



Rashi Kesarwani
Councilmember, District 1

**SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA MATERIAL
for Supplemental Packet 1**

Meeting Date: April 26, 2022

Item Number: 33

Item Description: Hopkins Corridor Project Conceptual Design

Submitted by: Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani

This supplemental material contains a referral to the City Manager to extend the bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements planned for Hopkins (for the Monterey to Gilman segment) further west to San Pablo Avenue, contingent upon holding two community engagement meetings to seek input from stakeholders. This referral is complementary to direction presented by staff in item # 33 and is not intended to modify it in any way.



Rashi Kesarwani
Councilmember District 1

Action Calendar
May 10, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani (Author)

SUBJECT: Extension of Hopkins Corridor Complete Streets Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements to Enable Safe and Equitable Access to Public Resources

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to extend the bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements planned for Hopkins (for the Monterey to Gilman segment) further west to San Pablo Avenue, contingent upon holding two community engagement meetings to seek input from stakeholders, such as roadway users, residents, visitors, employees, business owners, and the Transportation Commission.

The community meetings should specify benefits of extending the proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements from Monterey to Gilman further west to San Pablo Avenue, including:

- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety.** All pedestrians and bicyclists would experience greater safety as a result of the proposed upgrades, such as bulbouts, raised crosswalks, and protected bike lanes, consistent with the City's Vision Zero Action Plan.
- **Enhancing the Low-Stress Bicycle Network.** Extension of bike lanes on Hopkins to San Pablo Avenue is recommended in the City's Bicycle Plan.¹ It would improve the City's bicycle network, enabling low-stress connections to the Ohlone Greenway, the San Pablo corridor, and a

¹ 2017 City of Berkeley Bicycle Plan, Section 5 Proposed Bikeway Network, p.3
https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017_Ch5_ProposedBikewayNetwork.pdf

potential parallel bikeway on Kains Avenue under consideration as part of the San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project.²

- **Traffic Calming.** A protected bike lane for the full length of Hopkins would have the effect of narrowing the roadway and slowing car speeds west of Gilman—where neighbors have expressed a need for traffic calming.
- **Safe and Equitable Access for West Berkeley Residents.** The pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements proposed for Hopkins—if fully extended to San Pablo Avenue—would enable residents of West Berkeley to safely access public services and amenities, such as schools (i.e., King Middle School, Ruth Acty Elementary School, and the Mustard Seed Preschool), the Berkeley Public Library (North Branch); King pool, tennis courts, track, sports field, and playgrounds; Monterey Market, and other commercial establishments. *Without the extension of the pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements to San Pablo Avenue, bicyclists and pedestrians initiating trips from West Berkeley would not have equally safe access to these public services and amenities compared to residents living east of Gilman.*

Further, the community engagement meetings should address strategies to manage parking impacts, including:

- Automatic inclusion of specified nearby residential blocks into the Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) program, with the ability of blocks to opt out if greater than 50 percent of residents wish to do so; and/or
- Allowance for a “front yard setback” permit to enable driveway expansion.

Outreach and engagement for the Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking Study (Gilman to Sutter) began in October 2020, with construction expected to begin in late summer/early fall of 2023. This referral is presented as supplemental to the staff recommendations for Gilman to Sutter and in no way seeks to modify them.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

More than 70 Percent of Berkeley Residents are “Interested but Concerned” About Biking Without Protected Paths. The City of Berkeley’s Bicycle Plan found in a representative survey that 71 percent of Berkeley residents were “interested but concerned” about bicycling, meaning they are somewhat inclined towards bicycling though are held back due to concern over

² Alameda County Transportation Commission, San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project, <https://www.alamedactc.org/programs-projects/multimodal-arterial-roads/sanpabloave/>

sharing the road with cars. This group prefers separated bikeways and low traffic streets. Further, the Bicycle Plan survey indicated that 90 percent of residents already bicycle or would consider doing so if the right conditions exist: low-stress bicycle infrastructure and better road conditions.³ That is, the vast majority of Berkeley residents would welcome a continuous and connected system of low-stress bikeways, defined as a facility that is suitable for all ages and all abilities of bike users, including children.

The Full Length of Hopkins is an Important Corridor for the City’s Bike Network. The Bicycle Plan recommends a low-stress Bicycle Network, as shown in Exhibit 1.⁴ Significantly, it also shows that the current low-stress network and intersections are interrupted by a high-stress network and intersection gaps that are not suitable for bicyclists of all ages and abilities.

Exhibit 1: Low-Stress Bicycle Network and Intersections with High Stress Network and Intersection Gaps

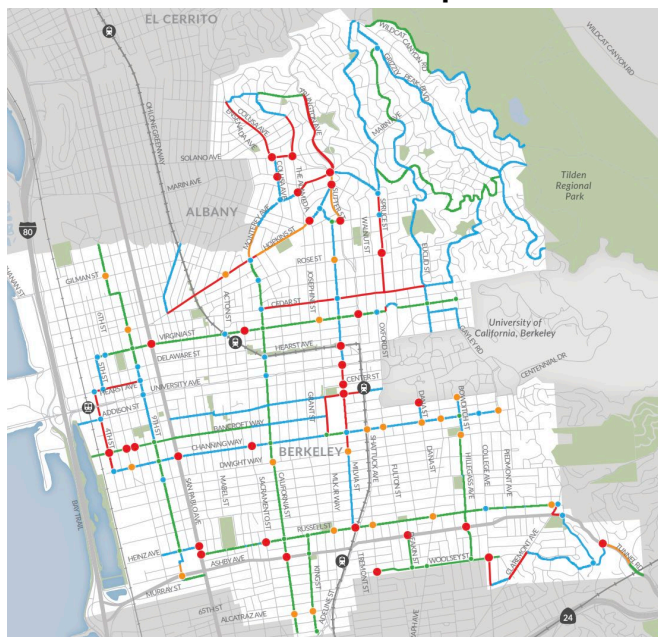


FIGURE ES-1: LOW STRESS NETWORK & INTERSECTIONS WITH HIGH STRESS NETWORK & INTERSECTION GAPS



Source: 2017 City of Berkeley Bicycle Plan, Executive Summary

As Exhibit 1 shows, while low-stress bikeways and the Ohlone Greenway run north-south through west and central Berkeley (along Ninth and California

³ 2017 City of Berkeley Bicycle Plan, Berkeley Resident Survey, Executive Summary, p. ES-6, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB2923

⁴ 2017 City of Berkeley Bicycle Plan, <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017-Executive%20Summary.pdf>

streets), there is currently no low-stress network that connects the bikeways and Ohlone Greenway north of Virginia Street. Only Hopkins Street west of California Street—a *high-stress* bikeway—directly connects northwest Berkeley residents and Ohlone Greenway users to amenities along the Hopkins corridor in North Berkeley. Improving the full length of Hopkins Street by making it a low-stress bikeway would help increase connectivity opportunities, allowing cyclists greater range of travel throughout the city.

Important Public Services and Amenities Are Provided On or Near Hopkins. Important public services and amenities are only available on or near Hopkins, including Ruth Acty Elementary School, King Middle School, and the Mustard Seed Preschool; King pool, tennis courts, track, sports field, and playgrounds; Berkeley Public Library (North Branch); and Monterey Market, among other commercial establishments. Hopkins Street is the most direct route connecting motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians coming from West Berkeley eastward in order to access these public services and amenities that by and large do not exist in Northwest Berkeley. Similarly, Hopkins Street is a major access route connecting cyclists to the Ohlone Greenway bike path going northward beyond Berkeley, and can easily connect travelers to Kains Street, a potential parallel bikeway under consideration through the San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project. As such, the full length of Hopkins (west of Gilman to San Pablo Avenue) warrants the same bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements.

BACKGROUND

2018 City Council Referral Initiated Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking Study. The Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking Study originated with a January 2018 budget referral submitted by Councilmember Sophie Hahn. The item was submitted after two fatalities—of a pedestrian and a bicyclist—occurred at intersections along Hopkins in 2017.⁵ Between 2016 to 2019, the Hopkins corridor witnessed a total of 18 collisions resulting in injuries or fatalities, with 78 percent of the collisions involving pedestrians or cyclists.⁶ The Council item from Councilmember Hahn called for taking a “complete streets” approach to the study, emphasizing the need to recognize the range of users, including pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, while also prioritizing safety for all and easy access to the small businesses populating the commercial area. The study also called for a robust community outreach and input process, which began in October 2020 and concluded in early May 2022.

⁵ Item #28 “Budget Referral: Hopkins Street Corridor traffic and Placemaking Study,” Jan. 23, 2018

⁶ Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking Study, <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/hopkins-corridor-traffic-and-placemaking-study>, Staff Presentation: Hopkins Street from Sutter to the Alameda, March 1, 2022, slide #9.

Community Process for the Hopkins Corridor Improvements from Gilman to Sutter Streets. Throughout the community process, which began in October 2020, staff identified key areas of concern to stakeholders: interest in improving pedestrian safety and protecting cyclists, concern over loss of on-street parking, and the desire to support the unique array of small businesses that make the corridor special. In total, staff conducted three workshops between October 2020 and October 2021, had roughly 40 discussions with business owners and other representatives of institutions along the corridor, and received more than 1,000 emails and phone calls from various constituents. During three successive weeks in March 2022, city staff met with residents living on and in close proximity to Hopkins Street to discuss conceptual designs and staff recommendations for the complete streets approach to redesigning the Hopkins corridor from Gilman Street to Sutter.⁷ This three-part series of community workshops was intended to engage all stakeholders of the corridor: residents, business owners, employees, and visitors to understand the particular needs of the community. Integrating the variety of stakeholder feedback and concerns, staff recommended a bi-directional bikeway from Gilman to the Alameda, switching to a buffered bike lane on the north side of the street, and a parking protected bike lane on the south side of the street from the Alameda up to Sutter. This referral is an accompaniment to the staff recommendation as it seeks to extend community outreach to the westernmost portion of Hopkins Street for the purposes of installing similar bike and pedestrian improvements.

FISCAL IMPACTS

This referral is requesting two community meetings to be conducted by city transportation staff to engage District 1 residents on or in close proximity to the westernmost portion of Hopkins Street and the broader community. It is recommended that the meetings take place by the end of the calendar year to ensure the Hopkins Corridor improvement process stays on schedule, and to schedule at least one meeting with the Transportation Commission.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Extending a Protected Bike Lane Along Hopkins Upholds Berkeley's Stated Goals and Values Articulated in Our Vision Zero and Bicycle Plans.

There are multiple rationales for this supplemental referral. First and foremost, the potential to extend a protected bike lane along the remainder of the western portion of Hopkins Street directly aligns with both the City's Vision Zero Action

⁷ Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking Study, <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/hopkins-corridor-traffic-and-placemaking-study> (March 1, 2022: Hopkins Street from Sutter to the Alameda; March 7, 2022: Hopkins Street from the Alameda to McGee; March 14, 2022: Hopkins Street from McGee to Gilman Street)

Plan adopted in 2019⁸ and the City of Berkeley's Bicycle Plan, approved May 2017.⁹ Berkeley's adoption of a Vision Zero Plan endorses the engineering strategy to design and build our streets to eliminate severe injuries and fatalities, prioritizing safety for all users. As noted on p.17 of the Vision Zero Plan, "slower streets are safer streets," and adding a protected bike lane has a traffic calming effect on all users, slowing speeds.¹⁰ The City's Bicycle Plan recognizes that a large majority of Berkeley residents are interested, but concerned, about bicycling and asserts the goal of making Berkeley a bicycle friendly city where cycling is a safe, comfortable and convenient form of transportation and recreation for all people (Executive Summary, p.1). Making the full length of Hopkins Street a low-stress bikeway would expand the continuous and connected bicycle network.

Providing a Protected Bike Lane on the Western Portion of Hopkins Connects West Berkeley Residents to Public Services and Other Bike Routes. The potential for a protected bike lane along all of Hopkins Street is an important safety measure for West Berkeley residents who regularly use this corridor for public services and amenities that are not available in their own neighborhood. It also enhances safety for all cyclists who can use this corridor to seamlessly connect with other bike routes in the City.

Adding a Protected Bike Lane Now to the Scope of Repaving Work on Hopkins Makes Economic Sense. Adding the extension of the protected bicycle lane on Hopkins to the scope of repaving work now makes economic sense as it will be more expensive to add this safety measure in the future if it becomes a stand-alone project. This is especially true as construction costs continue to rise. Because of this time constraint, it is crucial that we hear from residents and community members that would be most affected by such an improvement before finalizing repaving plans. Residents should be fully aware of the impacts of adding a protected bicycle lane along the entire length of Hopkins Street, particularly as it relates to on-street parking, and understand what mitigating efforts the City could offer to help offset any negative impacts. The proposed community engagement meetings would allow the City to share

⁸ City of Berkeley Vision Zero Action Plan, March 2019, <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/Berkeley-Vision-Zero-Action-Plan.pdf>

⁹ City of Berkeley Bicycle Plan, May 2, 2017, <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017-Executive%20Summary.pdf>

¹⁰ See Science Daily May 29, 2019 article: [Cycling Lanes Reduce Fatalities for all Road Users Study Shows](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190529113036.htm), <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190529113036.htm>

this information while providing community members the opportunity to share their feedback.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Extending a protected bicycle lane along the entire length of Hopkins Street aligns with our city's Climate Action Plan¹¹ as it would make this transit corridor safer for cyclists, thus incentivizing carbon-free trips. This will help reduce vehicle miles traveled and transportation-related emissions, the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the city.

CONTACT

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¹¹ City of Berkeley Climate Action Plan, 2009, <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017-Executive%20Summary.pdf>