



Kate Harrison  
Councilmember District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR  
May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmember Harrison  
Subject: Acton and University Traffic Light Budget Referral

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the budget process a one-time allocation for an overhanging street light at Acton and University

BACKGROUND

University Ave is one of the busiest streets in Berkeley, with tens of thousands of cars traveling the stretch every day. As the heart of Downtown and Central Berkeley's business community, pedestrians frequently cross University to access retail and entertainment venues and public transportation stops. Acton and University is an especially dangerous intersection, with 47 collisions in the past 10 years, per the University of California Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS). For comparison, over the same time period, the similarly busy intersection at University and Curtis experienced 19 collisions.

According to local businesses and neighbors, the intersection is particularly dangerous because it has a traffic light in the median, while intersections on either side with a light (for example, at University and Curtis) have overhanging traffic lights. Thus, drivers get accustomed to looking overhead for the next light, which may be green, and do not realize that they are running a red light at Acton.

The median traffic light leads to infrastructure costs for the City. On multiple occasions in the past several years, cars have hit the traffic light in the median, presumably because they could not see the red light. The City is forced to replace the traffic light in the median when this happens. An overhead traffic light is more expensive than a median traffic light, but because they will not be knocked over by cars, they have more longevity. Furthermore, when the median traffic light is down and waiting to be replaced by City staff, the intersection is without a light at all and this dangerous intersection is made even worse.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$400,000 per Transportation Department estimates. May save the City money if the median intersection does not have to be replaced regularly.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

By making intersections safer for bicyclists and pedestrians, we incentivize use of carbon-neutral modes of transportation.

CONTACT PERSON

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ATTACHMENTS:

1: Data from TIMS

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