



CONSENT CALENDAR
November 15, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rigel Robinson (Author), Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Co-Sponsor), and Councilmember Sophie Hahn (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Budget Referral: Closing the Southside Complete Streets Funding Gap

RECOMMENDATION

Refer \$1,000,000 to the FY 2023 AAO #1 process to contribute to closing the funding gap for the Southside Complete Streets project to ensure that construction on Bancroft, Dana, & Fulton can proceed on schedule and to prevent the loss of \$7.3M in federal funding.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On February 22, 2022, the Berkeley City Council adopted a resolution approving the conceptual designs for the Southside Complete Streets Project on Dana Street from Dwight Way to Bancroft Way; Bancroft Way from Milvia Street to Piedmont Avenue; Fulton Street from Dwight Way to Bancroft Way; and Telegraph Avenue from Dwight Way to Bancroft Way, and directed the City Manager to direct staff to proceed with the detailed engineering design of the project.

Two important project elements are different today than at the initial phases of the Southside Complete Streets Project:

1. Construction costs have risen dramatically during the pandemic. The California Construction Cost Index (CCCI) increased by approximately 2-4% each year between 2016 and 2020. In 2021, the CCCI increased by 13.4%. This represents a cumulative increase of 16.2% over the past two years. Cost estimates for the project have increased dramatically.
2. Through the community engagement process, the Southside Complete Streets Project has landed on conceptual designs that are an expansion of the project's scope. The February 22 vote approved a conceptual design for Telegraph Avenue that includes a plaza on Telegraph Avenue and contemplates limits on private automobiles on Telegraph Avenue. This is the result of a community-driven effort to pedestrianize the blocks of Telegraph from Bancroft to Dwight. This approach was also contemplated in the 2016 Telegraph Public Realm Plan. This conceptual design, however, will be more costly than initially anticipated for the Southside Complete Streets Project.

As a result, staff have concluded that the existing \$8.3M allocated for delivering the Southside Complete Streets Project will not be sufficient for all four street segments. In fact, even if Telegraph Avenue is separated from the project and separate funding is pursued to construct the concept design for Telegraph Avenue, the existing \$8.3M allocation will not quite be sufficient to construct the other three street segments: Bancroft, Dana, & Fulton.

As a result, the Telegraph Avenue segment will be treated as a separate project. Additional resources are required to pursue the Telegraph project. Now, it is critical that we close the funding gap to allow the construction of Bancroft, Dana, & Fulton to proceed.

The city has a critical January 2023 funding obligation deadline in order to remain eligible for the \$7.3M of the project budget represented by Federal Aid.

The latest cost estimate from staff is a \$7.852 million shortfall from currently allocated grant and matching funds for Bancroft, Dana, & Fulton.

Closing this funding gap can be achieved through a variety of sources, including UC LRDP settlement funds and Measure BB Local Streets and Roads funds. To fully close the funding gap, an allocation from the general fund will be necessary.

Construction is expected to start in July of 2023 (FY24) and continue for about 14 months, ending in September 2024 (FY25), so there is an opportunity to spread the shortfall over multiple years. Construction of these street segments has been anticipated in 2023 and is accounted for in the paving plan. Further delay of these street segments could jeopardize our federal funding and disrupt the paving plan. It is essential that these three street segments, Bancroft, Dana, & Fulton, remain on schedule.

This budget referral urges the council to allocate \$1,000,000 in General Fund resources to ensure that the city is able to close the funding gap for Bancroft, Dana, & Fulton and construction of those street segments can begin on schedule. Not doing so could risk jeopardizing the \$7.3M in federal aid that has been allocated to the project.

BACKGROUND

The Southside Complete Streets project will improve conditions for people walking, biking, riding transit, driving, and delivering goods and services in Berkeley's Southside neighborhood along Telegraph Avenue, Bancroft Way, Fulton Street, and Dana Street.

Berkeley's Southside neighborhood has a rich history and a bright future as a community hub that serves many functions. The neighborhood is growing, and more people are walking, biking, taking transit, using rideshare, and having packages delivered. Today, Southside streets provide access to many vibrant local businesses,

community and cultural destinations, healthcare, and multi-family and single-family residences. As the main gateway to UC Berkeley’s campus, many students, faculty, and staff rely on the Southside neighborhood for housing, food, and other daily needs.

The Southside Complete Streets Project will apply the vision and goals identified in previous planning efforts to create a cohesive street design. The goals of the project are to improve safety, comfort, and access for all users for decades to come. When implemented, the project will bring improvements for people walking, biking, driving, and taking transit. These improvements will also support economic development and cultural vitality of the district.

Numerous studies, documents, and plans have recommended changes to Southside streets. The City’s Vision Zero Action Plan identifies Bancroft Way as a “High Injury Street” in need of traffic safety improvements, with a history of severe injury and fatality traffic crashes for people walking, biking, and driving. Among other recommendations, the Southside Area Plan recommended conversion of Bancroft Way, Durant Avenue, and Dana Street from one-way to two-way streets to improve transit reliability and pedestrian and bicycle safety; calm traffic; and improve vehicle circulation. The Berkeley Bicycle Plan recommends continuous Cycle Tracks on Bancroft Way, Dana Street, and Fulton Street to close gaps in the proposed citywide Low Stress Bikeway Vision Network. To address chronic transit delays through the Southside, the AC Transit Major Corridors study recommends a continuous Bus Rapid Transit facility on Telegraph Avenue and Bancroft Way, connecting to Oakland to the south and to Shattuck Avenue/University Avenue to the north. The City of Berkeley’s General Plan Transportation Element Policy T-4 Transit-First Policy gives priority to alternative transportation and transit over single-occupant vehicles on Transit Routes. Policy T-22 seeks to reduce wait times and transfer times for pedestrians taking transit by implementing improvements such as transit-only lanes and traffic signal improvements. Additionally, Policy T-55 designates Bancroft Way, Durant Avenue, and Telegraph Avenue as the “highest priority routes” for transit improvements in the Southside area. The Telegraph Avenue Public Realm Plan recommends a phased approach to improving and increasing pedestrian space along Telegraph Avenue’s relatively narrow existing sidewalks, culminating in a “shared street” configuration; the plan notes that it will need to be updated to include the future possibility of dedicated bus lanes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$1,000,000 to fund construction of the Southside Complete Streets Project. Not closing the funding gap for the Southside Complete Streets Project could result in a loss of \$7.3M in already allocated federal aid.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Installation of protected bikeways, widening sidewalks, and improving pedestrian crossings is anticipated to increase walking and biking, which is consistent with the 2009 Berkeley Climate Action Plan Policy that calls for expanding and improving

Berkeley's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Installation of bus-only lanes is anticipated to improve bus reliability and decrease travel times, making on-street transit a more attractive mode of transportation. The 2009 Berkeley Climate Action Plan sets targets of reducing transportation emissions 33% below year 2000 levels by 2020, and 80% below year 2000 levels by 2050. The Plan further states that transportation modes such as public transit, walking, and bicycling must become the primary means of fulfilling the City's mobility needs in order to meet these targets.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

1: Telegraph Public Realm Plan

<https://www.berkeleyside.com/wpcontent/uploads/2016/09/Telegraph-Public-Realm-Plan-Final-Low-Res.pdf>

2: Berkeley Southside Complete Streets Project Website

<https://berkeleysouthsidecompletestreets.org/>