



Rashi Kesarwani
Councilmember District 1

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA MATERIAL for Supplemental Packet 1

Meeting Date: April 26, 2022

Item Number: 25

Item Description: Budget Referral: Expand Scope of the Downtown Streets

Submitted by: Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani

A minor edit was made to reflect that the Downtown Streets Team services the west Berkeley area (University and San Pablo Avenues) two times per week, instead of three. Councilmember Terry Taplin was also added as a co-sponsor to this item.



Rashi Kesarwani
Councilmember District 1

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 26, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani (Author), Councilmember Terry Taplin (Co-Author)

SUBJECT: Budget Referral: Expand Scope of the Downtown Streets Team to Include Services within the Gilman District

RECOMMENDATION

Referral to the City Manager and the FY 2022-23 budget process \$50,000 annually to expand the scope of services for the Downtown Streets Team to address the need for enhanced services around commercial and industrial areas in the Gilman District twice weekly.

The Gilman District is defined as the commercial area west of San Pablo Avenue to Eastshore Highway and, on the south, Gilman Street north to the Albany border.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Gilman District Experiences High Levels of Trash and Debris. The Gilman District—west of San Pablo Avenue to Eastshore Highway and, on the south, Gilman Street north to the Albany border—has long been the heart of the City’s manufacturing and industrial sectors, while more recently becoming home to wineries, breweries, artisanal food production facilities, non-profits, and maker spaces. The area experiences the following challenges related to trash and debris:

- Build up of trash and debris on sidewalks and streets that obstruct access
- High volume of rodents
- Illegal dumping

The Downtown Streets Team is Deployed to Numerous Other Berkeley Business Districts. The City currently has a contract with the Downtown Streets Team (DST)¹ to do a variety of manual beautification services, including removal of leaves and trash from sidewalks and gutters, graffiti abatement, and poster and

¹ See [Downtown Streets Team](#) webpage

advertising removal from commercial areas. These services complement Public Works' baseline services that use mechanical street sweepers and pressure washing, and removal of illegally dumped materials from the public right-of-way. Both types of services help keep an area clean and well maintained. The DST deploys teams of local, low-income and homeless residents to service seven different commercial and high-use areas throughout the City. These areas include:

- Downtown Berkeley, serviced three times per week
- Telegraph Avenue, serviced three times per week
- West Berkeley (University and San Pablo area), serviced ~~three times~~ two times per week
- South Berkeley, serviced two times per week
- North Shattuck, serviced one time per week
- Elmwood, serviced one time per week
- Solano Avenue, soon to be serviced two times per week

All the teams work cooperatively with community agencies to ensure team members receive training for the jobs they perform. The goal is to promote self-sufficiency through job training and build effective work habits as well as to provide assistance in securing permanent housing.

The Gilman District Deserves Similar Investment as Other Business Districts.

The Downtown Streets Team provides a low-barrier volunteer work experience model where unhoused participants receive case management, employment services and non-cash basic needs support in exchange for beautifying their community. This investment in keeping the district clean can have an outsized impact as locations that are well maintained tend to invite greater public use which helps to revitalize an area, while poorly maintained and degraded areas invite undesirable behaviors and elements. Regular attention to litter and debris removal and graffiti abatement will create a more welcoming environment for customers, workers, and visitors.

BACKGROUND

The Downtown Streets Team has provided support to the City of Berkeley's Clean City program since August of 2018 (see attachment). The Clean City Program, developed in 1989, aims to provide clean, debris-free public rights of way within the City by assisting with neighborhood clean-ups, street sweeping, and removal of illegally dumped materials. Over the years the program expanded to include designated hand sweeping zones throughout the City; the work of the DST fulfills this objective as teams deployed to targeted areas hand sweep sidewalks and gutters, complementing the efforts of our Public Works Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

\$50,000 annually for Downtown Streets Team services in the Gilman District two-times per week.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Keeping our business districts clean and healthy is one of the City's strategic priorities "to provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities."² The Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit (MRP) also requires the City to reduce the trash flowing into the Bay and local waterway via our storm drainage system. Hand sweeping sidewalks and gutters helps remove built up leaves and debris, which prevents litter from entering the system. Codornices Creek, home to steelhead trout, a threatened species, borders the city along the length of the Gilman District and has been undergoing a process of restoration since the 1990s.

CONTACT PERSON

Rashi Kesarwani, Council District 1

(510) 981-7110

Attachments:

Downtown Streets Team 2018 Contract

² See the City's [Strategic Plan](#) webpage