



Commission on Aging
George Porter, Chair
Richard Castrillon, Commission Secretary

COMMISSION ON AGING VIRTUAL MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, January 18, 2023
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

[https://cityofberkeley-
info.zoomgov.com/j/1614800144](https://cityofberkeley-info.zoomgov.com/j/1614800144)

PASSCODE: **825132** (may be
required)
MEETING ID: **161 480 0144** (may be
required)

Preliminary Matters

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comments
The public may comment about any item not on the agenda. Public comments are limited to two minutes per speaker. Public comments regarding agenda items will be heard while the Commission is discussing the item.
3. Approval of minutes from November 16, 2022. (Attachment A)

Discussion/Action Items

The Commission may act related to any subject listed on the Agenda. Public comments regarding agenda items will be heard while the Commission is discussing the item. Public comments are limited to two minutes per speaker.

4. Letter to City Council regarding Hopkins Corridor Reconsideration (Attachment B)
5. Formal adoption of Commission Meeting Schedule for 2023
6. Commissioner Reports

Adjournment

PUBLIC ADVISORY: THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH VIDEOCONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE Pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(e) and the state declared emergency, this meeting of the City Council will be conducted exclusively through teleconference and Zoom videoconference. The COVID-19 state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person and presents imminent risks to the health of attendees. Therefore, no physical meeting location will be available.

Internal

To access the meeting remotely: Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device: Please use this URL <https://cityofberkeley-info.zoomgov.com/j/1614800144>. If you do not wish for your name to appear on the screen, then use the drop-down menu and click on "rename" to rename yourself to be anonymous. To request to speak, use the "raise hand" icon by rolling over the bottom of the screen.

To join by phone: Dial 1-669-900-9128 and enter Meeting ID _726 7423 9145_. If you wish to comment during the public comment portion of the agenda, Press *9 and wait to be recognized by the Chair.

Please be mindful that the teleconference will be recorded, and all other rules of procedure and decorum will apply for Council meetings conducted by teleconference or videoconference.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION

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Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the North Berkeley Senior Center located at 1901 Hearst Avenue, during regular business hours. The Commission Agenda and Minutes may be viewed on the City of Berkeley website: <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/commissions>.

Secretary:

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Internal



Health, Housing & Community
Services Department
Commission on Aging

COMMISSION ON AGING VIRTUAL MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, November 16, 2022
1:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: (3) Porter; Futran; Collins

Absent: (0)

Excused Absent: (1) Cochran

Staff Present: (2) Richard Castrillon; Tanya Bustamante

Public: (4) Julia Cato; Jim Offel; Margo Smith; Carole Marasovic

2. Public Comment (4)

Residents of the Hopkins Corridor are upset about the bike lanes and how they cause confusion for drivers and pedestrians. Other city intersections and streets were mentioned as well.

Discussion/Action & Information Items

3. Approval of the Minutes from October 18, 2022 Regular Meeting

M/S: Porter/ Collins

Ayes: Porter, Collins, Futran

Noes: None

Abstain: None

4. Age Friendly Initiative- an action item requesting that Council fund a half-time position for coordinator of the Age Friendly Berkeley Initiative in relation to the work done by the Age-Friendly Continuum

Discussion; No action taken

5. Pedestrian concern of Shattuck & Oregon Street intersection

Reallocated to January 18, 2023 agenda

6. Preservation and/or development of community environment in subsidized senior housing facilities

Reallocated to January 18, 2023 agenda

7. Increase of Aging Services funding proportional to increase of growth of senior residents in Berkeley

Reallocated to January 18, 2023 agenda

8. Letter to Parks & Recreation and Commission for possible senior center outdoor spaces reserved for senior center classes specifically Ohlone park on Bonita Way

Reallocated to January 18, 2023 agenda

Internal

9. Market-rate senior 60+ housing development to facilitate downsizing

Discussion; No action taken

Commissioners adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes Approved on:

Richard Castrillon, Commission Secretary

Internal

To: City Council

From: Commission on Aging

Re: Hopkins Corridor Reconsideration

Mayor and Councilmember's,

As regards the reconsideration of the Hopkins corridor project, after examining the situation, receiving much public comment from Berkeley's Elder population (as well as a number of younger citizens) and gathering information from individual commissioners who've attended various public meetings focused on the issue, the Commission on Aging's recommendation is that there should be very little change to the Hopkins corridor from Mc Gee St to San Pablo Ave. We strongly feel that the simple repaving of the corridor should move forward, but that an investment should be made in a few relatively minor additions. Those additions are:

1. A stop sign on Hopkins at McGee St.
2. A signal at the corner of Monterey and Hopkins that allows for pedestrian crossing (as well a cyclists who choose to dismount their bikes) for an extended period in all directions at once, including diagonally.
3. Signage and pavement markings that encourage the use of Ada St. for through east-west cycling.
4. A highly visible "Hawk" signal at the corner of Sacramento and Ada.

As supplement to these additions the Commission also considered these possibilities:

5. Making Ada St. one way running to the east from Ordway to Sacramento for safer cycling while preserving residential parking.
6. A protected bike lane from Ordway to the Ohlone Greenway on the south side of Hopkins.
7. A stop sign at the corner of Ordway and Hopkins.
8. Designated areas near the corner of Hopkins and Monterey where cyclists can safely park and lock their bikes.
9. Designating the area as a historical district, installing signage indicating this and imposing a 15 mph speed limit in the area.

The Existing Situation:

The commercial strip near the corner of Hopkins and Monterey was built out many years ago near what has become somewhat of a transportation bottleneck over those years as automobile traffic predominately from Gilman and Sacramento Streets has increased. That said, even during rush hour the combination of through traffic, the local traffic generated by the long-lived shops and markets as well as pedestrian traffic and the needed parking process remains manageable in this vibrant area.

As far as bicycle traffic goes, through traffic seems to be predominately choosing various alternative, arterial routes to avoid the area closest the most dangerous intersection - the intersection of Hopkins and Sacramento. For example, those coming down Monterey St. will take Posen to Peralta to access the Ohlone Greenway or areas further west. Those trying to reach North Berkeley Bart will turn left at Monterey (or McGee) and simply continue on California St., a designated bicycle boulevard.

As far as bicyclists visiting the shops goes, there is very little impediment for doing so from anywhere east of Sacramento St. or south of Hopkins. Access from the remaining quadrant is compromised by the busy stretch of Hopkins from Gilman to Monterey and, equally important, by Gilman Street itself which is narrow and highly congested along its entire run. (See CoA's 3, 4, 5 and 7 above).

Community input and CoA concerns regarding currently proposed new development:

The vast majority of input the CoA has received regarding the Hopkins Corridor Project from our elder (as well as number of younger) citizens has essentially taken an "if it isn't broken, don't fix it" point of view. In addition, there is also a widespread sense of exasperation that this position has been characterized as indicative of an incalcitrant and fearful resistance to change that is part and parcel of the aging process. Having examined the situation as a commission, we generally agree with that position on the corridor and certainly share the indignation at the agist characterization. Indeed, though there may be a disproportionate number of elders who have spoken out against the Hopkins Corridor Project, elders are certainly not the only ones raising objections, just the most vocal, and perhaps aren't even the majority of those holding that position. This attempt to sway public opinion using the characterization of "old-person thinking" is particularly alarming to the CoA and a serious threat to the health and well being of the entire community.

The resistance in this instance is not simply “resistance to change” nor is it out of animosity to bicycle riders or bike lanes. Indeed, CoA commissioners (and many who have made public comment to it) applaud bicyclists’ good sense from both the individual health and fighting climate change angles and support protected bike lanes to ensure their safety wherever practical. Instead it is resistance to the imposition of poorly thought through and narrow minded change that results in public policies that do more harm than good.

In this case, the long-lived Hopkins Corridor business district currently remains a healthy and economically high functioning area for nearby residents and locally-based businesses both. The commerce there not only serves those nearby residents but draws in a large number of patrons from adjoining neighborhoods and those further afield even though it has the limited access of a different era. The small business district lacks the “convenient access” and “ample parking” of more modern strip malls or large stores or even our own Elmwood District which is in a much more highly-traveled area and more supported by off-street parking. Despite this, the businesses continue to draw a large number of regular customers, a large number of which are elder or soon to be elder - Berkeley’s older population is growing rapidly as established residents age into that demographic.

To the CoA’s observation, the current amount of curbside and lot parking is by and large adequate. The patrons of the businesses know that there will be times when near in parking will be readily available and other times when it is so crowded they will need to circle round and round or, for the more hale, spill out further into the adjoining neighborhoods. Some of this is just hit or miss, but in general this follows a pattern during the day and patrons have adapted accordingly as have the neighborhood residents. Of course this functional balance can be thrown off a bit by inclement weather, whether rain or extreme heat, resulting in more overcrowding at times and it can take a few days for things to “return to normal”, but, again, current parking is adequate. Indeed, if anything a bit more curbside and lot parking is needed if these businesses want to grow appreciably.

As far as patrons arriving on bicycles go, as mentioned above there are currently few impediments to doing so from most directions though out of prudence less experienced riders might want to dismount and effectively become pedestrians in the busiest sections. The riders, though, could use more space to park and lock their bikes. (See CoA’s 8 above.)

For those arriving on foot, yes, crossing at the corner of Hopkins and Monterey can be trying and pedestrians need to be careful, but is currently doable and to the best of the CoA’s knowledge there have been few pedestrian/auto accidents reported in the two blocks of the Hopkins Business District proper over the years. That elders in particular might currently prefer to park on the south side of Hopkins for safety’s sake is quite understandable though. (See CoA’s 1, 3, 8 and 9 above).

Rational behind the CoA's objection to the current proposal:

In accordance to previous discussion by the CoA as well as examination of newly arriving public comment, objections to the current proposal generally fall into two interrelated categories: equitable access to the area as tied to the health of the existing businesses and general public safety.

1) Equitable access / health of existing businesses:

Put simply, curbside and lot parking is currently far from ample, but just barely adequate for the current level of commerce in the district. The removal of any curbside parking will reduce the access to the businesses for those who come by car and this has a disproportionately negative effect on the elder and mobility limited population who are understandably more dependent on private vehicles. The same is true for anyone who comes from a distance not reasonably walkable or bikeable or served by frequent and convenient public transportation. In addition, patrons of the businesses that make purchases that can't be easily carried away or put in a bicycle's basket will be seriously discouraged from frequenting the area - such patrons account for the lion's share of the area's business. Building a two-way bike lane that will remove a large amount of that parking - especially the close in parking favored by those with strength and mobility issues prefer - will inevitably damage the businesses and the community both.

As far as bicycle access goes, as mentioned above there are currently few serious impediments for cyclists to frequent the businesses in the area itself except for one quadrant and options other than the proposed bike lanes can address this. (See CoA's 3, 4, 5 and 7 above). That somehow the increased bicycle traffic will make up for loss business due to the loss of parking seems unlikely given that these won't appreciably increase the existing access. Again, there is little stopping cyclists from frequenting the area now. That the proposed bike lanes could provide a better through route for cyclists is true, but that the possible "stopping along the way" by those who have "discovered the area" could make anything more than a small dent in that loss seems very, very unlikely in this instance.

2) Public Safety

For anyone standing at the corner of Gilman and Hopkins and looking up and down the streets, it is quite clear - especially during rush-hours - that for public safety's sake the last thing these sections of roadway need are more rolling vehicles even if all street parking were removed and the bicycles and EPTDs are separated from the automobile traffic by protected lanes. Add to this the pedestrian traffic in the area concentrated at the corner of Hopkins and Monterey and the public safety concerns are ratcheted up greatly. The intersection and its adjoining sections of roadway simply were not built to safely accommodate this level of congestion - too many things for all involved to watch out for - and this clearly evident safety problem will in all likelihood be

exacerbated for the foreseeable future as the automobile traffic becomes greater due to the push to increase population density in the Bay Area.

Though getting the citizenry out of cars and onto bicycles will help solve this intractable problem, the speed of this change is unlikely to even keep pace with that growth until considerable public funds are dedicated to improving local transportation infrastructure - the automobile provides us all the freedom to go to the market in the rain, to drive over to a friend's house across town in the dark for a dinner party, to go to a Doctor's appointment in an adjoining City without spending half a day on public transportation, etc.. It will take a long, long while (if ever) for the citizenry to give this up. Given this, the CoA strongly believes it would be wiser to divert bicycle through-traffic away from that intersection and, as suggested above, use Ada St. instead.

Skilled cyclists and EPTD riders will, of course, retain the right to ride with the flow of traffic through the area if they so choose. There are also a number of other arterial routes on slower streets to be taken. As for crossing streets, cyclists uncomfortable in doing so can simply dismount and become pedestrians pushing their bikes aside them.

In addition, the CoA has both received and been present at meetings where elder residents in particular have raised concerns about the behavior of cyclists, e-bike and - more often - e-scooter users. The battery assisted devices themselves are more troubling because they accelerate more quickly than bicycles, the E-bikes are quite heavy and both are more silent - it is hard to hear them coming, especially for those with hearing impairments. In the specific case of E-scooter riders, they tend to be younger, less cautious and - using our downtown area as example - often seem unaware that they are not allowed to ride on sidewalks. The danger? A 45 year old could be knocked down by a scooter and recover in a few days. For even a healthy 75 year old, the healing time could take weeks. For the more impaired? - simply falling down can start a chain of events that can make this a "life altering injury".

And in addition to all this, two individual commissioners have brought up concerns that were not previously discussed by the full CoA:

1. That there is an inadequate buffer zone between drivers exiting their cars and automobile traffic. The end result is that though the bike lanes may protect riders from being "doored", it puts drivers at greater risk of being hit by a car and that this is obviously and unacceptable trade-off.

2. That the Hopkins Corridor is a designated evacuation route and that this new configuration may compromise its effectiveness. To the best of this commissioner's knowledge the Berkeley Fire Department has not publicly addressed the issue and nor has the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission been asked to weigh in. This suggests an avoidance of the topic.

Given these two concerns, it might be wiser to simply require cyclists and EPTD

users to dismount and walk their vehicles through the commercial area.

CoA conclusions and recommendation for future action:

The CoA is fully aware of the existential threat to all of humanity due to climate change and of the need to change our transportation systems to address this. We are also aware of the part policy decisions from the local level all the way up to global agreements will play in this needed change. As stated above, the commission appreciates that encouraging bicycle and EPTD usage is part of this needed change and support investment in the infrastructure needed to move in this direction where and when appropriate.

In this specific instance, we strongly believe the proposed plan is inappropriate for the reasons stated above and have accordingly made the recommendations at the beginning of this report to best serve the laudable goals of that proposal while addressing these concerns.

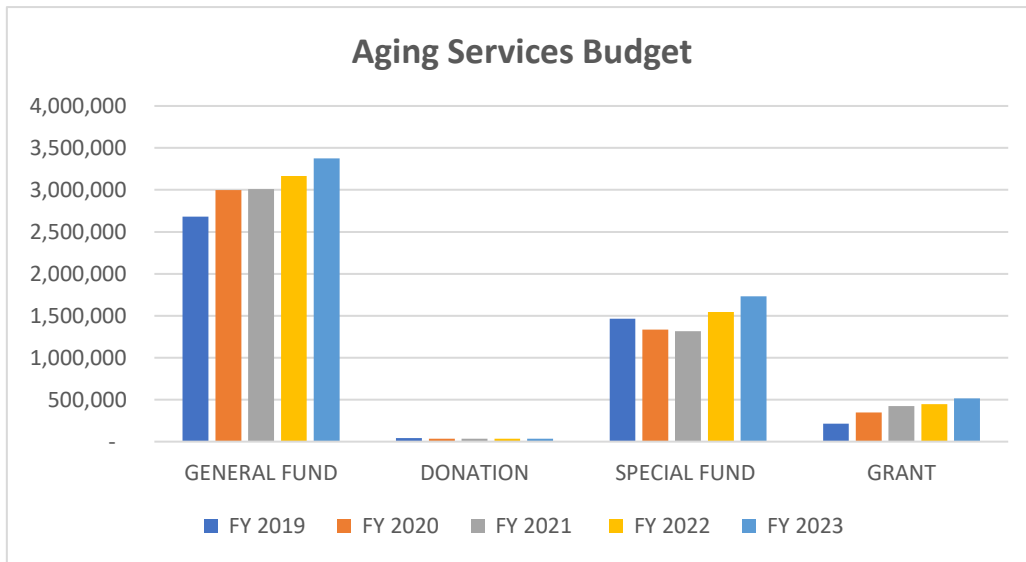
As far as future action goes, for years the CoA has suggested to the Transportation Commission that an integrated system of small shuttles buses on secondary streets be developed around town to reduce car usage, but it seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Tellingly, in the City's Vision 2050 Framework shuttle buses appear twice in the narrative "A Street Corner View of Berkeley in 2050", but to the best of the CoA's knowledge no actual proposals or even feasibility studies have been made to support this truly progressive infrastructure change.

George Porter

Chair, Commission on Aging

Aging Services Fiscal Year 2019-2023 Approved Budget

FUNDING TYPE	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
GENERAL FUND	2,681,242	2,998,763	3,009,764	3,167,301	3,376,281
DONATION	42,519	33,308	33,457	33,775	34,280
SPECIAL FUND	1,464,508	1,337,113	1,315,221	1,544,245	1,730,146
GRANT	215,756	347,857	425,402	445,846	514,768
TOTAL	4,404,025	4,717,041	4,783,844	5,191,167	5,655,475



Special fund includes Measure B, Measure BB, Target Case Management (TCM) and Mental Health Service Act (MHSA).