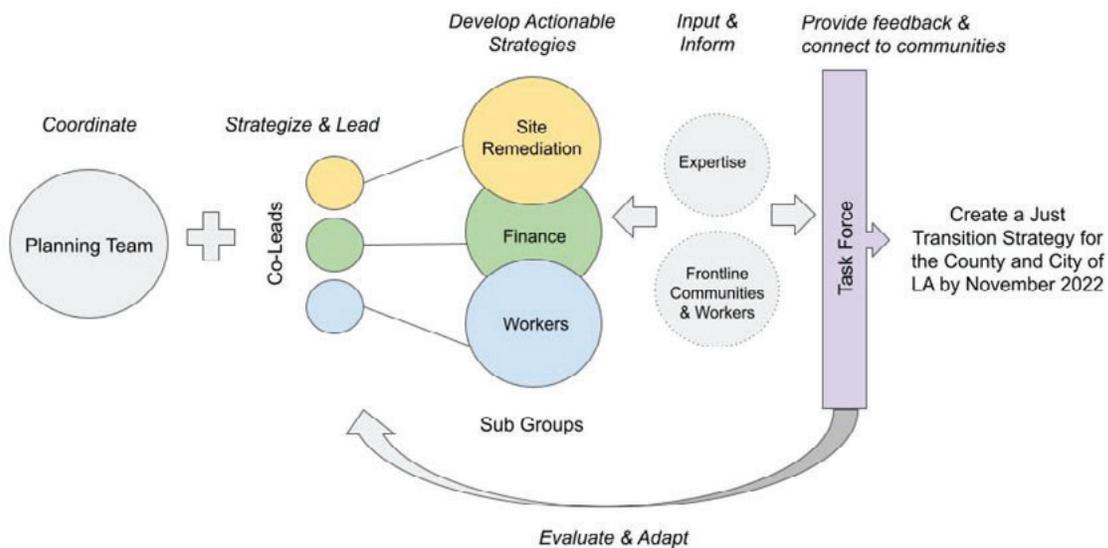
The Subgroups (Workers, Site Remediation & Reuse, and Finance) consisted of Task Force members with expertise or interest in each of the Subgroup focus areas. Each Subgroup served as a strategic thinking arm of the Task Force to develop recommendations to the City and County for actionable strategies and actions for that Subgroup's long-term goal (as stated above), to collectively accomplish the Task Force goals. Subgroups were responsible for working with the Planning Team and consultants to ensure engagement and input from frontline communities and workers. The Subgroups held meetings approximately every other month. All Task Force members were welcome to attend any Subgroup meeting.

## Subgroup Co-Leads

Each Subgroup contained two co-leads with expertise in the respective Subgroup's goal or subject matter. The Subgroup co-leads consisted of six Task Force members, two with expertise in each goal or subgroup area. The role of the Subgroup Co-leads was to guide their subgroup in crafting strategy and action recommendations to meet the goals of the Task Force. They met monthly in coordination with the Planning Team.

## Planning Team

The Planning Team consisted of LA City and County Sustainability representation and Just Transition Fund facilitators. The Planning Team oversaw and coordinated all Task Force logistics and communication, organized ideas that surfaced through meetings, coordinated research by consultants, etc. to support the Subgroups and the Task Force, and served as a connector of ideas and people.



## Decision Making Process

All members of the Task Force had equal status and voice in operations and decisions about the Task Force. The goal was for each decision to be made by consensus, meaning that all members could support a decision. Whenever consensus was not possible, decisions were made using a majority vote and concerns noted if provided by members. When decisions needed to be made between meetings, email feedback and voting was conducted:

- Planning Team sent out decision under consideration by email and Task Force Members had 5 business days to ask questions or raise concerns
- No email concerns or questions was assumed consensus
- Planning Team incorporated concerns and sent out for full email vote again if necessary

## Targeted Outreach and Engagement with Native Nations

In addition to group conversations in Subgroups and Task Force meetings, the Planning Team held individual meetings with Tribal representatives on the Task Force and their staff teams to develop recommendations for how the County and City can specifically work with Native Nations to develop clear opportunities for engagement and consultation as early as possible in the process of remediation and reuse planning. The Planning Team also gave a presentation to the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission in May 2022 to provide an update on the Task Force and receive feedback on the draft recommendations to date.

## Intelligent Partnerships, Research Consultant

The City obtained a grant from C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group—a global network of 97 of the mayors of the world’s largest cities working to address climate change in an equitable way—to serve as a cost share with the funding that the County had budgeted to hire an expert technical consultant to support the Task Force in assessing the impacts of the phase out of oil drilling and extraction activities. After a competitive bidding process, Intelligent Partnerships, a consulting firm focused on strategic planning and inclusion design, was selected to carry out the following scope of work:

- Develop a “Worker Engagement Plan”(Appendix B) that outlines the methodology for worker and employer outreach during the Task Force’s development of strategy and action recommendations.
- Implement the “Worker Engagement Plan” by conducting direct engagement with oil extraction workers to understand their needs and priorities for a future transition to other sectors.
- Develop a “State of Fossil Fuel Extraction Workers in Los Angeles” report (Appendix C) using data from both qualitative worker engagement and quantitative analyses to create a profile of the workforce in oil extraction in Los Angeles.
- Develop a “Public Infrastructure Spending Job Opportunities Assessment” (Appendix D) that identifies worker transition opportunities into a set of planned and proposed investments in Los Angeles for clean energy, advanced transportation, stormwater management, climate resilience, and other sectors that have high occupational alignment with worker skills, interests, pay, and benefits.
- Develop a “Worker Transition White Paper” (Appendix E) that identifies potential worker transition opportunities into high-growth industries, beyond those assessed in the “Public Infrastructure Spending Job Opportunities Assessment,” that have high occupational alignment with worker skills, interests, pay, and benefits.
- Develop a “Funding White Paper” (Appendix F) with order of magnitude cost estimates and potential funding sources needed to implement a just transition away from fossil fuel extraction activities, including costs for early retirement, worker retraining, and other potential workforce-related strategies identified.
- Develop a “Final Report” (Appendix G) summarizing key findings.

Intelligent Partnerships findings and deliverables supported the Task Force and Worker Subgroup to develop and refine the Strategies and Actions.

# Strategy and Action Recommendations

## Goal 1: Workers

**Goal 1:** Provide oil workers impacted by the phase-out of drilling and extraction of oil with the necessary support to transition their skills into jobs of comparable, family-sustaining compensation or retirement in ways that promote livelihoods and dignity

### Background

Intelligent Partnerships research and analysis (see Appendices B-G for details and methodology) identified approximately 664 oil extraction workers (FTEs) in the City of Los Angeles and unincorporated L.A. County that will be impacted by the proposed phase out of oil extraction activities. In addition, through direct worker outreach including in-depth interviews, focus groups, listening sessions, and surveys across four large oil production sites in the City and County, Intelligent Partnerships reached a total of 176 workers, providing the City and County with key information about the needs and demographics of those workers. The following key findings and themes from Intelligent Partnerships' engagement and reports informed the Worker Subgroup in developing necessary Strategy recommendations to support impacted workers and accomplish the stated goal:

1. **An estimated 128 FTEs would relocate out of LA County and 55 were estimated to retire within the next five years, leaving an estimated 482 FTEs who would be interested in job training and/or reemployment.** See below chart outlining detail by entry-, mid-, and high-level positions.

Category of Worker	Total Currently Employed (FTEs)	Estimated Number to Relocate (FTEs)	Estimated Number to Retire Within 5 Years (FTEs)	Total Remaining (FTEs)
Entry-Level	257	25.7	0	231.3
Mid-Level	305	82.4	33.6	189
High-Level	102	19.4	21.4	61.2
TOTAL	664	127.5	55	<b>481.5</b>

*\*These are general FTE estimates based on the results and responses of oil extraction workers in-person interviews, focus groups and survey results collected in June of 2022, and are not representative of discrete numbers of workers, but are provided for planning purposes only*

2. **The majority of impacted oil workers were non-unionized. Only 10% of oil extraction worker respondents were unionized.** Only one oil extraction company in Los Angeles, Tidelands Oil Production Co., is unionized through the United Steelworkers (USW Local 675), under the umbrella company California Resources Corporation (CRC).
3. **Entry-level extraction workers were at highest risk in the transition but had the highest interest in retraining.** The median age of Entry-Level workers (Laborers/Technicians) was 26 and 77% had a high school degree or less. More than 52% had no work experience in the industry prior to employment in their current position. This is compared with 57% of mid- and high-level workers having specialized or formal training.

4. **Pay scales and benefits for oil extraction workers varied by experience and educational attainment and ranged from \$52,000-109,000 and 16-18% benefits for entry-level positions and \$109,000-\$237,000 and 16-22% benefits for mid- and high-level positions.** Transitioning occupations will need to have potential for entry-, mid-, and high-level workers to move into positions with comparable pay and benefits.
5. **“Green energy” jobs were identified as the top priority for reemployment (63% of respondents) though the primary factor in transition was parity in pay and benefits.** Other industries of interest to participants were other oil industry jobs, including well remediation (11%), though some respondents perceived oil well plugging and remediation as a temporary rather than a longer-term career; water extraction, reclamation and facilities (9%), other trade specializations, such as mechanics, electrical, heavy equipment operation, etc. (11%), and construction or the trades (6%). The primary factor influencing decision making in employment transition was parity in pay and benefits.
6. **Transportation Electrification, Water and Wastewater Management, Goods Movement at the Ports of LA and Long Beach, Solar Energy Production, and Oil Plugging and Abandonment sectors were identified to have existing occupations that align with oil extraction interests, skills, and pay and benefits.** For detailed occupational breakdowns and analysis please refer to Public Infrastructure Spending Job Opportunities Assessment in Appendix D and Worker Transition Memo in Appendix E.

## Worker Strategy and Action Recommendations

**Strategy W1:** Create a “Workers’ Advisory Council” to provide ongoing input, guidance, and feedback to the City and County as they implement the Strategy and Action recommendations and identify additional needs throughout the phase-out

### Actions

- a. Work with labor, oil extraction employers, and local nonprofit partners to develop a recruitment strategy for the Workers’ Advisory Council that ensure workers’ needs and opinions can be honestly shared, including the potential of representation by retired workers and/or their family members
- b. Determine clear authority of the Workers’ Advisory Council and develop a mission statement to clarify the purpose and responsibilities
- c. Provide stipends for Workers’ Advisory Council members to compensate for their time
- d. Ensure a mix of workers or worker representatives that is proportional to demographics of the transitioning oil extraction workforce, including diversity of union-represented and -unrepresented, occupation, age ranges, and entry-, mid-, and senior-level transitioning workers

**Strategy W2:** Develop ongoing oil extraction employer engagement to provide ongoing updates and collaborate on clear communication to workers about job impacts, timelines, and available transition support

### Actions

- a. Work with US Department of Labor and workforce development boards to develop clear criteria/guidelines for effective advance notification regarding potential worker layoffs to ensure this strat-

egy is implemented as intended and provides the best opportunities for affected workers to be eligible for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded transition support far in advance of job impacts

- b. When the City and County ordinances and amortization studies are finalized, develop a clear notification and announcement to communicate to oil extraction employers operators and current employees, including contract workers, organized labor, community organizations, and the public about the expected closure process, available transition support for workers, and guidelines for employee notification to be eligible for WIOA-funded support to motivate timely and accurate communication to workers
- c. Work closely with oil extraction employers to provide more than the WARN Act requirement 60 days notice of layoff to impacted workers to allow time to plan and prepare for career transitions and trigger worker eligibility of WIOA-funded support resources
- d. Explore City and County authority to require oil extraction employers to provide more than the WARN Act requirement of 60 days notice of layoff to impacted workers

**Strategy W3:** Work with existing training institutions and programs to connect dislocated oil extraction workers to jobs with high parity in pay and skill alignment, including but not limited to Solar and Other Renewable Energy Production, Transportation Electrification, Water and Wastewater Management, Oil Well Plugging and Abandonment, and Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach sectors

### **Actions**

- a. County and City jointly organize and facilitate collaboration between workforce development boards, employers (including public sector employers and city and county agencies), labor, and training providers
- b. For any apprenticeable occupation, collaborate with existing apprenticeship programs to develop skills assessments that identify and give credit to oil workers' transferable previous experience and allow them to test out of portions of apprenticeship programs where they already have competence, and facilitate their placement at the appropriate level in the relevant apprenticeship program
- c. For any non-apprenticed occupation, collaborate with employers and labor and training providers to identify existing or create new training programs within a high road industry partnership model that accelerates reemployment for oil workers. Training programs should take oil extraction workers' previous experience into account by providing them with access to shortened training and documentation of existing skills and experience. Conduct additional outreach and research as needed with high road employers to gather on-the-ground data about available/projected job openings in additional sectors that align with dislocated worker skill sets and compensation levels.
- d. Conduct worker outreach near-site and on-site both before and after layoff notifications to ensure widespread awareness of available support services

**Strategy W4:** Develop a pilot Transition Navigators program that provides specialized on-site assistance for oil extraction workers to easily and equitably access the retraining and reemployment programs developed in Strategy W3

**Actions**

- a. County and City jointly design the program in partnership with workforce development boards (WDB), employers and labor and training providers to provide specialized support that complements capacity of WDB Case Managers; ensure Transition Navigators are knowledgeable about available financial support for workers as well as the industries identified as having high skill and pay parity for transitioning workers and the unions in those industries
- b. Inform and enroll workers in the WIOA dislocated worker program and other financial, social, health and wellness support programs as developed by the Workers' Advisory Council in Strategy W7
- c. Provide tailored counseling and skill assessment to identify opportunities for career transition that align with oil worker skills and interests
- d. Identify and connect workers with retraining and reemployment programs based on skills and interest, including solar, electrified vehicles and transportation (EV), water treatment, and Port jobs as priority areas and other sectors as identified in further research and outreach

**Strategy W5:** Expand and create additional programs to encourage private employers and the County and City to hire dislocated oil extraction workers into existing occupations with high parity in skill alignment and pay

**Actions**

- a. Use the newly-developed Transition Navigators program (see Strategy W4) to pre-enroll workers into WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs so employers who hire transitioning oil workers can benefit from subsidized wages.
- b. Engage employers through partnership-building described in Strategy W3 to identify additional incentives for hiring dislocated oil workers, including financial incentives that build on WIOA programs or public relations incentives such as a recognition program. Prioritize engagement with employers who have at minimum, comparable wages, benefits, as well as equitable hiring practices
- c. Conduct outreach campaign to educate employers on the benefits of hiring dislocated oil workers, the incentives available through WIOA, and the value of creating 'priority hire' opportunities for dislocated oil workers

**Strategy W6:** Expand use of labor agreements (such as Project Labor Agreements for construction and collective bargaining agreements for non-construction) and labor standards to create more high-wage job opportunities to reemploy dislocated oil workers at the County and City, including City- and County-funded contracts, in sectors identified to have high parity in skill alignment but not yet parity in pay

**Actions**

- a. Prioritize hire of transitioning workers through new and existing County and City labor agreements for city and county public sector jobs and city and county contracted work
- b. Coordinate with economic and climate action agencies who are applying for federal and state climate and infrastructure grant programs to advocate for training and support programs for employers with labor standards, labor agreements, and priority hire of dislocated oil workers

**Strategy W7:** Work with the Workers' Advisory Council (as described in Strategy W1) to develop a menu of opt-in support options to address additional worker and family support needs—including housing, health and wellness, financial—that are not covered by WIOA

**Actions**

- a. Conduct additional worker interviews and surveys as needed to get more information on financial and other support needs to minimize economic, social, and personal impact of the transition
- b. Workers' Advisory Council uses information gather in Action A to develop recommendations for other worker supports

## Goal 2: Site Remediation and Reuse

**Goal 2:** Properly remediate and monitor impacts of closing oil well sites and integrate co-visioning and input from sovereign Native Nations on whose ancestral homelands Los Angeles is built—Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash—and frontline communities in community visioning, remediation and land use redevelopment planning processes

### Background

The Site Remediation and Reuse Subgroup determined that in order to create effective and meaningful strategies and actions, they needed to have an understanding of the current process for site remediation of oil wells and what the roles are of the various partners in the process. Native Nations have historically lacked sufficient or timely opportunities for meaningful, culturally appropriate engagement in the remediation and reuse processes. Additionally, the site remediation and reuse processes offer opportunities to explore Tribal land access and ownership of well sites that are ancestral homelands on which Los Angeles is built. The County has worked with local Tribal Nations and Native communities to more broadly understand and identify solutions to land access issues through several processes (see Indigenous Peoples Day 2020 report, and ongoing work led by LANAIC and the County’s Arts and Culture Department to implement recommendations from the Countywide Cultural Policy as directed by Board motions dated June 22, 2021 and July 13, 2021), which can inform the implementation of the actions below.

Based on a discussion of those processes, the following key findings were identified as opportunities for ensuring community engagement and proper remediation of oil well sites and informed the Site Remediation and Reuse Subgroup in developing necessary Strategy recommendations. The Task Force acknowledged that many of these sites are located on private property over which local government has limited authority, and the timing of site remediation and changing any overarching policies will not always align. These Subgroup findings are by no means exhaustive, but are based on meetings and cumulative one-on-one outreach with members of the Task Force which have informed the Site Remediation and Reuse Subgroup in developing necessary Strategy recommendations to ensure public and tribal engagement and accomplish the stated goal:

- 1. Traditional well-closure processes do not guarantee engagement with frontline communities and Tribal Nations.** There was found to be no comprehensive planning tool for ensuring community engagement in the future use of these numerous, geographically dispersed, and varied sites, which may have special community considerations or offer unique community-based infill opportunities, or a clear path for ensuring a higher level of remediation is conducted outside of the lease restoration process. It was identified that the lease restoration process is mandated after the conclusion of a lease where the well site must be restored to as near a natural state as possible; this process is overseen by CalGEM. Further, there was found to be no standardized process or set of planning regulation to ensure that minimum requirements (for both remediation and community engagement, for example) are applied equitably and/or consistently between neighborhoods.

Members of the Site Remediation and Reuse Subgroup suggested that activating a General Plan Amendment would more likely result in quality community and tribal engagement in the future devel-

opment of the oil sites. A General Plan Amendment could be initiated by both the City and County to consolidate policy affecting just transition from oil/gas uses, and then enacted through subsequent Community Plan amendments that would follow in order to align those policies and tailor them to local community needs. Planning Departments typically conduct broad community outreach when amending or approving these plans, so it would allow for increased community engagement. Planning Departments would also notify the Native Nations of the amendment, and would also require CEQA (The California Environmental Quality Act) compliance which includes Tribal consultation. Once the GPA is passed, the planning departments would work on making it consistent at the Community Plan level which might include site-by-site analysis. This was identified to be a great opportunity to outline additional policies (including, but not limited to, policies about additional assessments, community engagement, greenzone/brownfield designation, Tribal right-of-first-refusal, etc.). This would trigger Community Plan Amendments that may allow for site-by-site community visioning and new policies that can be added at the local level.

2. **Existing processes and opportunities for engagement in the site remediation and reuse process are not easily understood nor accessible to the public.** A concerted effort to work with local organizations to conduct outreach is crucial. The Subgroup determined that a community engagement and education program would increase understanding and awareness of the local remediation and reuse planning processes and increase the ability of community members to be actively involved.
3. **The current process for the plugging, abandonment, and lease restoration does not include a public notification system.** The current process was found to lack formal public notifications about plugging wells. CalGEM's WellSTAR system is public, but very few people knew that they could use it or how to use it. The public at large has little access to the information necessary to be prepared for the community engagement that will, or could, come later. CalGEM has the ability to notify local agencies about well closures. Local agencies could then make the process more transparent to the public through their own public notification process or through other means of communication. Encouraging coordination between local agencies and CalGEM was identified as a way to activate a public notification system and make the process more transparent to the public.
4. **There was concern that the existing remediation process is slow and lacks transparency.** It was found that existing California state code gives city and county officials the ability to use their regulatory authority to request that the state plug and abandon wells within their local jurisdiction, which could assist the City and County with ensuring that the existing standards and processes for complete and timely remediation are properly executed.

## Site Remediation Strategy and Action Recommendations

**Strategy S1:** City and County Planning Departments collaborate with the Just Transition Task Force to initiate General Plan Amendments that includes policies to guide remediation and redevelopment of former oil sites, triggering community plan updates that abide by State Tribal Consultation Laws and prioritize local and Tribal engagement on a site by site basis

### Actions

- a. City and County Planning Departments work with the Just Transition Task Force, local Native Nations, and communities with adjacent idle and active oil sites to develop specific policy proposals for City and County General Plan Amendments to accomplish the following key principles to guide remediation and redevelopment:
  - i. Prioritize and facilitate ongoing, iterative, and meaningful engagement with Native Nations
  - ii. Prioritize and facilitate ongoing, iterative, and meaningful engagement with frontline communities
  - iii. Encourage proper plugging, abandonment and remediation to standards that protect human and environmental health, preserve Tribal culturally important sites, and explore alternative minimally-invasive remediation technologies such as bioremediation<sup>6</sup> that would minimize potential impact on Native Nations and frontline communities
  - iv. Future land-use redevelopment goals should benefit and center around the needs of the impacted nearby communities and local Native Nations, focusing especially to keep communities in place and avoid displacement, and to facilitate Tribal access to previously inaccessible sites
  - v. Ensure that social and environmental justice is prioritized by focusing on BIPOC communities and creating outreach methods that are accessible to impacted communities, such as translating materials in multiple languages, providing information in a range of formats, and sharing communications with awareness of timing constraints

**Strategy S2:** Develop and execute a community engagement and education program to increase understanding and awareness of the existing local remediation and reuse planning processes and increase the ability of community members to be actively involved.

### Actions

- a. Conduct community outreach and engagement alongside and in addition to the General Plan Amendment process to inform program development and continue to identify local support and resource needs throughout the remediation and reuse process
- b. Maintain a current Tribal contact list from the California Native American Heritage Commission and in consultation with Native Nations to ensure they are contacted for community engagement and outreach programs
- c. Develop a community engagement and education program with educational materials accessible

<sup>6</sup> Bioremediation is a process that uses mainly microorganisms, plants, or microbial or plant enzymes to detoxify contaminants in the soil and other environments.

in multiple languages and clearly outline all the steps in the remediation and redevelopment processes (such as a flow chart or decision tree for implementation) including community expectations, timeline, and opportunities to engage

- d. Work with local organizations to develop a grants program that supports their capacity to engage with Tribal and local communities throughout the remediation and the reuse planning process, including the General Plan Amendment and Community Plan update process
- e. Require that any local groups who receive a grant to implement community education and outreach during the remediation and redevelopment planning process consult with Native Nations as early as possible in their program design process using the contact list provided in Strategy S2, Action B

**Strategy S3:** Ensure that the existing standards and processes for complete and timely remediation are properly executed and abide by all State and local laws, including State Tribal Consultation Laws

#### **Actions**

- a. City and County officials use their regulatory authority to request a list of idle wells within their jurisdiction and coordinate with CalGEM to assess and prioritize which wells need to be plugged and abandoned<sup>7</sup>.
- b. City and County officials coordinate with CalGEM to improve and expand capability of local agencies to interface effectively with the public on the status of each well plugging and abandonment process<sup>8</sup>.
- c. City and County officials work with CalGEM through its Construction Site Well Review process for assessment of future site development plans proposed at oil well sites, ensuring that this information is transparent to the public and in compliance with methane buffer zone safety requirements

**Strategy S4:** Work with local Native Nations to develop clear opportunities for engagement and consultation as early as possible in the process of remediation and reuse planning.

#### **Actions**

- a. Work with Native Nations to explore a first right of refusal process for the return of remediated land to Native Nations and explore possibility of County or City offering support when there isn't a land conservancy in place
- b. If it is agreed that Native Nations are not interested in the option of Strategy S4, Action A, then work with Native Nations to develop a General Plan Amendment or zoning strategy that creates opportunities for Tribal consultation before a redevelopment project has been identified on former oil sites.

<sup>7</sup> Plugged and Abandoned Oil Well—Any well that has been permanently sealed with a cement plug in compliance with current regulations. Note: Some legacy oil wells that were previously abandoned may need to be re-abandoned in order to comply with current regulations. CA Public Resources Code § 3208.

<sup>8</sup> The well abandonment process should be consistent with time frames of the City and County oil well ordinances, and including, at minimum, actions related to well cementing/capping, well site remediation and lease site restoration.

## Goal 3: Finance and Coordination

**Goal 3:** Leverage public and private funds to equitably and sustainably finance and coordinate the successful implementation of Strategy and Action recommendations, with ongoing accountability, transparency and advising from the Just Transition Task Force

### Background

The following are key findings and themes from Finance Subgroup and Task Force meetings and informed the Finance and Coordination Strategy and Action recommendations:

- 1. Need for Long Term Funding.** The timing of mandated oil site closures will depend on the amortization studies that will be conducted by the City and County of L.A. The current zoning codes default to 20 years. The results of the amortization studies will determine whether an operator has already or will recoup its investments (“amortization”) prior to the 20-year timeline, thus enabling future code amendments shortening the timeline in those instances. The studies may take up to three years and oil extraction sites are not expected to close until these amortization studies have concluded. Regardless of amortization findings, oil extraction companies may decide to close earlier on their own. A complete transition for oil extraction workers and communities is expected to take over a decade and there is a need for long-term financing to support this long-term work.
- 2. Need for Increased State and Federal Funding for Oil and Gas Transition.** Los Angeles is ahead of most of the country in thinking about a just transition for oil workers and communities and there was a determined need for expanded awareness at the State and Federal levels about the need for additional grant funding to support this work. Interested members of the Finance Subgroup and Task Force began this work by developing and submitting a letter to Governor Newsom, President pro Tempore Atkins, Speaker Rendon, Chair Skinner, Chair Ting, Chair Wieckowski, and Chair Bloom advocating and sharing recommendations for the Well-Capping Workforce Pilot for Displaced Oil and Gas Workers and Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Pilot Fund (Appendix H). These new programs were included in the State Budget and have been identified as a key source of funding for the Task Force’s recommendations. It is important to build close State and Federal partnerships as this work moves into implementation.
- 3. Need for Ongoing Collaboration and Coordination Between City and County.** The Task Force has been an important way for the County and City to work together on just transition issues and there needs to be ongoing mechanisms for joint collaboration and coordination to lead the implementation and funding of this Just Transition Strategy. While this Just Transition Strategy includes recommendations specific to each goal, it is important to remember that all of these recommendations are connected—the solutions for workers and communities need to be thought of together, not in isolation, which calls for strong coordination and collaboration that allows for comprehensive implementation.
- 4. Importance of the Task Force’s Role in Ongoing Advising, Accountability, Transparency.** It was found to be important to continue the Task Force to provide community-driven advising and accountability to the County and City in implementing and funding the Just Transition Strategy.

Additionally, Intelligent Partnerships' "Funding Memo" (Appendix F) provided detailed budget estimates and potential funding sources needed to implement the Worker Strategies. This memo informed the Worker and Finance Subgroups in developing the following recommendations and is a resource for future next steps.

## **Finance Strategy and Action Recommendations**

**Strategy F1:** Expand and continue joint County and City collaboration to implement the Strategy and Action recommendations, including coordinating and leading grant application development

### **Actions**

- a. Expand City/County joint Planning Team to include representatives from necessary departments to implement Worker and Site Remediation and Reuse Strategies and Actions, including but not limited to Planning, Workforce Development, and Public Health
- b. Expand grant writing capacity to support Just Transition Task Force in applying for funding opportunities quickly and effectively
- c. Meet weekly as a City/County joint Planning Team to coordinate implementation of Strategy and Action recommendations and lead grant applications
- d. Evaluate the feasibility of an independent entity to implement and coordinate just transition work, including being able to raise funds and apply for grants

**Strategy F2:** Continue the Just Transition Task Force in order to provide ongoing continuity, accountability, transparency, and advisory capacity to the County and City in implementation of the Strategy and Action recommendations

### **Actions**

- a. The continued Just Transition Task Force may meet as a full group quarterly to review, guide, and support progress in implementing Strategy and Action recommendations and use topic-based Subgroups and flexible Working Groups that may meet more frequently, as needed, to fine-tune, problem-solve and facilitate progress on implementation of Strategies and Actions.
- b. Expand the composition of Subgroups and Working Groups to be open to community members, topic area experts, and state and federal agency representatives to ensure robust and comprehensive insight and feedback on Strategy and Action implementation
- c. Develop a pitch deck to share with philanthropic partners to request funding for facilitation and coordination of the continued Just Transition Task Force and its Subgroups/Working Groups, including budget for contracted research assistance to continue collecting necessary information to implement Strategy and Action recommendations
- d. Use current and latest technology to provide communities, workers, and the City and County with the spatial data they need to make informed decisions, conduct additional research and analysis, and provide real-time monitoring as needed to implement Worker and Site Remediation Strategies and Actions

- e. City/County joint Planning Team coordinate with Just Transition Task Force to finalize annual timeline and milestones for implementation of Strategy and Action recommendations
- f. Coordinate outreach and communications with a designated public relations team to ensure transparency and consistency in sharing information with communities, workers, government officials, and the general public

**Strategy F3:** Develop a centralized web platform that can serve as a one stop shop over the lifespan of the phase-out and transition providing updates, resources for the general public, frontline communities and Native Nations, transitioning workers, oil extraction employers, and employers hiring transitioning workers

**Actions**

- a. County and City jointly design a simple landing page that can be linked to from existing agency websites, providing clear contact information and updates for initial phase of transition
- b. Expand the landing page over time to provide a more comprehensive platform to house relevant data and resources such as key dates of opportunities for engagement in site remediation and reuse processes, notification of the site by site progress and timelines, and job boards that provide listings with occupations identified to have high parity in pay and skill alignment for transitioning workers

**Strategy F4:** Identify and secure sustainable funding to resource Workers Strategies and Actions

**Actions**

- a. Develop a pitch deck to share with philanthropic partners to request funding for development and two years of coordination of Workers’ Advisory Council including stipends for members and contracted research assistance to continue collecting necessary information about worker needs
- b. Request State Labor and Workforce Development Agency support for applying to TEGL 12-19, change 1 (WIOA) to conduct initial planning with existing training programs to connect dislocated oil workers with jobs with high parity in pay and skill alignment, including but not limited to Solar Energy Production, Transportation Electrification, Water and Wastewater Management, Oil Plugging and Abandonment, and Ports of LA and Long Beach sectors. Explore using TEGL 12-19, change 1 to fund transition support programs before oil extraction workers have received official layoff notice to serve as bridge funding before being eligible to leverage WIOA Dislocated Worker Funding and Rapid Response
- c. Identify funding sources for the menu of support options developed by the Workers’ Council
- d. Coordinate partners and lead/support development of applications to State’s Well Capping Workforce Pilot Fund and the Dislocated Worker Pilot Fund to implement sector-based strategy to connect dislocated oil workers to jobs with parity in pay and skill alignment
- e. Coordinate City and County government affairs engagement with Governor’s Office and relevant state agencies to advocate for LA County and City grant applications to Well Capping Workforce Pilot Fund, Dislocated Worker Pilot Fund, and other programs as identified

**Strategy F5:** Identify and secure sustainable funding to resource Site Remediation and Reuse Strategies and Actions.

**Actions**

- a. County and City planning departments provide staff capacity and resources to conduct a General Plan Amendment process that develops policies to accomplish the guiding principles developed by the Just Transition Task Force
- b. Identify and secure funding to implement the grants and technical assistance program to local organizations and groups to effectively conduct community education and engagement in site remediation and reuse process
- c. Identify and secure funding for additional needs identified through ongoing outreach with frontline communities and Native Nations to ensure they can meaningfully engage throughout the remediation and reuse process

**Strategy F6:** Share LA County-City Just Transition Task Force lessons learned to inform design and implementation of State’s newly-funded Well Capping Workforce Pilot Fund and the Dislocated Worker Pilot Fund

**Actions**

- a. Coordinate City and County government affairs engagement to work with the State to increase accountability to impacted communities, Native Nations, and stakeholders in the management of the grant programs to ensure those closest to the problem have a voice in developing the solutions by recommending the State:
  - i. Create a diverse and representative advisory board under the Employment Development Department that is reflective of the wide range of affected stakeholder groups, Native Nations and communities to manage and guide the development of the Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Pilot Program and ensure the program is responsive to local needs
  - ii. Require grant applicants to have developed a just transition advisory board or Just Transition Task Force reflective of the diversity of affected stakeholder groups, Native Nations and frontline communities to ensure their work is grounded in communities and responsive to local needs
  - iii. Prioritize funding for proposals that include matching funds from employers, philanthropy or local governments
  - iv. Prioritize funding for applicants who support workers and work sites in communities that face disproportionately high environmental and climate burden
  - v. Prioritize funding for applicants who have a proven track record and detailed plan for outreach to dislocated and disadvantaged workers and impacted communities to ensure program development is responsive to their needs

**Strategy F8:** Advocate for a California Just Transition Fund, an expansion and continuation of the Dislocated Workers Fund Pilot, to support workers and communities in the oil extraction transition.

### **Actions**

- a. Coordinate City and County government affairs engagement with the Governor’s Office and relevant state agencies to advocate for a California Transition Fund in partnership with other transitioning oil and gas communities across the state
- b. Identify successful elements of state-level just transition funds in other states, and strategically collaborate with other states undergoing similar transitions
- c. Work directly with the legislative caucus from LA City and County and other oil and gas-impacted communities in the state to advocate for these strategies

**Strategy F9:** Advocate and monitor opportunities for expansion of federal programs that can support oil and gas community transition, and create new jobs in high growth sectors with high parity in pay and skill alignment for transitioning workers.

### **Actions**

- a. Coordinate City and County government affairs engagement with Department of Treasury and other oil and gas-impacted communities in the region to submit comments encouraging expansion of the definition of “Energy Community” to include oil and gas communities
- b. Coordinate City and County government affairs engagement with Department of Energy and other federal agencies to educate them on the Just Transition Task Force, these recommendations, future funding needs, and federal barriers such as Department of Labor definitions of eligibility for Rapid Response and Dislocated Worker funds that limit advance transition support that would prevent gaps in employment.
- c. Monitor Inflation Reduction Act program guidelines development, especially the Environmental Protection Agency allocation and the Methane Emissions Reduction Program, and identify opportunities for funding implementation of these recommendations
- d. Work directly with the legislative caucus from LA City and County and other oil and gas-impacted communities in the state and/or nationally to advocate for these strategies

## Next Steps

The process of closing and remediating oil well sites is expected to take over a decade of work and support. These recommendations are a starting point to buffering the potential social and economic impacts of these closures on workers and communities. The Task Force will continue meeting at least biannually to advise, guide, and support the County and City in the implementation of these recommendations. Using strategy-specific working groups and the existing Subgroups, Task Force members, experts, and community stakeholders will meet as needed to support the City and County in accomplishing the goals laid out in this report. Over the next year, the primary focus for the County, City, and Task Force will need to be on detailed planning for implementation of these strategies with the goal of securing funding to pilot implementation. After securing more funding, the County, City, and Task Force will need to ramp up for implementation of these strategies and actions at scale using lessons learned from pilot approaches. The sustained coordination between LA City and LA County, state and federal agencies, and local organizations will be needed to ensure that the strategies put forward by this Task Force remain responsive and relevant.

## Conclusion

These recommendations outline an important pathway and set of community-driven strategies for the County and City to take the next steps toward ensuring a just transition for workers and communities during the phase out of oil extraction. To the group's knowledge, this Just Transition Strategy is the first comprehensive, proactive just transition plan for oil extraction workers in the nation. These groundbreaking recommendations represent a strategy developed from common goals and values across diverse stakeholders, including representatives of labor, Tribal Nations, industry, environmental justice, workforce development experts, academic institutions, and state and local government entities. In a world that can feel so divided, this group modeled what's possible when a dedicated group of people takes the time to listen to different perspectives and move forward together on common goals. Through a year of meetings, conversations and learning across the unique individual perspectives of Task Force members, this group collectively agreed on the importance of ensuring that workers and communities are not negatively impacted by the phase out of oil extraction and came together across differences to create actionable steps to make that vision a reality in the City and County of Los Angeles. The hours of time Task Force members spent together over the past year not only led to this powerful set of recommendations but now to a group of individuals and organizations who can work together to provide ongoing accountability and guidance to the City and County in implementation in the years ahead. The work in many ways has just begun but this Task Force established a powerful foundation from which to build.