



Office of the City Manager

ACTION CALENDAR

April 26, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Liam Garland, Director, Department of Public Works

Subject: Berkeley Strategic Transportation Plan Update and Grant Application Opportunities

RECOMMENDATION

Receive a presentation on the Berkeley Strategic Transportation (BeST) Plan and provide comments to staff on prioritization of projects for preparation of grant funding applications. Staff will return to Council May 31, 2022 for adoption of an amended BeST Plan with a list of grant funding applications to be submitted to the Alameda County Transportation Commission by the end of June.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation has no fiscal impacts.

SUMMARY

The Berkeley Strategic Transportation (BeST) Plan was approved by City Council in 2016 in order to establish a framework for prioritizing the funding and completion of transportation projects throughout the City over the following thirty years. The BeST Plan includes an investment strategy to guide how the City spends transportation dollars from local, regional, State, and federal sources. Projects included in the BeST Plan are pooled from the City's already-adopted plans. Addenda to the BeST Plan were approved by Council in September 2018 and January 2021 in order to report on progress in funding and completing the projects on the Five-Year Priority Project list from the BeST Plan. Now that it has been more than five years since the original BeST Plan adoption, the Public Works Department will be developing a comprehensive update to the BeST Plan throughout calendar year 2022, which is anticipated to be brought to Council for adoption in 2023. Public Works will also be proposing a nearer term BeST Plan addendum to City Council in May 2022 in order to update the five-year priority project list and identify transportation capital grant applications to submit to the respective funding agencies in June 2022.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

In the five years since the BeST Plan¹ was adopted, the City has made substantial progress in acquiring funding for the Five-Year Priority Projects. Figure 1 shows that, of

¹ <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Transportation/Strategic-Plan/>

the twelve individually listed projects from the BeST Plan Five-Year Priority list, eight have been fully funded, with five of these completed, one under construction, and two others in the preliminary engineering phase. In addition, Table 1 shows that several projects grouped as High-Priority Bicycle Plan, Pedestrian Plan, and Safe Routes to School projects have been completed or at least funded. These include the completion of the Sacramento Street Complete Streets project, safety treatments at bike boulevard crossings, and four Safe Routes to School projects.

Upcoming Transportation Grant Funding Opportunities

For potentially funding the remaining BeST Plan priority projects, upcoming transportation capital grant funding opportunities include the State Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 6, the State Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) Program, the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) Fiscal Year 24 Comprehensive Investment Plan (FY24 CIP), and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) One Bay Area Grant Cycle 3 (OBAG3). Applications under all of these programs are due in June 2022.

Remaining Unfunded BeST Plan Five-Year Priority Projects

The remaining unfunded stand-alone projects from the BeST Plan Five-Year Priority Projects list are not anticipated to be competitive for these upcoming capital grant funding opportunities. These projects are as follows: the Gilman Grade Separation, Center Street Plaza, Downtown Transit Center, and Signal Interconnect project. All of the above listed programs prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety and access projects, transit corridor projects, and linkages to transit-oriented development. The Gilman Grade Separation is estimated to cost \$66 million, an amount that is too high to be competitive without meeting the above-described priorities. The Center Street Plaza design and construction are estimated to cost \$20 million, an amount that is too high to be competitive given that this project would only extend along one block. The Downtown Transit Center would not be competitive given that no conceptual plan has yet been developed because it has not been as high a priority for AC Transit as transit corridor improvements prioritized through the AC Transit Major Corridors Study² (2016). The Transit Signal Priority portion of the Signal Interconnect project could be competitive for grant funding, but this is a small part of the project cost compared to the Signal Interconnect, and AC Transit has already acquired funding for the highest priority transit signal priority upgrades on Telegraph and San Pablo Avenues.

Adeline Corridor Specific Plan Projects

With the list of BeST Plan Five-Year Priority project dwindling, it is timely for the City to consider adding new projects to this list. A major City plan that has been adopted since the BeST Plan approval is the Adeline Corridor Specific Plan³ (December 2020). One project from this plan has already received grant funding through the Alameda CTC Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) CIP for preliminary engineering: the Adeline Corridor Project covering the segment of Adeline between Martin Luther King Jr. Way (MLK) and the

² <http://www.actransit.org/major-corridors-study/>

³ <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/AdelineCorridor/>

Oakland border. This project grant application was approved by Council as part of the BeST Plan Second Addendum under the Five-Year Priority Project category of High-Priority Pedestrian Plan projects.

In order to implement the Adeline Corridor Specific Plan more broadly, the anticipated May 2022 BeST Plan Addendum could include an Adeline project bundle on the Five-Year Priority Project list, along with the inclusion of individual projects from the Adeline Corridor Specific Plan in a resolution supporting submitting them to compete for grant funding. These projects could include the detailed design and construction of the Adeline Corridor Project between MLK and the Oakland border, or a segment thereof, and the preliminary engineering, detailed design, and construction of a reconfiguration of Adeline between Ashby and MLK. The latter project would be the result of the Adeline Reconfiguration Study being funded through a grant acquired by the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART). This study was conducted in response to a City Council Referral calling for an analysis of a potential reduction of Adeline north of MLK to two lanes (a “road diet”) in order “to increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and people living with disabilities, while also meeting the needs of public transit and emergency vehicles”.⁴ The study is also evaluating whether Adeline could be used to provide a plaza for the Flea Market within the existing street right of way, as the Ashby BART station west parking lot currently used by the Flea Market on weekends is anticipated to be developed into affordable housing. BART has developed several scenarios to explore how a plaza to accommodate the Flea Market on the west side of Adeline might be configured, which are being revised in response to feedback from the Flea Market Board.

Upcoming BeST Plan Comprehensive Update: Equity and Transit Priorities

Staff plans to develop a comprehensive update to the BeST Plan throughout calendar year 2022, which is anticipated to be brought to Council for adoption in 2023. The scope of work for this centers social and racial equity and includes the identification of transit priorities consistent with the City’s Transit-First Policy. The scope of work emphasizes significant engagement in the Equity Priority Area identified in the Berkeley Vision Zero Action Plan and Pedestrian Plan, including through Community Based Organizations. A subset of the BeST Plan Update is anticipated to be a Transit-First Implementation Plan that recommends corridors for future study for potential implementation of major transit capital projects including potential transit-only lanes. These corridors are identified as Transit Primary Routes in the Berkeley General Plan Transportation Element as well as prioritized in the AC Transit Major Corridor Study. The Berkeley Transportation Commission had formed a Transit-First Subcommittee in 2019 which had reviewed analysis results for a Transit-First Implementation Plan. This Subcommittee ceased meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, staff has developed an administrative draft of the Transit-First Implementation Plan that is anticipated to be ready to present to the Transit-First Subcommittee in mid-2022, ahead of the drafting of the BeST Plan Update into which it could be incorporated.

⁴ https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2020/02_Feb/Documents/2020-02-11_Item_21_2-Lane_Option_on_Adeline_St.aspx

One transit corridor that is about to undergo a major study is Telegraph Avenue between the Oakland border and Dwight Way, where the project would meet the segment of Telegraph already approved by Council for a future northbound transit lane through the Southside Complete Streets project. The City acquired a grant from the Alameda CTC FY22 CIP for this Telegraph Complete Streets Corridor Study and preliminary engineering. The project grant application was approved by Council as part of the BeST Plan Second Addendum under the Five-Year Priority Project category of High-Priority Bicycle Plan projects, but has both bikeway and transit components.

Near Term (June 2022) Potential Grant Applications

Staff is considering requesting approval from Council to submit the following projects to compete for transportation capital grant funding. Applications under all of these funding programs are due in June 2022.

- ATP Cycle 6 Program
 - **Washington Elementary and Berkeley High Safe Routes to School**
 - **Addison Street Bicycle Boulevard Extension**
Resubmit under ATP Cycle 6 these applications previously submitted for the ATP Cycle 5 Program, which both just missed the funding cutoff in Cycle 5. The applications would incorporate improvements based on feedback received from California Transportation Commission staff. The projects fit under the existing BeST Plan Five-Year Priority categories of Safe Routes to School and High-Priority Bicycle Plan Projects.
- Alameda CTC FY24 CIP (Alameda County discretionary funds)
 - **Bicycle Boulevard Crossings**
Submit an application to fund safety treatments at the remaining unfunded bicycle boulevard crossings from the Bicycle Plan. This fits under the existing BeST Plan Five-Year Priority category of High-Priority Bicycle Plan Projects.
 - **Vision Zero Protected Left-Turn Signals**
Submit an application to convert permissive left-turn signals to protected left-turn signals at intersections identified to have the greatest safety need. This application was previously approved by Council to submit for funding from the California Highway Safety Improvement Program, but was not successful in acquiring funding from that highly competitive program. The project was recommended in the Pedestrian Plan and fits under the existing BeST Plan Five-Year Priority category of High-Priority Pedestrian Plan Projects.
- MTC OBAB3 Program (federal funding)
 - **Adeline Corridor South Project:** detailed design and construction of the segment, or a subsegment, between MLK and the Oakland border. This segment has already received funding for preliminary engineering from Alameda CTC. It is a high priority due to being the widest segment at six lanes, with a “road diet” to convert it to four lanes already approved in the Adeline Corridor Specific Plan.

The project was recommended in the Pedestrian Plan and fits under the existing BeST Plan Five-Year Priority category of High-Priority Pedestrian Plan Projects.

- MTC OBAB3 and State IIG Programs
 - **Adeline Corridor Project at Ashby BART Station:** The above described Adeline Roadway Reconfiguration Study is well underway. It is specifically evaluating design options and the traffic and transit impacts of a road diet on Adeline between Ashby and MLK, which would convert the existing four general purpose traffic lanes (two each direction) to two general purpose lanes (one each direction). The traffic analysis has found that the road diet would result in delay to the F Line Transbay Bus Service, the only line providing direct service between the Downtown/Southside areas of Berkeley and Emeryville, which are regionally designated Priority Development Areas slated to grow with transit-oriented development. The F Line has the second highest ridership of AC Transit's Transbay routes and was also identified in the 2022 UC Berkeley Campus Transit Survey as the second most frequently used transit route (including local service) for accessing the campus. Due to growing ridership, the F Line was slated to have its frequency doubled from every half hour to every 15 minutes throughout the day and evening, but the Regional Measure 3 funding for this increase has been held up in court in response to a lawsuit filed against the overall measure (not specifically targeting this service). The competitiveness of an OBAG3 application to fund this project could be affected by impacts on transit operations, as the OBAG3 evaluation criteria include consistency with the MTC Plan Bay Area 2050 Strategies, which include enhancing transit reliability, and with the Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan. The latter envisions an outcome of an efficient and reliable transit network, with an associated action category called "Bus Transit Priority" that includes actions to expedite travel time improvements on arterials and to improve bus speed and reliability on arterials.

In order to address the transit impact of a potential road diet, an option being evaluated is that of a road diet that has two general purpose lanes (one each direction), as well as a transit lane for maintaining transit reliability while providing a buffer with a low traffic volume (due to the efficiency of buses in carrying people, the volume of vehicles remains low). A key consideration for the viability of this project is the cost of extending the Adeline right of way to the west by way of constructing a podium as a potential future location for the Flea Market. The podium would connect the sidewalk on the west side of Adeline to the planned transit-oriented development buildings over the west parking lot. Planning level cost estimates are being developed in order to evaluate this. If these cost estimates are within the ballpark of the OBAG3 Program, key advantages of this option are in its competitiveness under the OBAG3 evaluation criteria and in connecting the future TOD buildings directly to the sidewalk on the west side of Adeline.

BACKGROUND

Given the large number of projects in the BeST Plan, they are organized into 25 bundles by location or type of work, with projected expenditures divided into 5-year, 10-year, and 30-year periods. Each of the 25 project bundles has been evaluated according to a set of prioritization and screening criteria which support the goals distilled from Berkeley’s adopted plans and policies. The plans used as sources include the Downtown Area Plan, Downtown Streets and Open Space Improvement Plan, Southside Plan, West Berkeley Circulation Study, Bicycle Plan, and Pedestrian Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

The projects being considered for future prioritization in the BeST Plan would increase the number of Berkeley residents and visitors who walk, bike, and take mass transit, which would decrease vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. This would help the City achieve the Berkeley Climate Action Plan greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 33% below the year 2000 level by 2020, and 80% below the year 2000 level by 2050. The Climate Action Plan states that, in order to meet these targets, “Transportation modes such as public transit, walking and bicycling must become the primary means of fulfilling our mobility needs.”

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Capital grant funding will allow the City to address critical local and regional transportation infrastructure gaps for all modes of travel. Priority projects will be identified using criteria drawn directly from adopted City plans and reports which have undergone extensive public review prior to Council adoption.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The City could choose not to discuss a future near-term BeST Plan Addendum and longer-term BeST Plan Update, and could also choose not to discuss the prioritization of potential future applications for transportation capital grants. This would result in City staff not having comments from City Council to utilize in understanding which transportation capital grant applications to bring back to City Council for approval at a future meeting.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

Exhibit A: Berkeley Strategic Transportation Plan Five-Year Priority Project

Figure I: Five-Year Priority Projects

PROJECT	Phase 1 Project Development/ Scoping	Phase 2 Environmental Study/ Preliminary Engineering	Phase 3 Detailed Design	Phase 4 Construction
West Berkeley				
9th Street Bikeway Path Extension	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase
Gilman Grade Separation	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase
Gilman Interchange	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Current Phase
Railroad Quiet Zone	Completed Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase
Southside Area				
Southside Complete Streets	Completed Phase	Current Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase
Bikeway Intersections & High-Priority Bicycle Plan Projects	Ongoing project category with many smaller projects			
Downtown Berkeley				
Center Street Plaza	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase
Downtown Berkeley BART Plaza	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase
Downtown Transit Center	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase
Hearst Complete Streets	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase
Milvia Protected Bikeway	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase
Shattuck Avenue Reconfiguration	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase	Completed Phase
Signal Interconnect & Transit Signal Priority	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase
High Priority Pedestrian Plan Projects	Ongoing project category with many smaller projects			
Safe Routes to School Projects	Ongoing project category with many smaller projects			
Ohlone Greenway Upgrade & Street Crossings	Current Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase	Future Phase

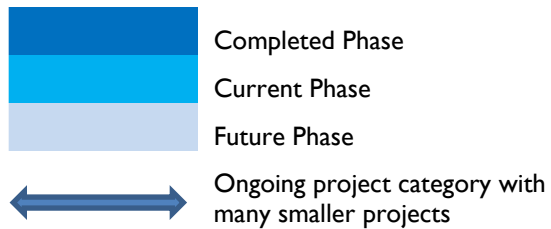


Table 1: Five-Year Priority Project Status Updates^{1,2}

PROJECT	LEAD	COMPLETE	FUNDING STATUS ³	IN BERKELEY STRATEGIC PLAN ⁴	CURRENT PHASE
Hearst Complete Streets	COB	✓		Yes	--
Downtown Berkeley BART Plaza	COB	✓		Yes	--
Safe Routes to School: Emerson, Sylvia Mendez, and John Muir Elementary Schools, King Middle School	COB	✓		Yes	--
Shattuck Avenue Reconfiguration	COB	✓		Yes	--
9th Street Bikeway Path Extension	COB	✓		Yes	--
Milvia Protected Bikeway	COB	✓		Yes	--
Gilman Interchange	Alameda CTC		✓	Yes	<i>Under Construction</i>
Southside Complete Streets	COB		✓	Yes	<i>Preliminary Engineering</i>
Ohlone Greenway Modernization & Street Crossings	COB		✓	Yes	<i>Preliminary Engineering</i>
High Priority Pedestrian Plan Projects:					
Sacramento Street Complete Streets (2010 Ped Plan)	COB	✓		Yes	--
Adeline Street South (Martin Luther King Jr. Way to Oakland border) (2020 Ped Plan)			X		<i>Preliminary Engineering</i>
High-Priority Bicycle Plan Projects:					
Complete Streets Corridor Study:					
Telegraph Ave Transit & Bikeway Corridor	COB		X	Yes	<i>Corridor Study & Conceptual Design</i>
Bike Boulevard Crossings:					
Virginia Street at Martin Luther King, Jr. Way Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)	COB	✓		Yes	--
Hillegass Street at Ashby Avenue Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)	COB	✓		Yes	--
Virginia at Sacramento Street Traffic Signal	COB	✓		Yes	--
9 th St at Cedar, California St at Dwight raised medians	COB	✓		Yes	--
Virginia at San Pablo Avenue PHB California Street at Ashby RRFB	Caltrans		✓	Yes	<i>Construction Bidding</i>
Mabel Street at Dwight Way RRFB	COB		✓	Yes	<i>Preliminary Engineering</i>
Russell and Woolsey Streets at Adeline Street PHBs	COB		✓	Yes	<i>Preliminary Engineering</i>
Russell and Woolsey at Shattuck Avenue RRFB	COB		✓	Yes	<i>Consultant Selection</i>

Table I: Five-Year Priority Project Status Updates^{1,2} (Continued)

PROJECT	LEAD	COMPLETE	FUNDING STATUS ³	IN BERKELEY STRATEGIC PLAN ⁴	CURRENT PHASE
Safe Routes to School Projects	COB		X ⁵	Yes	Portion of Washington Elementary Safe Routes to School Project Funded
High Priority Pedestrian Plan Projects	COB		X ⁵	Yes	--
Bike Boulevard Intersections	COB		X ⁶	Yes	--
Center Street Plaza	COB		O	Yes	Funding for Conceptual Design Deferred
Downtown Transit Center	COB		O		
Railroad Quiet Zone ⁷	COB		O		Deferred due to currently infeasible Federal Railroad Administration requirements ⁷
Gilman Grade Separation	COB		O		--
Signal Interconnect and Transit Signal Priority ⁸	COB		O		--

Notes:

1. Project status are as of December 2020. Figure I and Table I are updates to the table shown on page 69 of the BeST Plan.
2. COB = City of Berkeley; Alameda CTC = Alameda County Transportation Commission
3. ✓ = Fully Funded and Project Development Underway; X = Partially Funded; O = Seeking Funding
4. The City of Berkeley Strategic Plan was passed by the Council of the City of Berkeley to help prioritize projects and programs to help meet the City's goals. The Plan can be found at: <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/strategic-plan/>.
5. High Priority Pedestrian Plan Projects and Safe Routes to School Projects are ongoing projects and include projects at various phases.
6. Five intersections are prioritized for future funding: Russell BB at San Pablo Ave and Sacramento St; Channing BB at San Pablo Ave and Sacramento St; Hillegass/Bowditch BB at Dwight.
7. The I-80/Gilman Interchange project includes safety upgrades at the Gilman railroad crossing, while the Alameda CTC Railroad Safety Enhancement Program will be doing safety improvements at the remaining open crossings (Cedar, Virginia, Hearst, Addison, Bancroft). These treatments will not result in the trains ceasing to sound their horns, which would require major railroad and station modifications that are not feasible at this time.
8. First phase includes wayside signal upgrades to support transit signal priority on University Ave between Oxford and San Pablo Ave.

