

Meeting Minutes – Draft
Governing Board of the Green Empowerment Zone (GEZ)

Supervisor John Gioia, Chair
Assemblymember Lori Wilson, Vice Chair
Chuck Leonard, Vice Chair

Friday, March 20, 2026

9:30 AM

**1025 Escobar
Room 110A/B/C
Martinez, CA 94553**

ZOOM:

<https://cccouny-us.zoom.us/j/88323737930>

(888) 278-0254

Conference Code: 841892

1. The public may attend this meeting in person at the above location. The public may also attend this meeting remotely via Zoom or call-in.
2. Agenda Items: Items may be taken out of order based on the business of the day and preference of the Governing Board.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call.

Chair John Gioia called the meeting to order.

2. Public comment on items not on agenda
3. Review and Approve the Meeting Records of the February 13, 2026, Meeting.

There is a quorum to review and approve the Meeting Record from February 13, 2026.

A motion was made to approve February 13, 2026, minutes. All were in favor.

4. Review and Approve the Recommendation to Appoint Shoshanna Wechsler to a Vacant Environmental Justice/Environment Seat on the Green Empowerment Zone Governing Board

A motion was made to approve Shoshanna Wechsler to the Vacant Environmental seat on the GEZ. A second was made. All were in favor.

The previously recommended applicant could not accept the role due to work requirements. Shoshanna gave their thanks to the Board.

5. Review and Approve Recommendations for Green Empowerment Zone Executive Committee Appointments

At the previous GEZ Governing Board meeting it was recommended that Governing Board members state their interest in being on the Executive Committee. The committee would be made up of:

- 3 Local Elected Officials*
- 1 Business Representative*
- 1 Labor Representative*
- 1 Environmental Justice/Community Representative*
- 1 Industry Representative*

Board members were asked to express their interest by February 27, 2026.

A discussion occurred focused on the goal of the executive committee and how it will not supersede the Governing Board concerning decision making going forward.

After considering the goal of broad stakeholder and geographic representation, the officers recommend the following individuals to be appointed to the Executive Committee:

- Elected Officials – Martinez Mayor Brianne Zorn; Richmond Vice-Mayor Doria Robinson; Benicia City Councilmember Kari Birdseye (The officers are recommending that the cities with refineries – Richmond, Benicia and Martinez – be prioritized for representation on the Executive Committee since they are facing the greatest challenges)***
- Business Representative – Mark Orcutt, President/CEO of East Bay Leadership Council*
- Labor Representative – Josh Anijar, Executive Director of Contra Costa Central Labor Council*
- Industry Representative - Tiffany Roberts – Phillips 66, Rodeo*
- Environmental Justice/Community Representative – William Goodwin, Pittsburg*

A motion was made to approve the recommended officers of the Executive Committee. A roll call was completed with Gary Link abstaining. The remaining Governing Board members were in agreement and moved forward with approving the nominations.

6. Receive Update from UC Labor Center on Facility, Site, and Infrastructure Research and Policy Discussions

UC Labor Center presented, Facility, Site, and Infrastructure: Research Update and Policy Discussions

Levers to Develop clean Energy Manufacturing

- *Electric Power*
- *Infrastructure*
- *Facility/Site Development*
- *Access to Capital*
- *Industrial Ecosystem*
- *Workforce*
- *Social Support*
- *Land Use*

Overview of Key Infrastructure Types

- *Power and Energy: Levels of power needed (amperage and watts) as well as amount of energy usage (electric and gas)*
- *Water: Amount and intensity of water use per unit produced. Needs for wastewater and sewage treatment*
- *Transportation: Needs around access to transportation infrastructure (road, rail, port, and air). Truck size needs (Class 7, 8, etc.).*
- *Land and Building: Dimensions of the building itself including height. Size of the overall site needed for laydown, parking, offsets, etc.*

There is a relative lack of high-powered sites currently available in the GEZ. USS Posco Steel and the Valero Refinery are examples of significant redevelopment opportunities. Data centers are continuing to be a huge force in the industrial market. These centers are bringing unprecedented power demands and capital for heavy power sites. New deals and policy approaches to data centers are surfacing rapidly.

Financing and Capital Access

Financing can present itself as grants, loans, tax credits, etc. This will incentivize companies to locate in the GEZ, fund necessary infrastructure, and provide capital to companies in growth stages.

Types of Approaches:

1. Funding to Incentivize locating in the GEZ: Changes or enhancements to current funding programs could benefit GEZ

- *Local Program: GEZ Loan Guarantee Program: Locally sourced funds to provide loan guarantee to stack on top of state provided loan guarantee for projects in the GEZ*

- *“Energy Opportunity” Communities: Define areas that are experiencing or at risk of experiencing impacts from energy transitions and could succeed in clean energy. Use that definition for set asides or prioritization of current state funding programs (ex. CAETFPA)*

2. Financial Hub/Entity/Intermediary: Build financial intermediary or network to distribute, leverage, and attract funds to advance strategies unique to the GEZ/clean energy manufacturing strategy

- *Potential Models: Steel Valley Authority – Appalachian Sustainable Finance Hub; Economic Development Corporations (EDCs); Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development*
- *Potential Financial Mechanisms/Strategies: Pre-Development Fund, Brownfield Redevelopment, Revolving Loan Fund, Financing Districts, Opportunity Zone Funds, Network with Clean Energy Financing Intermediaries*
- *Potential Fund Sources: Public grants/loans (state, federal), bonds, institutional investors (banks, pension, CRA Funds), impact and philanthropic capital (patient, first loss, recoverable grants), local revenue sources*

Manufacturing Ecosystem

Programs and policies to support clusters of firms in similar industries that can share resources, talent, and infrastructure. This includes firms that supply products and services to manufacturers.

Types of Approaches

1. Consider and include supplier firms in GEZ strategies: Rather than a specific policy, this should be considered across approaches

- *Benefits of Robust Local Supply Chains:*
 - *Increase employment opportunities and economic activity*
 - *Attracts manufacturers to the GEZ*
 - *Boosts manufacture productivity*
 - *Creates a workforce base that multiple firms can draw from*

2. Incubators, innovation campuses: Sector specific programs and sites can be key anchor institutions for clustered economies

Electric Power Rates and Infrastructure

This policy area focuses on the availability (infrastructure) and cost of electric power (rates) – a key input to advanced manufacturing processes

Types of Approaches

1. Ensure local level policies do not slow down power infrastructure build outs: Local level regulations on power infrastructure can increase “Time to power”

- *PG&E alerted us to two types of problematic regulations. Restrictions against pad mounted transformers and undergrounding. Also, excessive requirements*

when upgrading, placing, or replacing poles

2. Power focused Industrial Development” Partnerships between power providers, economic development entities, and developers can lower “time to power” by focusing resources to sites on the grid that are best fit for large loads

- *The GEZ and/or another economic development entity should partner with power providers and the real estate development community to identify places on the grid best suited for heavy power sites.*
- *New large loads on the grid can help bring down rates*

Ports

High quality infrastructure is key to economic development especially for industrial users. In this area, we looked at policy-related infrastructure outside of electric power.

Types of Approaches

1. Investing in and leveraging ports as an asset unique to the GEZ: How can new investments in ports be an important component of industrial development efforts in the region? The GEZ should engage in ongoing, region-wide efforts around shipbuilding and offshore wind.

Procurement

Purchasing of goods and services by public entities using public funds.

Types of Approaches

*1. **Align procurement to incentivize production of key products:** This could either mean prioritizing procurement of products already being produced in the GEZ or provide a market signal for new production.*

*2. **Embed standards to incentivize quality employment in the GEZ:***

Procurement rules can be written such that firms are incentivized to create jobs in the GEZ meeting specific quality standards.

Chair Gioia requested that the UC Labor Center create a document that explains what type of local regulations could create a burden for business and infrastructure expansion.

Interim Report and Recommendations are scheduled to be presented on September 18, 2026.

7. The next meeting is currently scheduled for Friday, May 15 at 9:30 a.m. at 1025 Escobar St, Martinez

8. Adjourn

The date for the next meeting of the Governing Board of the Green Empowerment Zone will be Friday, May 15, 2026.

Chair Gioia adjourned the meeting.