



To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Shoshana O'Keefe (Author), Mayor Adena Ishii (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Brent Blackaby (Co-Sponsor), and Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani (Co-Sponsor)
 Subject: Solano Avenue Stroll: Co-Sponsorship and Relinquishment of Council Office Budget Funds to the General Fund and Grant of Such Funds to the Solano Avenue Association

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution for the City of Berkeley to Co-Sponsor the 2026 Solano Avenue Stroll and approving the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$25,000 per Councilmember from the D13 Discretionary Accounts of members of the Berkeley City Council, including a contribution of \$24,000 from Councilmember O'Keefe, \$5,000 from Mayor Ishii, and \$15,000 from Councilmember Blackaby, and inviting other members of the City Council to contribute to support the Solano Avenue Stroll with funds relinquished to the City's General Fund.

The relinquished funds will help support the Solano Avenue Association in producing the Solano Stroll – the largest free, family-friendly street fair in the East Bay. The 50th annual Solano Avenue Stroll will take place on September 13, 2026.

BACKGROUND

The Solano Avenue Association was formed in 1974 and achieved nonprofit status in 1983. The Association's signature annual event – the Solano Avenue Stroll – is an approximately one-mile long, 26-block closed-street festival, spanning Solano Avenue from the Alameda to San Pablo Avenue in both Berkeley and Albany. Attended by some 250,000 people each year, the Stroll is a free, family-friendly, smoke- and alcohol-free one-day event celebrating the vitality and diversity of the East Bay.

Typically, the Stroll features over 500 vendors, including 50 entertainers representing a wide variety of cultures, food from 50 booths and local restaurants representing cuisines from every continent, 150 government and non-profit agencies, 150 juried handcrafters, a 75-participant parade with local bands, performers, schools, and organizations, safe mechanical rides for children, and more. In 2000, the Solano Avenue Stroll became an official "Local Legacy," included in the United States Library of Congress with the help of Congresswoman Barbara Lee and was recognized as celebrating "America's rich diverse culture." Now approaching its

semicentennial, the Stroll has been sponsored with both services and funds by the Cities of Berkeley and Albany longer than the Solano Avenue Association has records.

The Solano Avenue Association produces the Stroll on a “shoestring” budget despite its size and complexity. While Berkeley historically provided in-kind services to the event, given the City’s ongoing structural deficit those services can no longer be proved at no cost.

Every dollar contributed directly offsets the Association's out-of-pocket costs of producing the Stroll, helping keep the event free and open to all. Councilmembers wishing to contribute may relinquish surplus funds from their Council Office Budget discretionary accounts to the City’s General Fund to be granted to the Solano Avenue Association.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The Solano Avenue Association works actively to minimize the environmental impact of the Stroll. In addition to regular AC Transit service, free event-day shuttles provide rides from the North Berkeley BART Station and up and down the length of Marin Avenue, making stops at intersections with stop lights on Marin. In the past, free valet bicycle parking has also been available.

Recycling and composting are part of the zero waste ethos of the event. In 2022, the Solano Avenue Association began requiring all vendors to provide only compostable bags and foodware, unless items are not available due to supply chain challenges, or for health and safety reasons (to avoid spilling of hot liquids, for example). Recycling and composting bins have and will continue to be provided along the entire route of the event.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The contributions authorized by this item have no additional General Fund impact, as those funds are available from contributing Councilmembers’ Council Office Budget discretionary accounts.

CONTACT

Councilmember Shoshana O’Keefe, sokeefe@berkeleyca.gov

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ###,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZING CO-SPONSORSHIP AND THE EXPENDITURE OF SURPLUS FUNDS FROM THE OFFICE EXPENSES ACCOUNTS OF MEMBERS OF THE BERKELEY CITY COUNCIL FOR A GRANT TO SUPPORT THE SOLANO AVENUE STROLL

WHEREAS, the Solano Avenue Stroll is an annual, inclusive, no-barrier, family-friendly outdoor celebration that is and always has been free to the public, and is the largest street fair in the east Bay, drawing crowds of up to 250,000 people over the course of a single day and spanning the cities of Berkeley and Albany; and

WHEREAS, the Solano Avenue Stroll, a nonprofit formed in 1974 produces the Stroll on a shoestring budget and relies on community and municipal support to keep the event free and open to all; and

WHEREAS, contributions from Councilmembers' discretion office budgets provide tangible support that helps offset the Association's out-of-pocket costs and ensure the continuation of this signature community event; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of Berkeley that funds relinquished by the Mayor and Councilmembers from their discretionary office budgets, up to \$25,000 per office, shall be granted to the Solano Avenue Association in support of the Solano Avenue Stroll, with proceeds serving the public good.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Berkeley shall be an official Co-Sponsor of the Solano Avenue Association's 2026 Solano Avenue Stroll event, currently scheduled for Sunday, September 13, 2026.

