



Brent Blackaby
Councilmember District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR
April 29, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Blackaby (Author), Councilmember Taplin (Co-sponsor), Councilmember O’Keefe (Co-sponsor), Councilmember Humbert (Co-sponsor)

Subject: Amend AB-645 (2023-2024) to add the City of Berkeley to California’s Automated Speed Enforcement Pilot

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution to send to Assemblymember Buffy Wicks and Senator Jesse Arreguín, requesting that the Legislature amend AB-645 (Friedman) Vehicles: Speed Safety Pilot Program (2023-2024), in order to add the City of Berkeley to the pilot.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None. If the City of Berkeley is selected for inclusion in the pilot, additional costs for acquiring and operating new speed cameras will be identified before implementation.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City of Berkeley is densely populated with over 124,000 people living within its 10.5 square miles of land. Its community is passionate about eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028, which is the goal of the Vision Zero plan that Berkeley enacted in 2019. Yet 2024 saw four more fatal traffic incidents than 2023 (which had zero). Unsafe speed was the leading cause of the 877 collisions in 2024, according to the 2024 Berkeley Police Department Annual Report.

Based on traffic data, the City of Berkeley believes that reducing traffic speeds will reduce collisions, injuries, and deaths. Without sufficient enforcement resources, especially in a challenging budgetary environment, speed cameras can play a crucial role.

AB-645 (Friedman), approved Oct 13, 2023, permits selected cities to establish a Speed Safety Pilot Program, to run until Jan 2032. The initial measure included six (6) cities – Los Angeles, San Jose, Oakland, Glendale, Long Beach, and the City and County of San Francisco. Berkeley requested inclusion but was not selected.

California cities not included in the Pilot are not permitted to use speed safety systems. The Legislature wants to ensure the speed safety programs meet certain requirements and are using this pilot to measure their effectiveness. The City of Berkeley, after

significant public input, has developed several strategic plans towards creating safer transit infrastructure and made progress on their implementation. These include:

- The Berkeley Strategic Transportation (BeST) Plan to improve the physical transportation infrastructure for increased access, mobility and safety for everyone traveling within our city (adopted June 2016)
- The Berkeley Bicycle Plan to make Berkeley a model bicycle-friendly city where bicycling is a safe, attractive, easy, and convenient form of transportation and recreation for people of all ages and bicycling abilities (adopted May 2, 2017)
- The Vision Zero Action Plan to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries on our city streets by 2028 (adopted March 10, 2019)
- The Berkeley 2020 Pedestrian Plan to move forward with pedestrian infrastructure improvements focused on safety and equity (adopted Jan 26, 2021)

The City has also taken steps to use modern technology to support safety and enforcement. Berkeley is ideally situated to implement a Speed Safety Pilot Program and to reap the benefits. Such programs offer a high rate of detection, and, in conjunction with education and traffic engineering, can significantly reduce speeding, improve traffic safety, and prevent traffic-related fatalities and injuries. Further, they can reduce disparate impacts on communities of color, and implicit or explicit racial bias in police traffic stops which put drivers of color at risk nationwide.

This item seeks to urge the State Legislature to amend AB-645 to include the City of Berkeley in the Pilot. If that is not possible, then we request Berkeley be included in the next phase of California's Speed Safety Program as soon as possible.

BACKGROUND

Adopted by the California Legislature and approved by Governor Newsom on October 13, 2023, AB-645 (Friedman) included six California Cities in its automated speed enforcement pilot: Los Angeles, San Jose, Oakland, Glendale, Long Beach, and the City and County of San Francisco. The pilot runs through January 1, 2032. The City of Berkeley requested inclusion¹ before the bill was passed, but was not selected as one of the initial six cities.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

By reducing traffic speeds, the City of Berkeley can improve traffic safety and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Slower speeds support alternate forms of transportation such as biking and walking.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Brent Blackaby Council District 6 510-981-7160

Attachments: 1: Resolution

¹ Berkeley City Council Agenda, April 11, 2023, [Sending a letter to Assemblymembers Friedman and Wicks to request Berkeley's Inclusion in AB 645](#)

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

AMEND AB-645 (FRIEDMAN) TO ADD THE CITY OF BERKELEY TO CALIFORNIA'S
SPEED SAFETY PILOT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley is densely populated with over 124,000 people living within its 10.5 square miles of land; and

WHEREAS, AB-645 (Friedman) Vehicles: Speed Safety Pilot Program was approved on October 13, 2023 and authorized six California cities to implement an automated speed enforcement pilot, but Berkeley's initial request to be included was not accepted; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley saw 877 total collisions in 2024, including 4 fatal incidents, with unsafe speed the leading cause, according to the 2024 Berkeley Police Department Annual Report; and

WHEREAS, given budget constraints and hiring challenges, Berkeley does not have sufficient traffic enforcement capacity to serve speeding tickets to every unsafe driver to change behavior; and

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2016 the City Council adopted the Berkeley Strategic Transportation (BeST) Plan to improve the physical transportation infrastructure for increased access, mobility and safety for everyone traveling within our city; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2017, the City Council approved the Berkeley Bicycle Plan to make Berkeley a model bicycle-friendly city where bicycling is a safe, attractive, easy, and convenient form of transportation and recreation for people of all ages and bicycling abilities; and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2019, the City Council adopted its Vision Zero Action Plan to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries on our city streets by 2028; and

WHEREAS, on January 26, 2021, the City Council adopted the Berkeley 2020 Pedestrian Plan to move forward with pedestrian infrastructure improvements focused on safety and equity; and

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2024 the City Council approved a controlled pilot of Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) to support investigations and efficient response to stolen vehicles and vehicles associated with a felony; and

WHEREAS, the ALPR pilot proved successful, playing a role in 14 arrests, helping recover 10 stolen vehicles, generating 14 investigative leads, and contributing to the issuance of 2 warrants in the first three months – and led to Council approval of full roll-out of the ALPR program; and

WHEREAS, in 2025 the City of Berkeley will be installing Fixed Surveillance Cameras in intersections with high pedestrian traffic to capture incidents in real time; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has a track record of deploying modern technology to support safety and enforcement and has developed several strategic plans to create safer transit infrastructure, making significant progress on their implementation.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City of Berkeley, a densely populated city with passion and drive towards eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028, requests that the California Legislature amend AB-645 (Friedman) Vehicles: Speed Safety Pilot Program (2023-2024) to expand the program to include the City of Berkeley.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley has experience with modern technology to support safety and enforcement, and speed cameras would be a natural extension of existing investments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if it is not deemed possible to include the City of Berkeley in the AB-645 pilot program at this time, we ask the Legislature to include Berkeley in the next phase of California's Speed Safety Program as soon as possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be transmitted to the offices of Senator Jesse Arreguín and Assemblymember Buffy Wicks to request their support in amending AB-645.