



CONSENT CALENDAR
December 14th, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Terry Taplin

Subject: Budget Referral: Russell Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council refers to the FY2023 budget process the funding of the following bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Russell Street:

- Traffic Circle at Russell & King Street
- Cycle Track Crossing at Russell & San Pablo Avenue
- Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons at Russell & Sacramento Street

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

In November 2021, the City Council deliberated on and chose its top six priorities for the next two-year budget cycle. In order of importance, the Council chose infrastructure, public safety, houselessness, transportation, housing, and economic recovery. The fulfillment of Berkeley's Bicycle Plan, which aims to establish a network of streets where bicycle transportation is safe and convenient with access to the whole city, is explicitly in line with three of the Council's top four priorities — infrastructure, public safety, and transportation.

This intersection of priorities that the Bicycle Plan offers makes the funding of its numerous recommendations an important opportunity for the Council to focus on in the coming years. The centerpiece of the Bicycle Plan, a network of "Bicycle Boulevards", includes a West-East Bicycle Boulevard running along Russell Street from Mabel Street to Claremont Boulevard, connecting southwest Berkeley to central Berkeley and Elmwood.¹ This Bicycle Boulevard, while recently updated with quick-build traffic diverters, is in need of serious investments in the improvements recommended by the Bicycle Plan in order to reach its full potential. The recommendations, ranging from traffic circles and crossing improvements to bike lane enhancements, while obviously infrastructure, also act on the Council's new public safety and transportation priorities by strengthening the safety and ease of passage along Russell Street.

¹https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017_Ch5_ProposedBikewayNetwork.pdf

Beyond Council's new priorities, regular and unsparing investments in the improvements laid out by the Bicycle Plan for the entire city are essential for Berkeley to meet its climate and Vision Zero goals. In order to reduce Berkeley's greenhouse gas emissions, non-car travel must become the default mode-share in Berkeley as soon as possible. Council cannot expect this to happen unless bicycle travel is safe, easy, and well funded. Furthermore, Berkeley's Vision Zero goal of zero traffic deaths and severe injuries by 2028 is only achievable when infrastructure that improves the safety of pedestrians and cyclists is prioritized for funding.²

FISCAL IMPACTS

Staff time and an estimated \$360,000³ for the following improvements:

- \$50,000 for one Traffic Circle
- \$60,000 for Cycle Track Crossing
- \$250,000 for Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Establishing a network of safe streets for pedestrians and bicycles, promoting bicycle literacy, and distributing bicycles to those in need incentivize nonautomobile travel, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The City estimates that transportation-related emissions accounts for approximately 60% of our community's total annual greenhouse gas emissions.⁴ By encouraging alternatives to car transportation by making pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure safer and more accessible, these improvements stand to lower the emissions from our community's dominant source of carbon emissions.

CONTACT

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²https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley_Vision_Zero_Action_Plan_Approved_03102020.pdf

³[https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017_AppendixE_Project%20Recs%20Priorities\(1\).pdf](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017_AppendixE_Project%20Recs%20Priorities(1).pdf)

⁴https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2018/12_Dec/Documents/2018-12-06_WS_Item_01_Climate_Action_Plan_Update_pdf.aspx