



# EAST BAY MEDITATION CENTER

Strategic Plan  
April 2018

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## Strategic Plan

### Introduction

The East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC) strategic plan is grounded in the learnings of a multi-month engagement of EBMC members via individual interviews, focus groups, community meetings, and conversations among organizational leaders, including teachers, founders, Leadership Sangha or LSangha (board) members and staff, practice group coordinators and members, Program Committee members, and other key volunteers. The process was guided by a team of expert strategic planning consultants and supported by a steering committee comprised of LSangha and staff members.

The strategic plan provides a ten-year roadmap for organizational development, with strategic actions focused on years 1 and 2, years 3 through 5, and years 6 through 10. The strategic plan is a living document intended to be revisited and changed over the years, and a steering committee comprised of LSangha and staff will work with the EBMC community to review the plan annually and update it as needed.

The strategic goals included in this plan are EBMC's response to an organizational assessment of the strengths and areas of potential growth within our Sangha, as well as an environmental scan of the opportunities and challenges in the larger Buddhist/mindfulness and social justice organizational ecosystem and the rapidly changing landscape of Oakland and the East Bay, California.

The ten-year period of this plan (2018 – 2028) will be a time of deepening the connection to and sense of responsibility for EBMC among Sangha members. This will also be a period in which EBMC will increasingly take a leadership role in the larger ecosystem of organizations that wish to learn from our best practices, as well as a time for us to explore evolving our programs, space and organizational structure to meet the needs of our current and future Sangha community.

## Language and Definitions

As an expression of our commitment to the Buddhist principle of Right Speech and to values of radical inclusivity and social justice, in this document we seek to challenge words and concepts used in dominant language that are harmful or oppressive and to promote the use of language that is inclusive, non-harming and reflective of our values.

In an effort to expand on and clarify what we mean by some of the concepts mentioned here, we have provided a glossary as an appendix to this document.

## Executive Summary

### Mission

The mission of the East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC) is to foster liberation, personal and interpersonal healing, social action, and inclusive community building.

### Background and History

We opened our doors in 2007 to provide a welcoming environment for people of color, members of the LGBTQI community, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented communities, and we welcome everyone seeking to end suffering and cultivate happiness. We offer mindfulness practices and teachings from Buddhist and other aligned wisdom traditions. Rooted in our commitment to diversity, we operate with transparent democratic governance, generosity-based economics, and environmental sustainability.

EBMC is intentionally located in downtown Oakland to provide refuge, leadership development, and meditation and mindfulness training to the diverse populations of the Bay Area. The financial barrier presented by registration fees at most meditation centers has prevented a large segment of the community from having access to Dharma teachings and the skills and tools provided by meditation, yoga, and related training. Our Gift Economics model, with no set registration fees, allows everyone access to our programs, regardless of socioeconomic class.

Because EBMC prioritizes serving people of color, members of the LGBTQI community, people living with disabilities, difference and chronic illnesses, and/or low-income people, we've been called the most diverse meditation center in the country. We provide various programs including weekly practice groups, daylong and weekend retreats, class series, yoga and other movement classes, and yearlong trainings.

## Purpose and Results

The strategic plan serves (at least) three purposes. The plan:

- offers a deep reflection on the **five core elements** of EBMC and highlights those values and attributes of the organization which make it a truly unique community of Dharma practitioners and a model for other organizations and formations
- outlines decisions we have collectively arrived at through the strategic planning process about the direction we will move as an organization in the next ten years and provides a roadmap for how we might reach our **goals**
- highlights **areas of exploration and potential growth** that we will begin to explore in the next phase of organizational planning.

**Five core elements:** The strategic planning process highlighted five interdependent core elements that are central to the EBMC ecosystem: Buddhism and mindfulness teaching programs, Gift Economics, radical inclusivity, shared leadership, and social justice and healing.

**Goals:** With a fresh perspective on our mission, a close examination of what we do well and areas of potential growth and clarity about the landscape in which we operate, the strategic plan sets forth the following **goals** to strengthen the five core elements of EBMC over the next two, five and ten years.

Buddhism and Mindfulness Teaching Programs: Create and implement a program roadmap and more robust feedback loops that strengthen the quality of existing programming while adding new offerings to meet the expressed needs of the community to increase the intersection of social justice, radical inclusivity and the Dharma

Gift Economics: Implement this alternative economic model to foster greater responsibility and belonging for EBMC members while also meeting the operating costs of the organization

Radical Inclusivity: Continue to grow into a meditation center that honors the inherent worth, humanity and dignity of *all* people and to cultivate a place of refuge where people of color; people with disabilities, differences and chronic illnesses; members of the LGBTQI community; people of all ages and family structures; and those of intersectional identities can reclaim their inherent value in the face of all forms of oppression

Shared Leadership: Everyone in the EBMC community will understand the purpose, principles and structures of shared leadership and can skillfully practice and engage in the wide range of EBMC shared leadership opportunities

Social Justice and Healing: EBMC will be a beacon for social justice by: creating practices that strengthen the connection between the sharing of Buddhist teachings, the development of Sangha, and the promotion of social justice causes that are an antidote to the current extractive and exploitative culture and economy; providing social justice activists refuge and community with others who are working toward a shared purpose; and offering the opportunity to practice with identity specific and cross-cultural groups

**Areas of Exploration and Potential Growth**: In addition, the strategic plan lays out a proposal for next steps to determine future direction for EBMC around physical space, programs, and organizational structure. As EBMC is increasingly asked to share our practices as a model of a diverse, radically inclusive and social justice focused meditation center, we need to explore ways we might provide such training and support in ways that are sustainable. Also, given the rapid gentrification of Oakland/the East Bay, there is growing interest in our community to find creative ways to secure a more sustainable space for the future.

## Organization of the Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is divided into three sections. The first section, “Vision and Mission,” provides important background and context for the work that EBMC has done for the last ten-plus years and describes the five core elements of the EBMC ecosystem. It articulates the vision, mission, and definitions of the core elements: Buddhism and mindfulness training programs, gift economics, radical inclusivity, shared leadership, and social justice and healing.

The second section, “Strengthening the Core Elements of EBMC,” offers strategic actions and measures of success (here called “Key Performance Indicators”) in relation to each of the five core elements.

The third section, “Evolving EBMC Space, Program and Structure” is an invitation to the organization to think critically and expansively about its future purpose as a multi-generational institution of teaching and training toward social justice and healing. It includes an analysis of key organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and a plan for an exploratory committee that will focus on the future of EBMC’s physical space, programming, and organizational structure.

The final section of the strategic plan is an Appendix that includes a glossary of important terms and documentation of findings from the strategic planning process.

The strategic plan is designed to mirror EBMC's understanding of the interdependence of all things. As such, sections can be read in any order that one sees fit, and they are created so that they connect to and inform each other. We also acknowledge that change is inevitable, and we understand this to be a living document that will grow and change over the next two, five and ten years. It is our sincere hope that you will see yourself reflected in this strategic plan.

## **Section I: Vision and Mission**

### **Vision Statement**

EBMC envisions a Beloved Community of social justice and healing, grounded in Buddhism and aligned wisdom traditions.

We commit to social justice, gift economics, shared leadership and radical inclusivity as expressions of Socially Engaged Buddhism in action.

We create a Beloved Community built on these values to actualize our mission each day as we grow into our vision for tomorrow.

### **Context**

People on this planet are now facing multiple compounding global crises. These include climate chaos, forced displacement, extreme inequalities, and an accelerating mass extinction that is said to be the fastest and most complete in history. Out of an awareness of the gravity of our collective circumstances and the threats they impose, EBMC is living into a new vision counter to the dominant worldviews that created these global crises: heteropatriarchy, racial capitalism, and myths of white supremacy. These myths support the accumulation of financial wealth and political influence for the few, at the expense of the many. Our vision acknowledges that a just transition from the current system to a regenerative one is necessary.

In alignment with EBMC's embrace of "both/and" thinking and the acknowledgment of multiple cultural realities and experiences, the EBMC Strategic Plan endeavors to reflect the ways in which EBMC embodies Buddhist teachings of both harmony and difference, or relative and absolute social and spiritual realms. Thich Nhat Hanh refers to this as the non-dualistic understanding of "the historical dimension" (or relative reality) and "the

ultimate dimension” (absolute reality) which results in compassionate behaviors to decrease social suffering and to increase awakening, in “the action dimension.”

Through the relative or historical dimension, we become fully aware of the many social forces that have shaped us. Some of these have allowed us to bloom, others have prevented our flourishing, and still others have violently warped and repressed us because of perceived differences. We want to be fully alive to and honor the specificity of our experiences as queer people, as multiracial and people of color, as folks across the gender spectrum, as people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, who come from a variety of generations and class backgrounds. EBMC was founded to provide safer, healing spaces in which people from communities targeted for oppression can gather to meditate, support one another spiritually, and grow more joyful and resilient. Refraining from the spiritual bypass of declaring too quickly that “we are all One,” EBMC acknowledges the deep value and significance of identity-based affinity and refuge practice groups, while simultaneously upholding the ideal of Beloved Community and pointing to the absolute dimension of interconnectivity. The concept of Beloved Community, associated with the U.S. Civil Rights era and the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., points us toward the goal of an inclusive and loving society in which peace and justice co-arise, supporting and illuminating one another, and affirming the interconnection of all life.

## **EBMC Ecosystem**

As in a healthy biological ecosystem, EBMC’s ability to thrive is rooted in interdependence, diversity, and connection to the larger environment. The five core elements of our ecosystem—Buddhism and mindfulness teaching programs, radical inclusivity, gift economics, shared leadership, and social justice and healing—are both distinct from one another and also completely interconnected.

The core elements of the EBMC ecosystem provide a path to achieve our collective purpose of social justice and healing grounded in Buddhism and aligned wisdom traditions. With Buddhist teachings at the root, we continuously cultivate a regenerative relationship to resources through a generosity-based gift economics approach, prioritize radical inclusivity, and develop and practice a transparent shared leadership model of governance to achieve social justice and healing. Each of the five core elements of EBMC’s ecosystem is in dynamic correlation with the others and functions synergistically in relation to the whole.

EBMC seeks to deepen and refine the core elements of our organizational ecosystem in such a way that each element promotes systems and practices that are life honoring,

cooperative, resilient, inclusive, accessible and regenerative while nurturing a sense of abundance, trust and connection.

### **Buddhism and Mindfulness Teaching Programs**

We take refuge in the three jewels of Buddhism – the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha—as well as other aligned wisdom traditions—to guide, hold, and inspire us on our journey towards greater healing and social justice.

We practice loving kindness, bold compassion, courageous joy, and equanimity with ourselves and with one another. These practices strengthen our resilience and our commitment to liberate all beings from suffering.

We reaffirm that, on both the personal and societal levels, spiritual practice is deeply interconnected with issues of healing, social justice, and transformation.

We support a worldview that honors life as sacred, counter to ideologies which center extraction, exploitation, and hierarchies of human value.

### **Gift Economics**

EBMC promotes a regenerative relationship to resources and operates from a generosity and solidarity-based approach to sustain our center with a collective sense of care and responsibility. We are grounded in principles of inclusivity and sustainability.

Everyone has an inherent capacity for generosity. Together we co-create a welcoming and thriving spiritual community based in the transformative values of abundance, trust, and connection rather than scarcity, fear and separation. Coming into new relationship with resources, including both land and capital, is an essential aspect of living into a new vision.

*“What we will do for love will always be far more powerful than what we will do for money. What we can do together will always be far greater than what we can do alone. And when we cultivate the heart of giftivism within ourselves, our companies and our communities, we begin to unleash our true prosperity. We begin to move from being a market economy to being part of a gift ecology.”* —Pavithra Mehta, “Giftivism: Reclaiming the Priceless”

### **Radical Inclusivity**

Radical inclusivity is a set of practices that together embody the inherent worth and dignity of each life and reaffirm a sense of belonging and interbeing so that we might individually and collectively reach our fullest potential.

We support our Sangha in taking and making refuge—naming and addressing needs, holding space, and caring for self and each other.

We interact from our most healed selves—surfacing tensions, valuing constructive feedback in support of the community, and cultivating resilience and deep listening.



EBMC endeavors to bring attention to, intentionally include, and celebrate multiple axes of difference—including and going beyond race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and ability—in the practice of Buddhism and aligned wisdom traditions. Through our practices of radical inclusivity we realize our inherent interconnectedness.

## **Shared Leadership**

*“Everything moves at the speed of trust.”* – Mervyn Marcano

We cultivate our shared leadership model by interweaving the unique contributions and insights of all members of our community.

We emphasize decentralized decision-making, shared accountability and collective stewardship.

Shared leadership is a fluid practice requiring continual reflection to be flexible and responsive in a changing environment.

## **Social Justice and Healing**

EBMC’s ecology facilitates personal and collective healing and transformation, which is needed to create a more just and equitable world. We acknowledge that a commitment to working toward justice and equity is necessary to create space for healing, and we seek to live into the values of radical inclusivity, regenerative relationship to resources, and shared leadership, grounded in the Dharma, that create the container for healing to occur.

EBMC’s social justice commitment is grounded in Socially Engaged Buddhist philosophy and practices, notions of Beloved Community developed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and restorative practices that are designed to directly address and repair harm when it arises.

Beloved Community emerges from awakening to our wholeness.

EBMC uproots systemic multi-generational exploitative harm by supporting life honoring, regenerative systems and spaces for the benefit of all beings.

## **Mission Statement**

Founded to provide a welcoming environment for people of color, members of the LGBTQI community, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented communities, the East Bay Meditation Center welcomes everyone seeking to end suffering and cultivate happiness. Our mission is to foster liberation, personal and interpersonal healing, social action, and inclusive community building. We offer mindfulness practices and teachings on wisdom and compassion from Buddhist and other spiritual traditions. Rooted in our commitment to diversity, we operate with transparent democratic governance, generosity-based economics, and environmental sustainability.

## Section II: Strengthening the Core Elements of EBMC

### Buddhism and Mindfulness Teaching Programs

#### Overview/Context:

EBMC designs inclusive and responsive experiences that address the needs of its community. All programming is reflective of the community's commitment to Buddhism and meditation, radical inclusivity, and social justice. Currently, the community is invited to visit EBMC's physical space to experience an array of classes, practice groups, long-term programs, and peer-led Deep Refuge groups.

**Goal:** Create and implement a program roadmap and more robust feedback loops that strengthen the quality of existing programming while adding new offerings to meet the expressed needs of the community to increase the intersection of social justice, radical inclusivity and the Dharma.

#### Key Performance Indicators:

- Percentage of workshop participants who rate programs and workshops satisfactory or above
- Percentage of program participants who return for multiple program offerings (both the same program and different programs)
- Meeting program roadmap targets each year for adding new or enhanced EBMC educational programs
- Meeting racial diversity and inclusion goals for each educational program to ensure the targeted percentage of program participants who identify as people of color/multiracial and who identify as white
- Development of more advanced evaluation tools to assess the short- and long-term impact of programs on individuals and the community
- Percentage of teachers who receive and integrate participant feedback in ways that are perceived as meaningful and impactful in improving future workshops
- Increased access to community members needing specific accommodations at all educational programs and Sanghas/practice groups (chemical sensitivity, wheelchair access, ASL)

## **Strategic Actions:**

Many EBMC members have shared that the community's practice groups are what first brought them to and through the front door. There is great potential to deepen the experience of the community's current menu of programs and expand them to be inclusive of additional modalities and key groups within the Sangha. The following proposed strategies explore possible avenues by which EBMC may proceed over the next ten years:

### **Years 1 and 2:**

- **Revisit and refine programming blueprint** that addresses and balances the request for select workshops, classes, and retreats (held in multiple languages and reflective of multiple cultural backgrounds), along with more support for current and potentially new Sanghas, Deep Refuge groups, and yearlong program(s)
- **Codify a process to continuously improve current programming and identify which programs need to be expanded.** Create a rubric for objectively determining the strength of EBMC programming (that takes into consideration the anonymous input of program participants), conduct a rigorous analysis of current programs against it, and share feedback with both program teachers and program planning staff
- **Develop a curriculum committee to develop a fee-for-service intensive training** on how to grow EBMC's model in communities beyond Oakland. This training will ultimately be delivered in a manner that is inspired and sanctioned by EBMC LSangha (board) and staff
- Identify and implement some early wins in making EBMC offerings (such as Dharma talks) more accessible through online **audio and/or video recordings**
- **Create a sustainable dana/Gift Economics program for EBMC teachers**
- **Develop the capacity for group leaders and teachers** to provide a level of consistency and greater implementation of EBMC's policies and guidelines among Sangha members

### Years 3 through 5:

- **Implement and revise the programming blueprint** that builds alignment between the requests for and availability of select workshops, classes, and retreats (held in multiple languages and reflective of multiple cultural backgrounds), along with more support for current and potentially new Sanghas, Deep Refuge groups, and yearlong program(s)
- Identify and implement some early wins in making EBMC offerings more accessible through **online audio and/or video recordings of Dharma talks**
- **Pilot an EBMC approved fee-for-service training** on the foundations of building an inclusive meditation center for communities seeking to replicate the EBMC's model in and beyond the California Bay Area
- **Continue to build out accessibility, evaluation, and other new elements** from years 1 and 2 into years 3 through 5

### Years 6 through 10:

- **Refine and continuously improve the programming blueprint**, leveraging opportunities to deepen existing program experiences and expanding to be inclusive of new program offerings where appropriate
- **Continue to evolve and grow the fee-for-service training** on the foundations of building an inclusive meditation center
- **Continue to build out accessibility, evaluation, and other new elements** from years 3 through 5 into years 6 through 10

## Gift Economics

### Overview/ Context:

Since the inception of EBMC there has been a focus on building a model of financial sustainability that is rooted in the Buddhist concept of dana, the practice of generous giving, and in social justice values of fairness and equity. To become truly sustainable as an organization, which means relying mostly on contributions from individuals within the community rather than on grants from foundations or major fundraising events, over the next few years we want to focus on a more robust implementation of our Gift Economics model. We are not substantially changing what we have been doing in terms of fundraising but becoming more explicit about certain aspects of it, to create more

transparency in the organization and encourage the Sangha to develop an increased sense of responsibility for giving.

**Definition of Terms:**

- Dana: Rooted in the Buddhist tradition of generous giving to support the teachers and the temple
- Gift Economics: Rooted in a social justice philosophy that there should be no barriers to the teachings for anyone, requiring that people give to the highest extent they can, based on their ability. This means people who have more give a larger percentage of their income to make it an equitable system for all.

In shifting from focusing on dana and generosity to talking explicitly about the “economics” in Gift Economics, we are seeking to be transparent about the costs of running the organization and our foundational social justice principles which require each person to give at the highest level according to their financial ability. While volunteer time and other non-financial contributions are highly valued and necessary for the success of the organization, there will be an explicit request for all members to engage in the financial support of the organization.

This is important for a few reasons: it helps move us away from a false sense of volunteering and donating money as mutually exclusive, where some people are the laborers and some people are the donors; it challenges us to move away from notions of “getting something for free,” which is rooted in a capitalist mentality; and it makes all of us collectively responsible for the financial health of the organization.

**Goal:** Implement this alternative economic model to foster greater responsibility and belonging for EBMC members while also meeting the operating costs of the organization.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

- Contributions from individuals (rather than from foundations or external events) will make up 80% of EBMC’s operating budget. This will include an increase in major donors (those who give \$200 or more in a one-time gift) and Friends of EBMC monthly donors
- Each practice group is educated about Gift Economics and seeks to reach specific contribution targets for each gathering while maintaining a commitment to radical inclusivity and a recognition of the value of every gift regardless of size

- 98% of teachers, practice group leaders and staff who give gift economics talks demonstrate core competency in conveying the core principles of Gift Economics (based on self-reporting and periodic feedback from Sangha members)
- Contributions increase as a result of a shift in how Gift Economics is discussed

### **Strategic Actions:**

Our approach to sustainability is a radical expression of our values as a community: the centrality of generosity as a practice; the importance of collective responsibility for the health of the Sangha; and the prioritization of principles of fairness and equity that support radical inclusivity. With greater education and transparency, we have the potential to create a truly sustainable model that relies almost exclusively on donations from individuals in the community and which can be a model for other organizations.

#### **Years 1 and 2:**

- **Reframe the concept of Gift Economics** so that its purpose becomes directly connected to the overall vision and values of EBMC through the voices of community members
- **Build and implement a tool or conceptual framework** to illustrate the function and purpose of Gift Economics as a core element in maintaining and growing the operations of EBMC. Provide definitive guidelines for what demonstrating generosity could look like by Sangha, practice groups and at the individual level
- **Grow the capacity of Sangha leaders and teachers** to consistently implement Gift Economics talks at practice groups and events that are compelling and result in increased donations
- **Strengthen the major donor and Friends of EBMC monthly donor programs** to increase contact and sustain relationships with existing donors and develop relationships with new donors
- **Create a program around Dharma and Money** to support a shift in the culture around our relationships to money and to create space for courageous conversations around giving, especially given our commitment to eliminating barriers to participation based on socio-economic status

### **Years 3 through 5:**

- Continue to **build out major and monthly donor programs and Gift Economics education tools and training** from years 1 through 2 into years 3 through 5
- If the Gift Economics model and ratio of individual donations to grants does not meet operating costs, **consider a plan to change the ratio and develop a fundraising approach** that includes a more robust grants program and plan for external sources of funding

### **Years 6 through 10:**

- Continue to **build out major and monthly donor programs and Gift Economics education tools and training** from years 3 through 5 into years 6 through 10

## **Radical Inclusivity**

### **Overview/ Context:**

Rooted in the concepts of relative and absolute reality, the concept of radical inclusivity is our way of being mindful to the history and contemporary reality of various forms of oppression that have led to the exclusion, oppression, and marginalization of peoples. Seeking to undo this history, we have institutionalized ways of ensuring that different voices are included as often as possible. We are also aware that, like all things, oppression also changes and that the methods we use to be inclusive also will need to change. This means that we should always be mindful of how to proceed and to ask if we are truly being inclusive.

The founding of EBMC was itself a commitment to radical inclusivity, as it was an effort to bring attention to, intentionally include, and celebrate multiple axes of difference—including and going beyond race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and ability—in the practice of Buddhism and aligned wisdom traditions. The founders of EBMC wanted to create a meditation space in the East Bay that was more accessible to people of Oakland and the East Bay both geographically and culturally.

The *practice* of radical inclusivity—beyond just an embrace of the theory—is complex to realize and requires consistent care and attention. EBMC acknowledges that there is a need for constant learning, self-examination, dialogue and shifts in programs and practices to fully practice radical inclusivity in all its forms.

**Goal:** Continue to grow into a meditation center that honors the inherent worth, humanity and dignity of *all* people and to cultivate a place of refuge where people of color; people with disabilities, differences and chronic illnesses; members of the LGBTQI community; people of all ages and family structures; and those of intersectional identities can reclaim their inherent value in the face of all forms of oppression.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

- Percentage in growth over time of members of color and other underrepresented communities in relation to overall growth to ensure that EBMC sustains diversity in all its forms
- Percentage of teachers who are people of color, members of the LGBTQI community, people with disabilities, differences and chronic illnesses, and members of other historically underrepresented communities
- Increasing investment in educational programs and practice groups that serve the needs of underrepresented groups including monolingual and intersectional identities
- Percentage of people who consistently feel that they belong and are welcomed when they come to EBMC
- Percentage of community members who identify as people of color who report feeling welcomed and authentically included both in POC-specific groups and in non-POC-specific programming and events
- Percentage of white people who engage in individual and collective action to create a radically inclusive culture at EBMC and the perceived quality and impact of these efforts from the point of view of people of color
- Introduction of child care for a significant number of practice groups and programs
- Percentage of families with children who take advantage of available child care

**Strategic Actions:**

EBMC stands to become a beacon of hope for groups of various forms across the Bay Area and beyond based on its approach and commitment to the concept of radical inclusivity. The focus with which the community practices the inclusion of all people—especially people who must deal with constant aggression from a society rooted in a history of white supremacy—will set a tone for what deep healing and genuine human connection will look like for years to come.



### **Years 1 and 2:**

- **Make EBMC's commitment to practicing radical inclusivity (and the definition of this term) more present on the **organization's website and other forms of outreach****
- **Facilitate a series of conversations among Sangha leaders** to explore and examine the mechanisms by which radical inclusivity can be increased in ways that feel supportive to all Sangha members. Engage members in refining the success metrics and building agreement on culturally authentic ways of gathering this feedback on an annual and ongoing basis
- **Create more explicit expectations and commitments of white members** regarding their role and responsibility in creating a radically inclusive community through expansion of white awakening groups and other strategies
- **Create guidelines for all groups** that share best practices from the People of Color, Maha Sangha, Middy, Every Body/Every Mind and Alphabet Sanghas
- **Develop a plan to provide child care** at some practice groups and events

### **Years 3 through 5:**

- **Invest in a process by which radical inclusivity is measured** across all program areas at EBMC through a people's assembly and/or member surveys to assess their experience both while at EBMC and outside the walls of EBMC. *(Base this on insights and feedback from community engagement in year 1 and 2)*

### **Years 6 through 10:**

- **Continue to use ongoing tools** to assess and improve quality of radical inclusivity at EBMC
- **Engage community in documenting strategies and practices** that have deepened radical inclusivity and agree on ways to share this with other groups as part of EBMC's longer range plans to shared tools and trainings outside of EBMC

## **Shared Leadership**

### **Overview/ Context:**

EBMC embraces the spirit of shared leadership, which we define as both a collaborative governance system based on mutual accountability and a culture of respect and

inclusion rooted in Dharmic society values. Our shared leadership approach stewards the mission and vision of the organization through role clarity, transparency, compassionate confrontation and timely attention to areas of tension.

The issues and opportunities addressed in this section include all the current and potential forms of shared leadership including but not limited to:

- LSangha (Board) and Staff Leadership
- Program Committee
- Core Teachers Group
- EBMC (all) Teachers Sangha
- Coordinating Committees for each weekly practice group
- Other teams of volunteers

The practice of shared leadership, which includes the training and leadership development of Sangha members, is not only crucial to the daily operation of EBMC but is also a key function of creating a socially just meditation community supported and led by its members. Because so many key positions at EBMC are held by highly-skilled volunteers, leadership development and mentoring has always been, and continues to be, a core value of the organization.

**Goal:** Everyone in the EBMC community will understand the purpose, principles and structures of shared leadership and can skillfully practice and engage in the wide range of EBMC shared leadership opportunities.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

- Percentage of shared leadership team members (LSangha, staff, practice group leaders, volunteers, etc.) who rate the functioning of the shared leadership model at a satisfactory level or above on an annual basis with suggestions to improve the functioning of the team and the model on a continuous basis
- Percentage of EBMC paid staff members who report satisfactory working conditions and adequate levels of support and who also have satisfactory or above performance reviews for their respective roles
- Percentage of EBMC community members who indicate on an annual survey that they have an understanding of and engagement with the shared leadership structures and opportunities at EBMC
- The degree to which the leadership roles required to support the operation of EBMC (e.g., LSangha, staff, practice group leaders, etc.) are continuously filled,

including the degree to which vacancies are filled from a pool of potential leaders who have been recruited and developed to take on potential leadership roles

- Percentage growth of participants from long term programs and committed practitioners who assume a range of leadership roles within the organization
- Percentage of those holding space at EBMC—including LSangha, staff, Program Committee, teachers, practice group coordinators, and volunteers—who report that they feel well trained in the following collaborative and shared leadership skills: group facilitation, communication skills including giving and receiving feedback, restorative practices including addressing conflict and harm as it arises, and team building.

### **Strategic Actions:**

EBMC's shared leadership model celebrates the benefits of embracing the concept of interdependence. Through collaboration, collegiality, community, cooperation, and communication, interdependence emerges and is nourished at EBMC. In years to come, the community has an opportunity to approach the effectiveness of its leadership model with a spirit of curiosity and commitment to critically evaluating its efficacy to achieve the community's stated goals.

#### **Years 1 and 2:**

- **Develop (or refine an existing) shared leadership skills matrix** to ensure there is comprehensive understanding of the roles necessary to lead EBMC's future operations
- **Cultivate a pathway for future leaders** to serve on EBMC's LSangha and in other leadership functions
- **Create more clarity about how people can become EBMC leaders**, especially amongst current, invested EBMC volunteers

#### **Years 3 through 5:**

- **Increase the volume and modes of communication** which focus on:
  - Helping EBMC members understand the roles and responsibilities of key people and groups so that members know how to navigate asking questions, offering support, and/or addressing challenges
  - Ensuring that EBMC members understand EBMC's operating values, norms and procedures to increase shared responsibility for enacting these when engaging with the EBMC community

- **Create connections between different Sanghas and practice groups within EBMC** to promote increased synergy and “cross-pollination” of ideas to build consistent practices across groups

**Years 6 through 10:**

- **Explore shifting from a nonprofit to a more cooperative model** and/other organizational structure for EBMC in alignment with the evolving vision for EBMC to become a model of and learning center for more collective ways of operating an organization

## Social Justice and Healing

**Overview/ Context:**

As a meditation center rooted in Buddhist and other wisdom traditions, EBMC acknowledges the inevitability of suffering and its root causes and seeks to act intentionally to end individual and collective suffering of ALL beings. Our mission is to foster liberation, personal and interpersonal healing, social action, and inclusive community building. We believe that all people have an equal right to a dignified existence that includes an excellent education, environmental safety, economic opportunity, comprehensive healthcare, and a political voice.

EBMC’s social justice commitment is grounded in Socially Engaged Buddhism and philosophy, notions of Beloved Community developed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and restorative practices that compassionately address harm as it arises, and we endeavor to honor the wide range of social justice aspirations of our diverse members.

**Goal:** Be a beacon for social justice by: creating practices that strengthen the connection between the sharing of Buddhist teachings, the development of Sangha, and the promotion of social justice causes that are an antidote to the current extractive and exploitative culture and economy; providing social justice activists refuge and community with others who are working toward a shared purpose; and offering the opportunity to practice with identity specific and cross-cultural groups.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

It is our belief that the majority of the Key Performance Indicators throughout the Strategic Plan are expressions of Social Justice in practice, in addition to the Key Performance Indicators listed below.

- The creation and ongoing use of a community engagement plan with clear protocols that helps the organization understand how and when EBMC engages in external-facing social justice issues in partnership with other organizations (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Women’s March, etc.)

- Qualitative evidence that EBMC Sangha members are spreading practices of mindfulness and mindful organizing in social justice movements of which they are a part
- Clear connection between individual and collective healing and social justice in our programming
- Percentage of social justice activists who see EBMC as a place of refuge to discuss ideas, receive feedback and support, build resilience, strengthen courage and offer a place for individual and collective healing

### **Strategic Actions:**

EBMC is uniquely positioned over the next decade to provide refuge and spiritual sanctuary to those who advance social justice for all. Additionally, the organization is poised to leverage the teachings of Buddhism, as well as our commitment to values of radical inclusivity, regenerative relationship to resources, and shared leadership, in order to inform and increase social, cultural, and political consciousness both within the Sangha and with communities outside of EBMC.

#### **Years 1 and 2:**

- **Create a community engagement plan** to make clear how and when EBMC engages in external-facing social justice issues in partnership with other organizations
- **Compile a repository of key readings and principles** through which members can increase their understanding of the intersections of Buddhist teachings, social justice activism in the 21st century, and the core elements of EBMC
- **Continue to offer the Practice in Transformative Action (PiTA) secular mindfulness training program for social justice activists**

#### **Years 3 through 5:**

- **Develop an annual calendar of social justice events**
- **Provide teaching opportunities for visiting teachers** within and outside the Buddhist tradition with an expertise in relevant social justice issues to educate the EBMC community on updates in the push for social justice

#### **Years 6 through 10:**

- **Continue to engage in external-facing social justice issues, partner with like-minded organizations, and support the training of social justice activists** from years 1 through 5 into years 6 through 10

## Section III: Evolving EBMC Space, Program and Structure

**Overview:** As EBMC celebrates more than a decade of operation and emerges as a model in the landscape of Buddhist meditation centers, there is a need to consider even more fully the ways in which EBMC might evolve space, program and structure over the next ten years. Some of this evolution may come in the form of shifts within the organization, while some may develop through a synergistic approach involving like-minded partner organizations.

This section specifically addresses the SWOT analysis based on input gathered during the strategic planning process.

The chart below highlights the primary Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) for EBMC. For a full list see Appendix B.

<b>Strengths (Internal)</b>	<b>Opportunities (External)</b>
<p>There is a deep sense of connection and appreciation for opportunity to practice and learn about Buddhism, mindfulness and other wisdom practices in a community that embraces and strives for radical inclusivity and social justice.</p>	<p>EBMC is becoming recognized and studied as a model for how to create radically inclusive and Socially Engaged Buddhist/ Mindfulness community. This is an asset to the organization that needs to be intentionally developed for mutual benefit of EBMC and the broader community of Buddhist/ mindfulness practitioners.</p>
<b>Weaknesses (Internal)</b>	<b>Threats (External)</b>
<p>While there is also deep appreciation for how EBMC anchors its operations in shared leadership and gift economics, there is still a great deal of work to be done to fully implement these practices to create a sustainable organization. There is also a lack of clarity among members about how important all EBMC elements are and how they fit together to fulfill EBMC’s mission.</p>	<p>Oakland is rapidly gentrifying and while taking a long-term lease or purchasing a building feels daunting, there is concern that EBMC will be priced/ pushed out of the current accessible site. There is a feeling of responsibility to current and future generations of EBMC members to ensure there is a sustainable space.</p>

There are potential opportunities to partner with other non-profits and/or community organizations around co-leasing and/or buying and building out sustainable space. There are a number of ways EBMC could become a learning center or institute with others for offering teachings/trainings in areas in which we are increasingly looked to as an expert: creating radically inclusive meditation centers, the intersection of social justice and the Dharma, and operating using a generosity-based model of sustainability through a Gift Economics approach. In terms of structure there are possibilities for considering a cooperative or other non-profit model as a way to evolve EBMC based on the direction the Center chooses to pursue in the future around programming and space

### **Strategic Actions:**

Establish an exploratory committee made up of representatives of a cross section of groups within the Sangha that will support the organization in considering future space, program, and structural needs.

#### **Years 1 and 2:**

- The exploratory committee will research and analyze how to:
  - Stabilize and evolve EBMC's space in Oakland/ East Bay to address issues of leasing vs. owning and to accommodate a range of additional space needs identified by teachers, group leaders and community members
  - Evolve programming to meet the expressed needs and interests of current members and to formalize an approach to teaching other groups or organizations about how to replicate or implement EBMC's model
  - Consider different organizational structures and partnerships with other organizations that could potentially support bullet points 1 and 2 above, including different financial and legal structures (e.g., cooperatives, 501(c)(3) educational arm, etc.) that would best help to achieve the goals described above

#### **Years 3 through 5:**

- Continue the work as indicated by the results of the exploratory committee efforts in years 1 and 2

#### **Years 6 through 10:**

- Continue the work as indicated by the results of the exploratory committee efforts in years 3 through 5

## Appendix A: Glossary

### **Aligned wisdom traditions:**

When EBMC opened its doors in 2007, the teachings and practices offered were primarily based in Theravada Buddhism, and these continue to be our foundations. Since 2007, our diverse group of teachers in addition have offered teachings and practices from both Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, and from various forms of spirituality, some indigenous and African-based, and from global faith traditions that are in alignment with EBMC's values, mission and vision.

### **Dana:**

The word *dana* is from the ancient Pali language, and has been understood in Asian Buddhism to mean gifts of money, food, clothing and medicine from laypersons to support the monastic Sangha and Buddhist temples and institutions. At EBMC, the meaning of *dana* has been expanded to include voluntary financial contributions from community members to form the basis of financial sustainability of both the center and its operating costs, as well as EBMC's teachers. *Dana* as an ennobling spiritual practice of joy and clarity is extensively praised in the Buddhist scriptures on generosity. (Go to [www.accesstoinsight](http://www.accesstoinsight) and do a search for the word "dana.") See also "*gift economics*."

### **Gift economics:**

Gift economics is a generosity- and social justice-based worldwide movement in which individuals and organizations are sustained through gifts of money, time, and material goods from their communities. As opposed to both barter and market-based systems of economics, gift economics emphasizes that generous giving, practiced with discernment and without attachment to outcome, creates conditions for joy and spiritual growth for the donor, and encouragement for the recipient to use gifts wisely to create a better world for all. In order for a gift economics system to work, people give to the highest extent they can. This means that people who have more give a larger percentage of their income to make it an equitable system for all. Gift economics is based on the assumption that we live in a world of abundance, and that freely sharing what we have in support of that which is good creates the conditions for awakening at personal, interpersonal, institutional, and societal levels.

### **Just transition:**

The transition from an extractive, exploitative economy to local, loving, living economies. This is the theory of change proposed by Movement Generation. See <https://movementgeneration.org/about/our-theory-of-change/>

### **People of color:**

In the U.S., there have been many terms used to describe people who have been discriminated against because of their skin color or perceived "biological" differences. In the United States, since the 1980s activists have used the term "people of color" to refer to peoples in the United States who have experienced racialization. Racialization is the



historical-sociological process by which a group of people with power have targeted and identified another group of people as a race. The history of the racialization of different peoples—of, for example, African Americans, Mexicans, Chinese, and all the many other peoples—has been quite different, even if there is some overlap. We use the term “people of color” to refer to those peoples who have been racialized in the United States, as a way to recognize and acknowledge the way entire communities, especially children, have internalized the pernicious, insidious effects of racism in the U.S., even as we acknowledge the very different experiences between and within various communities of color. As a way to combat racism, people of color have used the very category of race as a way to create safe spaces, to advocate for affirmative action by actively recruiting people of color, all as a way to undo the legacy of racialization.

For more, please see:

Michael Omi and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States*. Routledge, 2014, 3rd edition.

Ronald Takaki. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. Back Bay Book, 2008.

### **Racial capitalism:**

The late Cedric J. Robinson, professor emeritus of political science and Black Studies at UC Santa Barbara, developed the concept of “racial capitalism.” Born and raised in West Oakland, Prof. Robinson used the concept as a way to theorize the history of racialization and capitalist exploitation as interlocking forms of oppression and exploitation. He argued that the history of racial capitalism goes back to the 1500s when Europeans began to expand within and beyond Europe. Thus, the Irish, Jews, Roma, and Slavs were the first racialized peoples in Europe who were exploited as capitalism grew and expanded. With the expansion of race-based slavery in the Americas, racial capitalism shifted, and some of these previously racialized peoples became less so, some even becoming white, while others, such as enslaved people from Africa and the Native peoples of the Americas, became racialized as their bodies were used to feed global capitalism. Today, Black Lives Matter and other activists are increasingly calling for an end to racial capitalism. Historians and academics, too, are asking us to make the history of slavery and racial capitalism the standpoint from which to rethink our concepts of justice.

For more, please see:

Walter Johnson. “To Remake the World: Slavery, Racial Capitalism, and Justice.” *Boston Review*, <https://bostonreview.net/forum/walter-johnson-to-remake-the-world>

Robin Kelley. “What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism?” 12 January 2017: <http://bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-robinson-mean-racial-capitalism>

Special Forum. “Race Capitalism Justice.” *Boston Review*, 12 January 2017.

<https://bostonreview.net/forum-i>

### **Radical inclusivity:**

Rooted in the concepts of relative and absolute reality, the concept of radical inclusivity is our way of being mindful of the history and contemporary reality of various forms of oppression that have led to the exclusion, oppression, and marginalization of peoples. Seeking to undo this history, we have institutionalized ways of ensuring that different voices are included as often as possible. We are also aware that, like all things, oppression also changes and that the methods we use to be inclusive also will need to change. This means that we should always be mindful of how to proceed and to ask if we are truly being inclusive.

**Relative and absolute reality:**

In alignment with EBMC's embracing of "both/and" thinking and the acknowledgment of multiple cultural realities and experiences, the EBMC strategic plan endeavors to reflect the ways in which EBMC embodies Buddhist teachings of both harmony and difference, or relative and absolute social and spiritual realms. Thich Nhat Hanh refers to this as the nondualistic understanding of "the historical dimension" (or relative reality) and "the ultimate dimension" (the absolute reality) which results in compassionate behaviors to decrease social suffering and to increase awakening, in "the action dimension." (See <https://www.lionsroar.com/buddhahood-in-three-dimensions/>).

Through the relative or historical dimension, we become fully aware of the many social forces that have shaped us. Some of these have allowed us to bloom, others have prevented our flourishing, and still others have violently warped and repressed us because of perceived differences. We want to be fully alive to and honor the specificity of our experiences: as queer people, as multiracial and people of color, as gender non-conforming folks, as people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, and as people who come from a variety of class backgrounds. EBMC was founded to provide safer, healing spaces in which people from communities targeted for oppression can gather to meditate, support one another spiritually, and grow more joyful and resilient. Refraining from the spiritual bypass of declaring too quickly that "we are all One," EBMC acknowledges the deep value and significance of identity-based affinity and refuge practice groups, while simultaneously upholding the ideal of Beloved Community which points to the absolute dimension of interconnectivity. The concept of Beloved Community, associated with the U.S. Civil Rights era and the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., points us toward the goal of an inclusive and loving society in which peace and justice co-arise, supporting and illuminating one another, and affirming the interconnection of all life.

**Restorative Justice, restorative practices:**

In Restorative Justice, the main players are those who harm and those who are harmed, the harmed person being central. The community facilitates the process. The focus is on the future in an effort to restore balance and harmony. In dialogue with the community, the person who harmed takes action to repair the harm. In Restorative Practices for Dharma Practitioners at EBMC, the main players are the harm itself and the awareness that harm is arising. The role of those involved is to be present with the harm and to cultivate interdependent relationships. The values held are the Four Noble Truths, the Brahmaviharas, and the Buddhist Precepts. Focus is on the present as the

Sangha recognizes and takes action towards collective healing, recognizing and respecting that we've all harmed and have been harmed. (*From "Restorative Practices for Dharma Practitioners Sangha at EBMC."*)

**Socially Engaged Buddhism:**

Engaged Buddhism refers to Buddhists who are seeking ways to apply the insights from meditation practice and dharma teachings to situations of social, political, environmental, and economic suffering and injustice (Wikipedia). Well-known proponents of Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB) include the Vietnamese teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, Sulak Sivaraksa, Maha Ghosananda, Joanna Macy, Bhikkhu Bodhi, and Robert Aitken, Roshi. EBMC has close connections to SEB organizations like the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, as well as to the East Point Peace Academy (Kingian Nonviolence training), and many of EBMC's teachers, leaders, and community members are engaged in transformative social change work.

## Appendix B: SWOT Analysis

### SWOT Analysis

The chart below highlights the primary Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) for EBMC.

<b>Strengths (Internal)</b>	<b>Opportunities (External)</b>
<p>There is a deep sense of connection and appreciation for opportunity to practice and learn about Buddhism, mindfulness and other wisdom practices in a community that embraces and strives for radical inclusivity and social justice.</p>	<p>EBMC is becoming recognized and studied as a model for how to create radically inclusive and socially engaged Buddhist/ Mindfulness community. This is an asset to the organization that needs to be intentionally developed for mutual benefit of EBMC and the broader community of Buddhist/ Mindfulness Practitioners.</p>
<b>Weaknesses (Internal)</b>	<b>Threats (External)</b>
<p>While there is also deep appreciation for how EBMC anchors its operations in shared leadership and gift economics there is still a great deal of work to be done to fully implement these practices to create a sustainable model.</p>	<p>Oakland is rapidly gentrifying and while taking a long-term lease or purchasing a building feels daunting, there is concern that EBMC will be priced/ pushed out of the current accessible site. There is a feeling of responsibility to current and future generations of EBMC members to ensure there is a sustainable space.</p>

### Strengths (Internal)

- There is a deep sense of connection and appreciation for opportunity to practice and learn about Buddhism, mindfulness and other wisdom practices in a community that embraces and strives for radical inclusivity and social justice.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Many people value express appreciation for the fact that “radical inclusivity” is at the heart of EBMC’s history and mission. There is an understanding that radical inclusivity reflects both spaces that are exclusive for particular groups and spaces where multi-cultural agreements guide interactions and relationship building across multiple identities.
- There is a talented and diverse group of teachers at EBMC, with a wide variety of beginner classes and specialized workshops that appeal to a range of interests, practices and issues that are important to the community. In particular, people

appreciate classes and workshops that focus on the intersection of Buddhism and Social Justice.

### **Weaknesses/ Areas of Growth (Internal)**

- While there is also deep appreciation for how EBMC anchors its operations in shared leadership and gift economics, there is still a great deal of work to be done to fully implement these practices to create a sustainable model.
- There needs to be more clarity and accountability for addressing deeper issues around radical inclusion. Some people of color do not feel welcome in other groups and/or find that for them the primary or only benefit of EBMC is the POC Sangha. There is a desire to see more connectedness between the different Sanghas and more formal ways of creating a shared accountability model around radical inclusion to promote deeper conversation about how well EBMC is living into this value.
- Staff, board and volunteers are extremely dedicated and resourceful in running EBMC; however, there are concerns about overwhelm and burn out, as well as a shallow pool of future leaders.
- There is not a formal way of documenting EBMC's history and lessons learned in a way that can help train and support new members and/or share this knowledge with others outside EBMC.

### **Opportunities (External)**

- EBMC is becoming recognized and studied as a model for how to create radically inclusive and socially engaged Buddhist/ mindfulness communities. There are creative ideas and questions about how to intentionally develop materials and/or fee-for-service trainings for the mutual benefit of EBMC and the broader community of Buddhist/ mindfulness practitioners.
- There are partnership opportunities with similar organizations that would help EBMC explore possibilities around new and expanded space and programs.
- EBMC members would like to connect EBMC community and practices to social justice causes and to community groups to help extend the reach and impact of EBMC.

### **Threats/ External**

- Oakland is rapidly gentrifying, and while taking a long-term lease or purchasing a building feels daunting, there is concern that EBMC will be priced/ pushed out of the current accessible site. There is a feeling of responsibility to current and future generations of EBMC members to ensure there is a sustainable space.
- Knowledge sharing about EBMC's model is starting to take place informally, which means that there may be a lost opportunity for EBMC to benefit from a more formalized approach to building capacity outside of EBMC to understand and replicate the model.
- Many of the people who benefit from EBMC are suffering more harm, trauma and stress from the impacts of the current political climate.

## Appendix C: Strategic Considerations and Dilemmas

### Buddhist and Mindfulness Teaching Programs:

- There are more requests for new and enhanced educational programs and ongoing groups than EBMC can support with current staffing and funding levels.
- Much of the programming currently offered at EBMC's physical space has adequate room for all who choose to participate. However, the People of Color (POC) Sangha and some workshops are so robustly attended that the space is either very tight and/or cannot accommodate all who would like to participate.
- The current space also presents challenges in offering a range of options like child care, movement and outdoor space that have been requested by members throughout the strategic planning process.
- There is ongoing discussion and some tension, as it relates to identity politics, about how to both consciously enroll white community members (seeking diverse experiences) into programs while also honoring the request of members of color seeking refuge from whiteness in all of its forms.
- The number of long-term programs is sparse, as is the opportunity to participate in EBMC-led multi-day retreats, which means EBMC members must seek these courses at centers which are not as inclusive or welcoming or focused on social justice.
- The process of requesting feedback from community members on the quality and impact of programming is not always well understood by participants and/or used in a consistent cycle of learning and improvement with teachers and/or to address current and potential programming needs and opportunities.
- How do we honor the dana/Gift Economics model and meet the need to ensure more stable and sustainable pay for teachers?
- While EBMC explicitly states that "we offer meditation training and spiritual teachings from Buddhist and other wisdom traditions, with attention to social action, multiculturalism, and the diverse populations of the East Bay and beyond," some members and/or prospective members are not clear what "other

wisdom traditions” are and are not offered at EBMC. There also needs to be a continued affirmation that the meditation practices taught and embraced at EBMC are grounded in the Buddhadharma instead of being derived from pop culture or mass-market forms of mindfulness or meditation.

### **Gift Economics:**

- Contributions are decreasing at practice groups and the number of Friends of EBMC (monthly donors) has dropped even as attendance has increased.
- More direct and emphatic guidelines and requests for increasing contributions promoted when using a Gift Economics framework may threaten the value of radical inclusivity and decrease a sense of belonging.
- The high cost of living in the Bay Area makes it harder for people to be as generous as they may want to be and the range of salaries of EBMC members may not be high enough overall to support full operating costs of EBMC even if giving increases.
- We need a deeper analysis of data about the Sangha to know how much more people who are currently engaged at EBMC can give.
- A shift in the ratio of Gift Economics vs. fundraising could help EBMC meet its operating budget but could weaken the overall model, which requires all elements to be fully functional.
- In terms of Gift Economics, we need greater clarity about the relationship between asking for the center and asking for financial contributions for teachers to make sure that teachers feel adequately supported by the Sangha.

### **Radical Inclusivity:**

- Radical inclusivity is a living process, one where we focus less on fixed numbers, a condition, or a state and focus more on process, self-reflection, and openness to rethinking our assumptions.
- How might EBMC fully embrace and meet the multiple, diverse needs of historically underrepresented communities, especially those of communities of color, at a steady pace that honors the growth and diversity of the community?

- How does EBMC create opportunity for more people of color and diverse communities to grow as teachers “in-house” in a way that reflects the principles of the community?
- How can EBMC cross-pollinate practices and learnings from each of our many diverse communities in order to strengthen inclusive practices and support our intersectional identities?
- There is a healthy desire by many in the community to find ways for people of different identities to commingle and share in experiences around spiritual practice. How might we do that in a way that also respects those who choose to practice solely in identity-specific programs or practices?
- What is the role of white people and other socially-privileged communities (e.g., heterosexual, upper- and middle-class, temporarily able bodied people) in actively contributing to creating the environment and conditions for a radically inclusive center? In addition to participating in white awakening classes and other similar programs, how can white and other socially-privileged members evolve even further individually and collectively to create a radically inclusive meditation center?
- Because our experiences and who we are are so intersectional, how might EBMC offer opportunities for different intersectional communities to be represented at EBMC? In other words, how might a queer person of color connect to the practice in a way where they don’t have to choose between attending the Alphabet Sangha or the People of Color (POC) Sangha?
- How might we create space or additional accommodations for monolingual non-English speakers and people who are deaf to participate?

### **Shared Leadership:**

- The broader EBMC community does not understand and/or know how to access and/or support EBMC’s shared leadership model, especially around key roles and responsibilities within the leadership team.
- The Leadership Sangha (board) and Staff shared leadership model is in a process of evolution and needs to be continually revisited to ensure it is matching the development needs of EBMC and to ensure that is aligned with EBMC’s mission.



- There is a need to better articulate to community members the spiritual and political grounding for shared leadership and to describe the variety of ways people can participate in shared leadership at all levels of the EBMC organization.
- There need to be more ways to grow mutual accountability structures and increase coordination and connection of shared leadership with practice groups and other EBMC groups.
- There is a need for a clear process for cultivating future leaders for the various leadership opportunities. For example, what might be a path from volunteering to help set up for a weekly practice group to becoming a coordinating committee member of that group to eventually becoming a Leadership Sangha (board of directors) member?

### **Social Justice and Healing:**

- There are a number of other organizations already engaged in social justice work, including the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. How can we partner with them and other relevant organizations?
- How do we engage in community dialogue to decolonize our vocabulary/ language and promote more restorative and empowering language to express our social justice vision and values? For instance, some but not all people prefer “people of the global majority” vs. “people of color” or “marginalized communities.”