



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

September 15, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Eleanor Hollander, Manager, Economic Development

Subject: Contract: Downtown Berkeley Association for Addison Street Catenary Lighting

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to:

- (1) Enter into a sole source contract and any amendments with the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) for the City to provide \$150,000 to the DBA for actual incurred costs associated with the Addison Street Catenary Lighting project to support Downtown revitalization and placemaking in the Downtown Addison Street Arts District, and
- (2) Advance the city's approval to utilize city property as part of this effort (namely the connection/anchor points for the support guide wires for the lighting on the Addison Street side of the Center Street Garage building located at 2025 Center St).

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The total amount of the contract with the Downtown Berkeley Association is not to exceed \$150,000 to be paid in a lump sum. The \$150,000 in funding will be paid from the account with budget code: 139-21-208-251-0000-000-446-612990.

On June 23, 2026, the City adopted the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) plan for Fiscal Years 2027-2031 (FY 27- FY 31). Part of this action included a \$150,000 allocation for the Addison Street Catenary Lighting Project from the SOSIP (Streets and Open Space Improvement Plan) Fund. Funds will be provided to the Downtown Berkeley Association to reimburse them for actual costs incurred. The contract will be subject to standard City audit and oversight procedures.

The Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) is the Owners' Association for the Downtown Property Business Improvement District (DPBID). The DPBID finances maintenance and marketing activities for the Downtown business district. It therefore indirectly enhances sales tax, business license tax and other business-related City revenue sources.

The DBA will take the lead in designing and delivering the Addison Street Catenary lighting project and providing ongoing maintenance and will serve as the lead applicant for the encroachment permit in the Right-of-Way. The City will review all of the permits and condition the project through the Addison Street Catenary Lighting project contract. No General Fund tax dollars will be impacted by this action.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Addison Street Catenary Lighting effort is a placemaking and streetscape proposal led by the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) in collaboration with volunteer arts district leaders and architects and engineers. The project entails hanging overhead lighting across Addison Street that is affixed to buildings between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street. As the only property-based business improvement district representing the Addison Street Arts District, the DBA is the one viable source (or single entity) that can deliver and coordinate this effort which involves obtaining the permission of and representing the interests of multiple private property owners (including the city) and the public right-of-way. The DBA will take no management fee for this effort, and is a single, responsible source, that is uniquely positioned to take on this coordinated effort.

On June 16, 2026, the Berkeley City Council as part of the biennial budget process directed *Special Fund Allocations*¹ including Streets & Open Space Improvement Plan (SOSIP) funding for *Downtown Berkeley Revitalization Projects*², including the Addison Street Catenary Lighting effort. One time funding of \$150,000 SOSIP funds for the Addison Street Catenary Lighting Project, were allocated by City Council referral on December 2, 2025 with the express understanding that the DBA would be the leader of the project, stating “the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) made this project one of their priorities and are leading a group of volunteer arts district community leaders and architects to work on this project *pro bono*.”³

The goal of the project is to enhance nighttime ambiance, support public safety, and pedestrian vibrancy during the hours around evening programming at the Berkeley Repertory Theater, Freight and Salvage, and other cultural and commercial institutions in the area to highlight the Addison Street Arts District as a gathering space for culture and community. By improving illumination during evening theater, dining, and performance hours, the project aims to make the Downtown Addison Street Arts District safer, encourage visitors to linger, and spur local economic activity.

The proposed design elements of the catenary lighting project include LED “twinkly light” strands draped across Addison Street affixed to buildings on both the north and

¹ Berkeley City Council, *Proposed FY 2027 and Fy 2028 Biennial Budget and Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Proposed Biennial Budget and Five-Year CIP Public Hearing No. 2, Item 40a*, June 16, 2026.

² Berkeley City Council Consent Calendar, *Budget Referral: FY26 AAO1 Downtown Berkeley Revitalization Projects*, [Item 32](#), December 2, 2025.

³ *Ibid.*, page 3.

south sides of the street. The light strand configuration will be 7 sets of 3 light strands arranged perpendicularly across the street. The strands are to be spaced 5 feet apart within each set, with 50 feet between sets, mounted approximately 20 feet high. The height and layout of the lights avoid a dense "canopy" effect, preserving an open, balanced streetscape while delivering bistro/catenary lighting ambiance. The lights themselves will be energy-efficient LED fixtures that are to be powered by the Berkeley Repertory Theater's property, and the colors can be adjusted as needed via a computer-based application.

The DBA is uniquely positioned to lead the local property owner and stakeholder coordination that is needed to implement this project. The DBA has organized a group of local architects and engineers to design and implement this project and has worked to secure property owner support and the support of its Board of Directors to improve the Addison Arts District vitality and public realm.

BACKGROUND

The Addison Street Arts District serves as a primary cultural corridor in Downtown Berkeley. Placemaking improvements, such as overhead catenary lighting, have been identified as key strategies to revitalize the downtown core, foster foot traffic, and improve the night-time economy. The DBA has been developing this idea in conjunction with property owners, community members, and city staff, and enlisting the assistance of local design and engineering professionals. The DBA Board formally endorsed this effort at its meeting on July 2, 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

The catenary lighting fixtures utilize energy-efficient LED technology, minimizing electricity consumption while maximizing illumination.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

This effort will continue to leverage resources for Downtown vitality and maintenance that has had a positive transformational effect on the physical and economic health of Berkeley's Downtown Addison Street Arts District area. A sole source contract agreement with the Downtown Berkeley Association is appropriate as the DBA is the management entity for the Downtown Property Based Business Improvement District (PBID) and leads the district-wide vitality effort. Authorizing the use of the Center Street Garage wall provides essential infrastructure access required to bring the project to fruition.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachment:

1: Resolution: Contract: Downtown Berkeley Association to Implement the Addison Street Catenary Lighting in the Downtown Addison Street Arts District

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

AUTHORIZING A SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT AND AMENDMENTS WITH THE DOWNTOWN BERKELEY ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADDISON STREET CATENARY LIGHTING PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING THE USE OF CITY PROPERTY AT 2025 CENTER STREET TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) manages the Property Based Business Improvement District (PBID) in Downtown Berkeley and works to enhance the economic vitality, safety, and cultural life of the downtown corridor; and

WHEREAS, the DBA has proposed the Addison Street Catenary Lighting Project to improve nighttime visibility, pedestrian safety, and enhanced placemaking within the Downtown Addison Street Arts District; and

WHEREAS, the project requires a contract to transfer dedicated project funds to the DBA for procurement, coordination, and installation of the lights; and

WHEREAS, the catenary lighting design requires structural attachment to adjacent buildings, including the Addison Street elevation of the City-owned Center Street Garage structure located at 2025 Center Street.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Berkeley authorizes the City Manager to execute a sole source contract and any necessary amendments with the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) to pass-through all dedicated project funds for the Addison Street Catenary Lighting project in the amount not to exceed \$150,000 for actual costs incurred, aligned with the adopted CIP Plan for FYs 27-31. A record signature copy of said contract and any amendments are to be filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council grants approval for the utilization of City property, specifically the Addison Street side of the Center Street Garage located at 2025 Center Street, as an anchor structure for the catenary lighting installation, subject to final engineering approval and appropriate liability/indemnification agreements as approved by the City Attorney.

