



## Councilmember Ben Bartlett

City of Berkeley, District 3  
 2180 Milvia Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Berkeley, CA 94704  
 PHONE 510-981-7130  
 EMAIL: [bbartlett@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:bbartlett@cityofberkeley.info)

### CONSENT CALENDAR

May 28th, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett, Lori Droste, and Rigel Robinson  
 Subject: Budget Referral: Increase Staffing Level of Transportation Division to Expedite City's Vision Zero Goal

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adds six permanent positions to the Transportation Division as part of the city's fiscal year 2020-2021 biennial budget by referring \$1,433,310.40 to the budget process to fund these positions; the total cost of salaries without benefits is 863,440; the total cost of benefits alone is 569,870.40. These positions should include 4 Engineers, a permanent Senior Planner (to coordinate Vision Zero), and an Administrative Professional. The Transportation Division needs increased staff capacity to deliver funded capital projects and work towards the City's Vision Zero goal of eliminating fatal and severe injury collisions.

### CURRENT SITUATION

As the Mayor, Councilmembers, Transportation Commissioners, and community members have previously noted, the Transportation Division is short-staffed. Meanwhile, community concern about the safety of our streets is growing. The Transportation Division is responsible for the most important Vision Zero strategy: re-engineering our streets to make them safe and attractive for people walking and biking. The Council has made Vision Zero its top priority for staff, but currently, the Transportation Division is understaffed.

### BACKGROUND

Vision Zero is a data-driven road safety approach that aims to prevent all fatalities and serious, life-altering injuries. The Council has prioritized the Vision Zero initiative to respond to Berkeley's dangerous road conditions.. Traffic crashes that result in severe injuries or deaths cause obvious physical pain to survivors, but also leave survivors, caregivers, and loved ones with emotional trauma a well. Our lack of staff capacity in the Transportation Division interferes with the City's ability to effectively implement Vision Zero and prevent auto-related crashes for our communities. In addition, the lack

of project delivery capacity has pulled staff away from other core services, like installing bike racks. Finally, staffing problems will make the city less competitive for major transportation funding streams.

Attempting to prioritize Vision Zero actions, the Council referred to the budget process funds to support a Vision Zero coordinator for one year in December 2018. However, funding the coordinator for one year will not advance our Vision Zero goals. A one-year coordinator will be able to do little more than finish the Vision Zero Action Plan. Thus, the city needs a permanent full-time coordinator whose primary focus is implementing Vision Zero.

#### REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANS, PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND LAWS

Vision Zero has three key elements: Engineering, Enforcement, and Education. The Engineering element focuses on traffic calming and reengineering existing streets into safer ones for all road users, but especially the most vulnerable: people who walk, bike, and take transit. Some existing plans, policies, and programs include safe routes to school, Berkeley Strategic Transportation Plan, Bicycle Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Traffic Calming Program. The Enforcement element will focus on enforcement of traffic violations that cause the most injuries and deaths, like a violation of the pedestrian right of way. Lastly, the Education element serves to increase public awareness of laws related to the violations that cause the most injuries and deaths. By educating the community on traffic safety, Vision Zero aims to spread awareness on how to stay safe on Berkeley streets.

#### ACTIONS/ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

In December 2018, Council referred to the budget process funds to support a Vision Zero coordinator for one year. But, this plan is insufficient for developing, implementing, and expediting the City's Vision Zero Action Plan. To meet our Vision Zero goal, we must have enough staff to [re]engineer streets and lead a cross-department task force.

#### OUTREACH OVERVIEW AND RESULTS

Councilmember Bartlett has consulted with Walk Bike Berkeley, a volunteer-run group founded by Berkeley residents that advocates to make walking and biking in Berkeley safe, low-stress, and fun for people of all ages and abilities. This group strongly believes in the importance of increasing the staffing levels of the City's Transportation Division to create a healthy, just, and sustainable transportation system in Berkeley.

### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

At recent Transportation Commission meetings, staff has outlined their current staffing needs. The Transportation Division has proposed adding four engineering-focused full-time employees to ensure delivery of critical transportation capital projects. In addition, the Transportation Division needs a permanent Senior Planner to coordinate Vision Zero efforts and an administrative professional. Failure to add these six Transportation Division staff will delay the delivery of projects that would further the city's climate and Vision Zero goals, compromise our competitiveness for grants, reduce staff morale, and challenge staff retention. Thus, we need the appropriate amount of permanent staff members in the Transportation Division to make our Vision Zero goals a reality.

### IMPLEMENTATION, ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

To be determined.

### FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

If passed, the financial resources necessary for funding the six permanent positions will be allocated from the FY2020 and FY2021 biennial budget.

- Admin Staff Assistant: est. \$91,465 +66% for benefit: \$151,831.90
- Senior Planner: est. \$124,183 +66% for benefit: \$206,143.78
- Traffic Engineer (4): est. \$161,948 per position +66% for benefit: \$268,833.69 per position

The total cost of salaries without benefits is 863,440.

The total cost of benefits alone is 569,870.40.

The total cost of salaries with benefits is 1,433,410.40

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Funding for pedestrian and bike safety would be in compliance with the City's Climate Action Plan and state policy to reduce pollution and emissions.

### OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

It is expected that the Council will strive to implement the Vision Zero initiative and cultivate a culture of traffic safety by adding and funding six permanent positions to the Transportation Division.

### CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Ben Bartlett  
Katie Ly

510-981-7130  
510-981-7131

